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Against Homogeneity. Transcultural and Trans-Lingual Strategies in Cultural Production

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Russian: A Monocentric or Pluricentric Language?[1]

Abstract

All the world's 'big' languages of international communication (for instance, English, French or Spanish) are pluricentric in their character, meaning that official varieties of these languages are standardized differently in those states where the aforesaid languages are in official use. The only exception to this tendency is Russian. Despite the fact that Russian is employed in an official capacity in numerous post-Soviet states and in Israel, it is still construed as a monocentric language whose single and unified standard is (and must be) solely

[1] I thank Filip Tomić (Ivo Pilar Institute of Social Sciences, Zagreb, Croatia) who in May 2017 introduced me to the Deklaracija o zajedničkom jeziku (The Declaration on the Common Language). This document constituted a decisive impulse for writing this article. Rok Stergar (University of Ljubljana) kindly commented on an earlier draft. As usual, words of thanks go to Catherine Gibson (European University Institute), who commented in detail on the entire manuscript. I also appreciate the two Anonymous Reviewers' helpful comments and suggestions for improvement. Obviously, it is me alone who is responsible for any remaining infelicities.
Some general ideas and conclusions included in this text were mentioned first in the online edition of *New Eastern Europe*, where on 9 February 2018 the article 'Russian: Between Re-ethnicization and Pluricentrism' (Kamusella, 2018b) was published.

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controlled by Russia. From the perspective of sovereignty, this arrangement affords Moscow a degree of influence and even control over culture and language use in the countries where Russian is official. This fact was consciously noticed and evoked some heated discussions in Ukraine after the Russian annexation of the Ukrainian region of Crimea in 2014. However, thus far, the discussions have not translated into any official recognition of (let alone encouragement for) state-specific varieties of the Russian language.

Keywords: de-ethnicization, hybrid war, language politics, monocentric languages, non-Russian Russophones, pluricentric languages, Russian language, Russophone states, Russo-Ukrainian war, state varieties of Russian.

Introduction

The end of history – as bravely proposed by Francis Fukuyama in 1992 in the wake of the fall of communism and the breakup of the Soviet Union (Fukuyama, 1992) – unfortunately came to an early and unexpected end in Europe in 2014 with Russia's annexation of Crimea and onslaught on Ukraine, which led to the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war. One way or another, language politics has become an important part of the story, politicians taking decisions on the cue of language, and legitimizing decisions with this proverbial 'puff of hot air'. Ethnolinguistic nationalism (or the equation of a language's entire speech community with a nation) was developed in Central Europe during the 19th century. Subsequently, it was implemented in the following century with the sudden founding of ethnolinguistic nation-states, especially after 1918 and 1989 (Kamusella, 2018a, pp. 173–174). Now in the early 21st century, it seems that this ideology has become another weapon in resurgent Russia's ideological armoury geared to the needs of newly invented hybrid warfare (cf. Wasiuta & Wasiuta, 2017; Yashin, 2016). This weaponization of language has generated much discussion on the Russian language itself, first of all, quite understandably, in Ukraine (cf. O'Loughlin, Toal, & Kolosov, 2016). This article probes into the status of Russian as seen from this perspective by speakers of this language, alongside politicians and scholars in the mainly post-Soviet states, where Russian functions as the or an official (national, state) language.

The discussion opens with a brief overview of the globe's 'big languages', each of them construed as consisting of state-specific varieties. Russian is the sole exception to this principle of pluricentrism among the languages of this type. This generalized and rather unreflective insistence on the monocentric

character of Russian appears to be a carry-over from the former Soviet Union, where practically all the Russian-speakers used to live. For a quarter of a century, the post-Soviet states bowed to the Kremlin's unilateral and never openly discussed the Kremlin's insistence that only Russia had the right to control the Russian language, meaning the principles and practices of its standardization. The year 2014 was a sobering wake-up call, when Moscow firmly deployed Russian as an argument for extending pretensions to adjacent territories compactly inhabited by Russophone communities in Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, or Kazakhstan (Wasiuta, 2017). This was done on the basis of the assumption that each 'native' (L1) Russian-speaker *must* be a member of the Russian nation; this assumption was enshrined in the hastily adopted 2014 Russian citizenship law. As a result, ethnolinguistic nationalism was moulded into *the* ideological foundation of Russian neo-imperialism.

However, the principle of sovereignty, as practiced consistently across the globe since the mass decolonization during the 1960s, does not allow other states to meddle in a given polity's affairs, including language politics if that is of import for such a polity. That is why there are as many 'world Englishes' or 'world Spanishes' as there are states where these two languages are employed in an official capacity. Unless the founding principles of international relations are dramatically altered, it is high time for the development of autonomous 'world Russians' in the post-Soviet states in order to forestall Russian aggression. Russia's attack on Ukraine evoked a heated discussion on this subject in the latter country, followed closely in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Kazakhstan. Previously only few scholars and intellectuals had looked into this issue, especially when debating whether territorial varieties of Russian should be termed as dialects or regiolects and what it actually might mean.

What is elsewhere the subject of scholarly debates in faculties of philology, literature and linguistics, now has become an instrument of neo-imperial politics as conducted by Russia in the post-Soviet states. As such this issue of the normative monocentrism of the Russian language and its ramifications should be given more attention among political scientists. It appears that the survival of some post-Soviet states and the disarming of Russian neo-imperialism depend on the acceptance that numerous 'world Russians' exist, and each post-Soviet state should control its own. Reconstruing Russian as a pluricentric language is a small price to pay for peace and stability from Vladivostok to Vilnius and from Arkhangelsk to Dushanbe, and perhaps, to Tel Aviv.

World Languages: Decolonization, Pluricentrism and De-Ethnicization

Rarely do scholars (let alone politicians) take note of the otherwise quite obvious fact that potentially (and in the socio-political reality, as observed nowadays) the most pluricentric of all the extant Slavic languages is Russian. All the globe's 'large' (or 'world') languages are spoken and written by hundreds of millions in a myriad of polities. All of them are largely de-ethnicized lingua francas of former or current empires; all these empires with their centres (metropolises) located *exclusively* in Eurasia. Russian was (and to a degree still is) such an imperial lingua franca. Scholars noticed and began researching the phenomenon of pluricentric languages at the turn of the 1970s. One source of inspiration was the development of state-specific varieties of German in the aftermath of World War II (Clyne, 1992), and another a reflection on the rapid rise of different 'world Englishes' in the wake of decolonization ("International Association for World Englishes", 2018).

Nowadays (according to the statistical figures of 2010) about 76 million people speak French as their first language, 92 million German, 215 million Portuguese, 295 million Arabic, 360 million English, 405 million Spanish, and 955 million Chinese (that is, Mandarin, standard Chinese). This ranking changes quite a bit when the cited numbers combine both speakers who use these Einzelsprachen[2] as their first languages (L1) and as second languages (L2). All the speakers of German as their first and second language (L1 and L2) amount to 129 million, of French to 229 million, of Portuguese also to 229 million, of Arabic to 422 million, of Spanish to 527 million, of English to 983 million, and of Chinese to 1.09 billion. The rate of de-ethnicization measured by the ratio of L1 to L2 speakers is the highest for English and French, in the case of which L1 speakers account only for a third of all the speakers, and the lowest for Chinese and Portuguese with L1 speakers amounting to more than 90 per cent of all the speakers of these two Einzelsprachen.[3] Russian with its 155 million L1 (native) speakers –

[2] In English it is difficult to express the semantic difference between 'language' as the biological (evolutionary) capacity for speech that does not take plural and is never preceded by an article, on the one hand, and 'a language' as a (cultural, human-constructed) actualization of this capacity, on the other. In the latter case this noun must be preceded by an article and enjoys a plural form. These both radically different meanings are denoted by the same noun 'language', which often leads to confusion. In order to cut on this ambiguity, I use the specialist German term *Einzelsprache* for a language, i.e. one of many.

[3] The rate of de-ethnicization calculated as the ratio of L1 to L2 speakers is not without its problems. For instance, there are no native speakers of standard Arabic, meaning Arab children acquire this standard language at school, *not* in the family and community, where an unstandard-

or 267 million L1 and L2 speakers – fits perfectly into the category of the world's 'big' (pluricentric) languages; its L1 speakers accounting for just over half of all the speakers of this Slavic Einzelsprache. This high rate of de-ethnicization in the case of Russian is not equalled by the other (apart from English and French) aforementioned global languages – that is, Arabic, German or Spanish – with L1 speakers accounting for more than two-thirds of all the speakers of these Einzelsprachen.

German is an official or national language in six states (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and Switzerland), Arabic in 27 polities, while English in as many as 58 countries. On the other hand, Russian is an official or national language in seven states (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), in five de facto states (Abkhazia, Donetsk People's, Lugansk People's Republic, South Ossetia and Transnistria), while considerable Russophone speech communities exist in six countries (Estonia, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Ukraine). What is more, Russian remains an important foreign (second, L2) language of wider communication in at least four further states (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Mongolia).

Language	L1 + L2 speakers	L1 speakers	De-ethnicization: L1 speakers as a percentage of all (L1 + L2) speakers; the smaller the percentage, the greater the de-ethnicization
Chinese	1.09 billion	955 million	90%
English	983 million	360 million	37%

ized Arabic dialect is *always* the medium of everyday communication (Farghaly, 2005, p. 32). From this perspective, one could say that the de-ethnicization rate of Arabic must be 100 per cent. A similar phenomenon takes place in the case of about 382 million speakers of Chinese dialects, who account for over 32 per cent of all the speakers of the Chinese language (Rovira Esteva, 2010, pp. 202–203). Hence, simplistically one could propose that among people who consider themselves to be ethnic Chinese (Han) the de-ethnicization rate of their language stands at 32 per cent; hence, 40 or more per cent of ethnically non-Chinese L2 speakers are taken into consideration. But all these ethnically Arab and ethnically Chinese L2 learners of standard Arabic and standard Chinese, respectively, do not consider these standard languages as 'foreign' or somehow 'not theirs'. So for all practical reasons they are L1 (or maybe L1.5) speakers, whose number does not contribute to the de-ethnicization of the languages in question. Obviously, if speakers of this or that Arabic or Chinese dialect decided to gain full-fledged literacy only in it without bothering to master the prescribed standard language, then they would have to be subtracted from the totals of L1 speakers of these two languages. As a result, such a dialect would become an ethnic language in its own right, which is the case of Maltese. This language is a standardized variety of the Maghrebi (Libyan and Tunisian) dialect of Arabic. Obviously, the Maltese do not learn standard Arabic as their national (ethnic, standard) language.

Spanish	527 million	405 million	77%
Arabic	422 million	295 million	70%
Russian	**267 million**	**155 million**	**58%**
Portuguese	229 million	215 million	94%
French	229 million	76 million	33%
German	129 million	92 million	71%

Fig 1. Number of speakers of the world's pluricentric ('big') languages, as contrasted with Russian.

Hence, Russian is widely employed in writing, speech, the mass media, administration, publishing and education in at least 22 polities from the Far East to the Middle East, and from Eastern Europe to Central Asia. This metrics places the language close to Arabic, and well ahead of German. Russian is a middling world language, in terms of its speakers, 'bigger' than German but 'smaller' than English or Spanish, roughly on a par with Portuguese. However, Russian is much more de-ethnicized than German and Spanish, let alone Portuguese. Strangely, with the pronounced *exception* of Russian, *all* of the aforementioned world languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, German, French, Portuguese or Spanish) are construed as comprising somewhat differing state-specific varieties. Nowadays, computer users may choose their preferred (state) variety of a given world language from the software menu. Russian, however, is the sole world language that is construed as a homogenous and unitary entity, officially with *no* diverging state or ethnic varieties. The situation seems to be like that because Russia and other post-Soviet states concur with Moscow's highly ideologized insistence that speaking Russian as a first language is the sure sign that a person belongs to the Russian nation, despite the fact that at present she or he may be a citizen of numerous other countries than Russia. This Moscow-led Russophone aspiration to national and linguistic unity and homogeneity – so typical of ethnolinguistic nation-states in Central Europe – is *un*heard of among states that employ other world languages for official and educational purposes.

Language	Official and/or national in the following countries	Number
Arabic	Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Sahrawi Republic (Western Sahara), Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania (Zanzibar), Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen	27

English	Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cook Islands, Dominica, Federated States of Micronesia, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, India, Ireland, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Namibia, Nauru, New Zealand, Nigeria, Niue, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States, Vanuatu, Zambia, Zimbabwe	58
German	Austria, Belgium, Germany, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Switzerland	6
Russian	**Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan**	**7**

Fig 2. Russian, and selected 'world languages' as states' official or national languages

Monocentric Russian: Contradictions

After the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, almost a seamless and rarely commented ideological transition took place between the Soviet (Marxist-Leninist) theory of the pending merger (*zblizhenie*) and eventual unification (*sliianie*) of all the Soviet peoples (nationalities) into a classless Soviet communist people or nation (*narod*), on the one hand, and the Russkii Mir ('Russian World') ideology, on the other. The proposed unification of the multiethnic population into a 'post-ethnic' Soviet people, in the former case, was to be achieved through the adoption of Russian as their language of 'interethnic communication' by all the Soviet peoples who then would become a singular unified classless Soviet communist *narod* (Beloded et al., 1976; Dzyuba, 1974; Kondakov, 1976; Kuzeev, 1971). Similarly, the Russkii Mir ideology proposes that *all* communities of (native) speakers of Russian (despite the different states of their residence or birth) constitute inalienable parts of the same borderless single and homogenous (Pan- or Great) Russian nation, thus making Russian the sole *monocentric* large language of 'international communication' (V. N. Ivanov & Sergeev, 2008, p. 42; Lobodanov, 2015). Tellingly, in Russian the Soviet term 'interethnic communication' is exactly the same as the Russkii Mir term 'international

communication', namely, *mezhnatsional'noe obshcheniie*.[4] The potential for multi-variant translations and interpretations of this concept for a variety of ideological purposes is heightened by the fact that in the Russian language the very term 'Russian' is expressed with two distinctive adjectives, namely *Russkii* and *Rossiiskii*. The former means 'ethnically Russian and (at least in culture) Orthodox', while the latter 'Russian in the sense of being a citizen of Russia, despite any non-*Russkii* ethnic origin' (Kamusella, 2012). The Russkii Mir ideology expands the latter meaning (*Rossiiskii*) to all *Russkii* and non-*Russkii* (native) Russian-speakers, living outside today's Russia, especially after the 2014 Duma act that offers fast-track Russian citizenship to all (native) Russian-speakers ("Gosduma", 2014). In Russian such a (native) Russian-speaker is often denoted with the collocation *russkoiazychny sootechestvennik*, literally 'Russian-speaking compatriot'. In the current legal sense, as employed in the Russian Federation, the term *sootechestvennik* ('compatriot') means 'all former Soviet citizens and their descendants'. Importantly, with the removal of the term 'Soviet' (*Sovietskii*) from present-day Russian law, it was firmly replaced with the adjective *Rossiisskii*, rather than *Russkii* ("Sootechestvenniki", 2017).

Soviet term		Post-1991 Russian term	English translation
natsiia			nation {group of people; *not* a state}
natsionalnost'	{the state of an ethnic group, belonging to nation}		nationality {the state of belonging to a nation [i.e. group of people, *not* state]; {*not* citizenship}],

[4] The semantic fields of the Russian terms *narod* ('people') and *natsia* ('nation') are further blurred by derived collocations, names of organizations and concepts of political science. The United Nations Organization is literally translated into Russian as the *Organizatsiia Ob"edinenykh Natsii*. However, the collocation 'international relations' is denoted in Russian as *mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia*. Both English collocations share the same term 'nation' as a synonym for the word 'state'. Although in the Russian counterparts also 'state' is intended, this meaning is variously denoted by two different words *natsiia* and *narod*, which in common usage denote 'nation' (i.e. a group of people united by a shared language) or 'people', *never* 'state.' The compound noun *mezhgosudarstvennyi* ('interstate') with the word *gosudarstvo* ('state') featuring in it is rare, appearing in the collocation *mezhgosudarstvennyia organizatsiia* ('international organization'), though usually the term *mezhdunarodnyia organizatsiia* is preferred.

Terminological confusion or polyvalence is quite useful for conferring a veneer of ideological coherence onto the necessarily mixed bag of (neo-)imperial policies that apply different standards and seek different outcomes in the case of similar groups of population (nations, ethnic groups, or nationalities), especially if such groups in question live in distant corners of a geographically vast empire and of its sphere of influence.

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2"></td><td rowspan="2">{developed, meaning ‘industrialized, bourgeois’ ethnic group / nation in the SU}</td><td>increasingly synonymous with narodnost’, meaning an ethnic group or nation {with no right to statehood}</td><td>nationality {ethnic group [not nation] with no right to statehood}</td></tr>
<tr><td>increasingly ‘citizenship’ by parallel with the English use of ‘nationality’</td><td>nationality in the meaning of citizenship</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3" rowspan="2">mezhnatsional’ny</td><td>interethnic {between ethnic groups}, Soviet period;</td></tr>
<tr><td>international {between states, including post-Soviet states}, after 1991</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Organizatsiia Ob”edinenykh Natsii</td><td>United Nations {an organization of states}</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3" rowspan="2">Narod</td><td>nation {group of people, not state}</td></tr>
<tr><td>a people</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">narodnost’</td><td>ethnic group,</td><td rowspan="2">nation {with no right to statehood}</td><td rowspan="2">nationality {group of people [not nation] with no right to statehood}</td></tr>
<tr><td>{underdeveloped, meaning ‘agricultural, feudal’ ethnic group / nation in the SU}</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia</td><td>international relations {between states}</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Russkii {ethnic Russians, i.e. [culturally] Orthodox Slavophones}</td><td rowspan="2">Russian</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Rossiiskii = Sovietskii [Soviet] {all Soviet citizens, despite their different ethnic [linguistic, confessional, racial and other] origin}</td><td>Rossiiskii = russkoiazychny sootechestvennik [Russian-speaking compatriot] {all native Russian-speakers, former Soviet citizens and their descendants in all the post-Soviet states and Israel}</td></tr>
</table>

Gosudarstvo	state
Grazhdanstvo	citizenship [in English usually expressed by the term 'nationality']

Fig 3. Comparison of the semantic fields of selected Soviet, Russian and English political terms.

Linguistic Monocentrism in the Service of Russian Neo-Imperialism?

In the context of Russia's continuing ideological and military attack on Ukraine since 2014, it is important to remember that the discussion on the dichotomy of *Russkii* and *Rossiiskii* is not an internal Russian matter.[5] The adjective *Russkii* is derived from the adjectival form of the name of the medieval polity of Rus', nowadays usually known under the scholarly name of Kyivan Rus', because its capital was located in Kyiv. At present this city serves as the capital of Ukraine. In Greek, which was the official language of the (East) Roman ('Byzantine') Empire, Rus' was known as *Ros*. Because Constantinople was then the centre of the Orthodox Christian world, Greek was seen as the language of the highest cultural and political prestige in Orthodox Muscovy. When in 1547 the Grand Duke of Muscovy adopted the title of tsar ('king' or 'emperor'), the polity's name was changed to *Rosia* in official (Church) Slavonic, in line with the prestigious Greek usage. Meanwhile, the original term Rus' (or *Ruś* in Polish) was used to refer to the western half of the original Rus' lands that found themselves in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Likewise, the vernacular Slavic official language of the Commonwealth's Grand Duchy of Lithuania (in four-fifths composed of the Rus' lands) was named *Ruski* (Ruthenian in English, as filtered through Latin; cf. Cigogna, 1606, p. 435) in this language and Polish, and later also *Rus'ki(i)* in Ruthenian. This linguonym was derived directly from the name of Rus'. In 1721, Peter the Great changed his realm's name to *Rossiiskaia Imperiia*. In this collocation the Greek in its origin Slavic term *Rosia* for Rus' was paired with the Latin (Western European) word *Imperium* for 'empire', rendered in Cyrillic-based Slavic transcription as *Imperiia*. When the codification of the Russian language on the Western European model commenced in the 18th century with an eye to removing (Church) Slavonic from official use in the state administration, this language became known as *Rossiiskii* in Russian; this linguonym derived from the state's name

[5] I thank Professor Leonid Zashkilnyak, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, for a timely reminder on the importance of this issue for the discussion of state-specific varieties of the Russian language.

of *Rossiia*. In the Rus' lands in Poland-Lithuania, the employment of the terms Rus' and *Rus'kii* in Ruthenian and *Ruś* and *Ruski* in Polish continued. After the partitions of Poland-Lithuania in the late 18th century, both terms were preserved in the Rus' lands that found themselves in the Austrian and Russian partition zones. However, in the latter partition zone, following the 1830-1831 uprising of the Polish-Lithuanian nobility against the tsar, Polish was replaced with Russian as the region's official language during the latter half of the 1830s. Ostensibly, the law of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was employed to justify this decision, because the polity's 16th-century code of law, namely the Lithuanian Statute, specified *Rus'kii* as the Grand Duchy's official language. Furthermore, in official Russian administrative practice the Russian name of the Russian language was gradually changed between the mid-1830s and mid-1840s from *Rossiiskii* to *Russkii* in order to emphasize the ideologically sought equation between the Grand Duchy's then still prestigious Ruthenian language and Russia's upcoming *Rossiiskii* language. The subsequent conflation of the linguonym *Rus'kii* with *Rossiiskii*, yielded the form *Russkii* as the Russian name of the Russian language, i.e. the palatalization [‘] was dropped and the [s] in *Rus'kii* was doubled in line with Russian phonemic and spelling patterns. As a result, the correspondence between the name of the state and its language was decisively *de*coupled. To this day Russia remains *Rossiia* in Russian, but the name of the country's official language is *Russkii*. On the other hand, within the boundaries of the Russian Empire the speech of Ruthenian-speakers in what today is Belarus and central and eastern Ukraine became known in official Russian terminology as 'dialects' (*narecha*). The *nareche* of the area corresponding to present-day Belarus was dubbed *Belorusskii* ('White Russian'), and that of Russia's Ukrainian lands as *Maloros(s)iis'kii*, *Maloru(s)s'kii* ('Little Russian'), or even *Ros(s)iis'kii*. In reciprocation Belarusian-speaking national activists sometimes referred to the Russian language as *Maskal'ska* (Muscovian), while their Ukrainian counterparts as *Moskovs'ka* (Muscovian). In today's Belarusian, Russian is known as *Raseiskaia*, and as *Rosiis'ka* in present-day Ukrainian. Hence, in the wake of the change of the Russian name of the Russian language from *Rossiiskii* to *Russkii*, the former linguonym was partly adopted for referring to (Little) Ruthenian (today's Ukrainian) within the Russian Empire, while Ruthenian-speakers and their present-day descendants (that is, Belarusian- and Ukrainian-speakers) have consistently continued to refer to Russian with the linguonym *Rossiiskii*, as modified in line with the phonemic and spelling standards of Belarusian and Ukrainian. The same is true of former Poland-Lithuania's main official language, Polish, in which Russian was known as *Rossyjski(j)* in the 19th century, before the modern term *Rosyjski* was codified. The *Rossiiskii*-based correspondence

between the names of Russia and the Russian language is maintained in Belarusian, Polish and Ukrainian, the country being known, respectively, as *Raseia*, *Rosja* and *Rosiia*. Hence, in the cultural memory preserved in the Slavic Einzelsprachen of former Poland-Lithuania the name of Russia and its official language are still *Rossiia* and *Rossiiskii*, while the terms Rus' and Rus'an (*Ruski*) are reserved for medieval Rus' and former Poland-Lithuania's Rus' lands, nowadays located mostly in Belarus, eastern Poland and Ukraine. At the turn of the 20th century Ukrainian national activists adopted the novel name of 'Ukrainian' (*Ukrains'ka* in Ukrainian) in order to clearly distinguish it at the terminological level from Russian.[6] Another reason for this change was that in Austria-Hungary's Galicia Ukrainian was officially known as (Little) Ruthenian (*Ruthenisch* in German, *Ruski* or *Rusiński* in Polish, and *Rus(')ki(i)* in Ukrainian) and as Little Russian (*Malorossiis'kii*) in Russia, so the single linguonym of Ukrainian as designed for both varieties usefully emphasized that the variously named Ukrainian language was (to be) a single national Einzelsprache of the Ukrainian nation-in-making. The choice of the name of Ukrainian was set in stone in the Soviet Union, where full correspondence was introduced between the name of the language (Ukrainian), the nation (Ukrainians) and their homeland (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic). The now obsolete ethnonym *Rusini* for the Ukrainians and *Rusiński* for their language survived in interwar Poland *against* the Ukrainians' heartfelt wishes. Warsaw used these names, first of all, for differentiating Ukrainians living in Poland from those in the Soviet Union, and also for the sake of forced Polonization of the country's largest minority of five million. Nowadays, when the Russo-Ukrainian war continues, it is not uncommon to hear an opinion in Ukraine that the rulers of Russia (*Rossiia*) unilaterally appropriated the name *Russkii* for denoting their country's language and nation (both formerly known as *Rossiiskii*), though originally this ethnonym and linguonym had been the name of the

[6] This change commenced in the mid-1870s in Austria-Hungary's Galicia. Publishers and historians (importantly Volodymyr Anronovych and Mykhailo Hrushevsky) began to use the double-barrelled adjective Ukrainian-Rus'an (*Ukrains'ko-Rus'kyi*) in opposition to the Russian imperial term 'Great Russian' in order to stress the ethnolinguistic separateness of Ruthenians/Little Russians vis-à-vis the *Velikorusskii* (Great Russians). The traditional ethno-adjective (i.e. linguonym or ethnonym) *Rus'kyi*, often rendered as *Russkii* in Russian spelling, was insufficient, because to most it suggested the ethnolinguistic sameness of the Ukrainians and the Russians, given the aforementioned 1830s change in the Russian name of the Russian language from *Rossiiskii* to *Russkii*. *Rus'ko-Ukrainskyi* was an alternative rendering of this double-barrelled neologism. Slavists in Austria-Hungary began to use the linguonym 'Ukrainian' in preference to Little Russian or Ruthenian already in 1915. Finally, with the founding of Ukraine as a state in 1917, this double-barrelled ethno-adjective was firmly replaced with the single term 'Ukrainian' for denoting the Ukrainian language, nation and state in line with the normative isomorphic principle of Central Europe's ethnolinguistic nationalism (Farion, 2015, pp. 217–218; Halushko, 2016, pp. 16–17; Wendland, 2011, p. 412).

Ukrainians (*Rusini*) and their language (*Ruski*) (Farion, 2015, pp. 185–200, 210–216; "Historyia", 2018; Kamusella, 2009, p. 177, 2012; "Nastoiashchiĭ russkiĭ", 2012; "Nazva", 2018).

<table>
<tr><td>9th-14th cc</td><td colspan="3">Rus'</td></tr>
<tr><td>Linguonyms</td><td colspan="2">Rus'an in Slavic</td><td>Ros in Greek</td></tr>
<tr><td>14th-18th cc</td><td colspan="2">Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Poland-Lithuania</td><td>Muscovy / Rosia (from 1574) / Rossiiskaia Imperiia (from 1721)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Linguonyms</td><td colspan="2">Rus(')ki(i) in Ruthenian, Ruski in Polish</td><td>Rossiiskii in Russian</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">1795-mid-1830s</td><td rowspan="2">Galicia, Austrian Empire</td><td colspan="2">Rossiiskaia Imperiia</td></tr>
<tr><td>Russian Partition zone</td><td>Muscovian lands</td></tr>
<tr><td>Linguonyms</td><td rowspan="2">Ruthenisch in German</td><td>Rus(')ki(i) in Ruthenian, Ruski in Polish</td><td>Rossiiskii in Russian, Rossyjski(j) in Polish</td></tr>
<tr><td>1840s-1860s</td><td rowspan="2">Maloros(s)iis'kii, Maloru(s)s'kii, Ros(s)iis'kii in Russian</td><td rowspan="2">Russkii and Velikorusskii (Great Russian) in Russian</td></tr>
<tr><td>1870s-1914</td><td>Ruthenisch in German, Ruski or Rusiński in Polish, Rus(')ki(i) in Ukrainian</td></tr>
<tr><td>Great War</td><td>Galicia, Austrian Empire / Ukraine</td><td>Austro-Hungarian and German occupation / Ukraine</td><td>Rossiiskaia Imperiia / Russian Republic (Rossiiskaia Respublika) / Bolshevik Russia (Rossiia)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Linguonyms</td><td colspan="2">Ukrainian (Ukrains'ka in Ukrainian; mostly & increasingly)</td><td>Russkii in Russian, Maskal'ska in Belarusian, Rosyjski in Polish, Moskovs'ka in Ukrainian</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">1922-1939</td><td rowspan="2">Poland</td><td colspan="2">Soviet Union</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ukrainian SSR</td><td rowspan="4">Russkii in Russian (Raseiskaia in Belarusian, Rosiis'ka in Ukrainian)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Linguonyms</td><td>Rusiński in Polish</td><td>Ukrainian (Ukrains'ka)</td></tr>
<tr><td>World War II</td><td colspan="2">German occupation</td></tr>
<tr><td>Linguonyms</td><td colspan="2">Ukrainian (Ukrains'ka)</td></tr>
</table>

1945-1991	Soviet Union	
	Ukrainian SSR	
Linguonyms	Ukrainian (*Ukrains'ka*)	*Russkii* in Russian (*Raseiskaia* in Belarusian, *Rosiis'ka* in Ukrainian)
1991-today	Ukraine	Russian Federation
Linguonyms	Ukrainian (*Ukrains'ka* in Ukrainian, *Ukraiński* in Polish, *Ukrainskii* in Russian)	*Russkii* in Russian

Fig 4. Linguonym Rus(s)ki(i) and Rossiiskii between Rus', Poland-Lithuania, Muscovy, Russian Empire, Austria-Hungary, Poland, the Soviet Union, Ukraine and the Russian Federation (thus far).

The entailed tacit threat of a steel fist of hard military power (i.e. the Russian army and Russia's 1990s 'hard' geopolitical concept of 'near abroad') in the kid glove of the soft power of culture (as embodied by the Russkii Mir ideology) is that the Kremlin reserves for itself the right of intervention in areas and states where large Russophone communities exist, should a 'host country' act, from Moscow's perspective, against the interests of such a community or of Russia itself. These Russian-speaking communities are construed as inalienable parts of the single and indivisible speech community of the Russian language, nowadays defined as the Russian nation in light of the neo-imperial and ethnolinguistic ideology of Russkii Mir that builds on the earlier post-Soviet concept of Russia's 'near abroad' (Il'inskiĭ, 2010, p. 36). All the members of the Russian speech community are imagined as speaking the very same monocentric (unitary) Russian language, despite living in different states with their specific and often vastly different social, political, economic, ethnic, linguistic and other realities of everyday life. For now this thinly veiled threat – cloaked in the veneer of the presumed soft power of the Russkii Mir ideology – works rather well at keeping the cultural, linguistic, social and economic unity of the Kremlin-postulated 'Russian World' (Russkii Mir) with Russia as its cultural, political, economic and decisional centre. The sharp edge of this threat is either sweetened with cheap oil and gas (as in the case of Belarus), or put to work when Russian troops are dispatched to attack a 'misbehaving' country, be it Moldova in 1992, Georgia in 2008, or currently Ukraine. From the perspective of the Russkii Mir ideology such countries may appear to be 'stranded' or 'unjustifiably secessionist' regions of 'real

Russia', equated with the Soviet Union or even with the Russian Empire (cf. Baburin, 2013; Panteleev, 2008; "Putin", 2005).

Official / national language	Official / national language in de facto states	States with considerable Russophone speech communities	Language of wider communication
Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan [7]	Abkhazia, Donetsk People's Republic, Lugansk People's Republic, South Ossetia, Transnistria [5]	Estonia, *Israel*, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Ukraine [6]	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, *Mongolia* [4]

Fig 5. Use of Russian worldwide (*italicization* denotes states that were never part of the Soviet Union).

For better or worse, Russian is construed as a monocentric language, with the Russian Academy of Sciences in the Russian capital of Moscow as the language's sole controlling institution. This insistence on the monocentric (unitary) character of Russian is a direct legacy of Central Europe's ethnolinguistic nationalism which equates languages with nations and states (i.e. the normative isomorphism of language, nation and state). To a degree, this ideology only appears to stand at variance with the present-day Russian Federation's neo-imperial programme. But in reality the Kremlin's concept of the 'Russian World' has quite successfully married Moscow's territorial ambitions of regaining some parts of the Soviet Union that – in Moscow's view – post-Soviet Russia lost 'unjustifiably' (for instance, Crimea or Transnistria) with the idea of an ethnolinguistically defined Russian nation, which is spatially bigger than the territory of the present-day Russian Federation. And the Russian nation re-imagined in such a manner keeps 'growing' in spatial terms, so that a 'big chunk' of it now resides in Israel, potentially giving the Kremlin an 'ideologically justified' foothold in the Middle East.

Interestingly, not much attention seems to be paid – either in Russia or elsewhere – to the fact that this recent push for the ethnolinguistic definition of the Russian nation within the framework of the ideology of the 'Russian World' may be harmful to the social cohesion and eventually to the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation itself (cf. Marusenko, 2015,

pp. 154–170). In the country's autonomous republics at least 26 languages are employed in an official capacity (Abaza, Adyghe, Altai, Bashkir, Buryat, Chechen, Cherkess, Chuvash, Crimean Tatar, Erzya, Ingush, Kabardian, Kalmyk, Karachay-Balkar, Khakas, Komi, Hill Mari, Meadow Mari, Moksha, Nogai, Ossetic, Tatar, Tuvan, Udmurt, Ukrainian and Yakut) ("Languages of Russia", 2017). This fact is rarely commented, because the multiplicity of Russia's official languages is given a semblance of scriptural homogeneity following the Duma's 2002 decision that all of Russia's official languages native to the country's territory must be written in Cyrillic (Faller, 2011, pp. 132–133). In turn, this script is popularly construed as the 'Russian alphabet' and often equated with the Russian language itself (Ponomareva, 2002), Russia, and nowadays, with the 'Russian world' (cf. Bukarskiĭ, 2016, p. 610). However, from the perspective of ethnolinguistic nationalism, each of these aforementioned 26 speech communities may potentially leave the Rossiiskii cultural-cum-political commonality, redefine itself as an independent nation, and even demand full independence for their republic, thus recast as an indipendent nation-state (cf. Marusenko, 2015, pp. 171–201). Actually, that was exactly what the Chechens did during the 1990s. In reply to the Chechens' demand of national self-determination for their nation and of independence for their national republic, the Kremlin visited on them the two horrific Russo-Chechen wars (1994-1996, 1999-2000). This military conflict seriously destabilized Russia and its economy, and cost the lives of a fifth of Chechnya's population. It was a clear act of genocide that after 2001 was conveniently forgotten by the international community when Russia joined Washington's campaign of 'global war on terror' (Abumuslimov, 1995; Gilligan, 2010; Zherebtsova, 2014).

World Russians?

When different countries use the same language of worldwide communication they do not see their populations as constituting a single nation. Usually, it is the political boundaries of the states, their histories and the desires of their specific bodies politic that decide what a nation is or should be, not the mere accident of a language. When the same word in states sharing a single language is pronounced or spelled differently, this fact does *not* constitute any political or ideological scandal, and such an occurrence may *not* amount to a reason for diplomatic, let alone military intervention, unlike in the case of ethnolinguistic nation-states. The *de*scriptive principle of usage-based correctness is not applied at the level of the entire language (which again, on the contrary, is the very case of

Central Europe's monocentric languages run in a *pre*scriptive manner in the region's ethnolinguistically defined and legitimized nation-states), but on the plane of the use which is typical for the speakers of the language in question in a given state (that is, one of many). A language of this type is pluricentric, i.e. with many centres of use, identified with different states where this language is employed in an official capacity. A specific spelling or pronunciation may be correct in country A, but incorrect in country B, or just second best in country C (Clyne, 1992; Clyne & Kipp, 1999; Muhr, 2016a, 2016b; Muhr & Marley, 2015).

Arabic, English or German are such pluricentric languages. 'Theater' is correct in US ('American') English, but incorrect in British English, where the word is spelled 'theatre'. 'Wee' is a Scotticism in England's English, but a typical synonym for the adjective 'small' in Scottish English. 'You' is the singular second person and plural second person pronoun in British English, but only the former in Irish English, whereas the latter meaning is expressed in Irish English with the separate word of 'yous'. When a pluricentric language is shared by many countries, it means that such a language becomes de-ethnicized; it ceases being a marker of one's belonging to a nation or being a citizen of state X. *Atypically*, Russian is the only 'big' language of worldwide communication shared by numerous countries which (as yet?) is considered *not* to be pluricentric or de-ethnicized. But having recognized the sociolinguistic dynamics of this plural reality of 'world Russians' on the ground, it is possible to reimagine monocentric Russian as a pluricentric language. It is no news with regard to the English language that continues to exist as a single Einzelsprache, despite the widely accepted and well-established acknowledgement of the existence of 'world Englishes' in the plural (cf. Hopkins, Decker, & McKenny, 2013).

On the ideological grounds of the Russkii Mir ideology, Moscow may disagree to such a change in the perception of the Russian language, but in this modern world of sovereign nation-states, Russia's consent in this regard is not of essence. Countries where Russian is employed for official purposes or where substantial Russophone communities live, may unilaterally recognize the territorial and cultural specificity of the countries' respective Russian*s*, i.e. Russian language*s* in the plural. Nowadays in computer menus one can select from many state-specific varieties of English as an input language. The same is also true of Arabic or German. But obviously not so in the case of the Russian language, which features in these menus as a single option with *no* state-specific variants available.

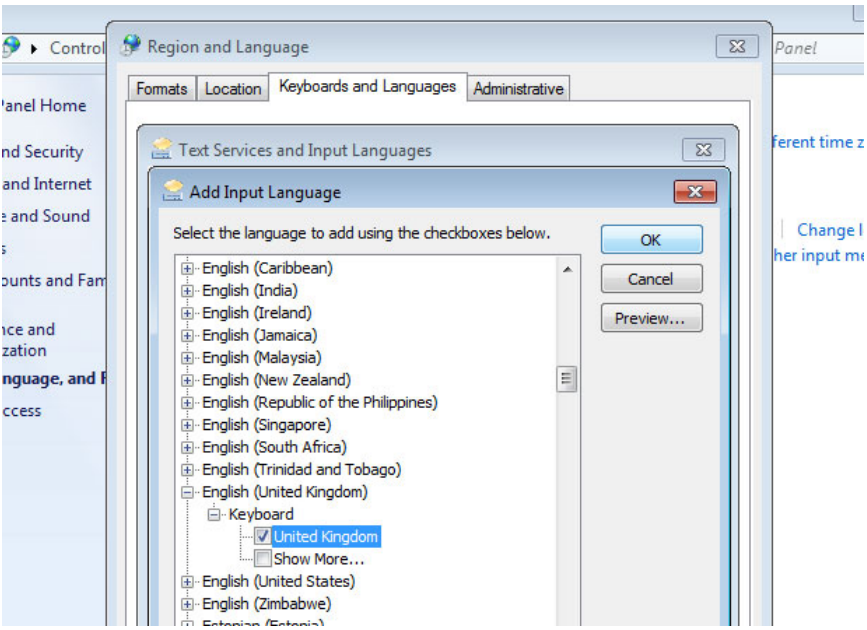

Fig 6. Screenshot with a computer menu indicating different country-specific Englishes as input languages.

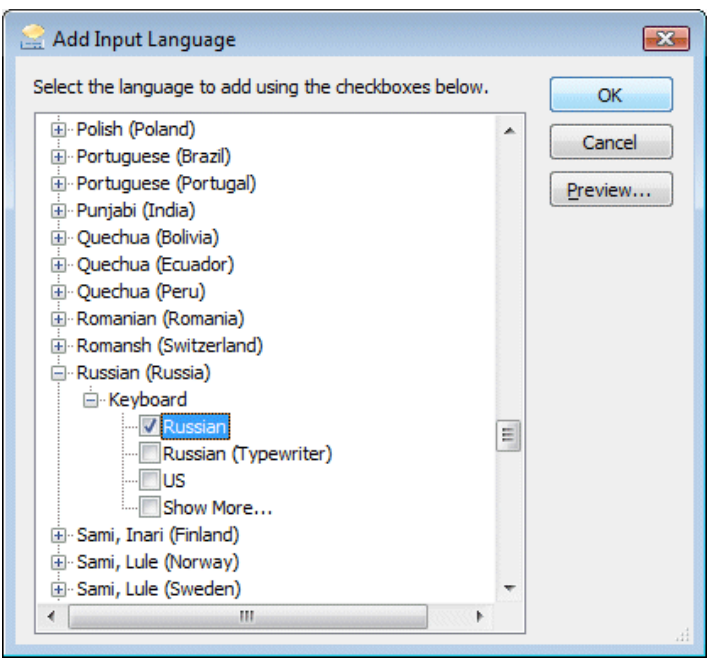

Fig 7. Screenshot with a computer menu indicating that Russian is treated as a single monocentric input language with no country-specific variants.

Computers, software and computer menus are human-made, products of human will and ingenuity, like nations, states and languages themselves. *None* of these above enumerated artefacts exist in nature, i.e. independently of human will. Thus, should people and governments in the countries where Russian is employed for official and other purposes decide so, they may compile dictionaries and grammars of their own state-specific Russian languages, be it Abkhazian Russian, Belarusian Russian, Estonian Russian, Kyrgyzstani Russian, Lithuanian Russian, Mongolian Russian, Turkmen Russian, or Ukrainian Russian. The difference vis-à-vis Russia's Russian does not need to be substantial. At best it should reflect the actual difference in usage that exists among the states where Russian is either widespread in everyday communication or employed in official use. Typically, this difference can be anything between 20 and 100 to 300 odd words and phrases pertaining to the institutional and cultural specificity of a given state, which is the case, for example, of Austrian or Swiss German when contrasted with Germany's German. Certainly, should such a need arise the difference may be acknowledged (cherished) more emphatically or even actively deepened by extending it to pronunciation, spelling or syntax as, for example, in the case of Indian English vis-à-vis American English. The decision, however, should belong solely to the population concerned in a given country where Russian is of import, *not* to Russia. London never leans on Delhi or Washington that in Indian English or US English they ought to accept this or that 'correct' spelling of a word, as employed in British English (Rusiecki, 1994). Such an intervention would be at best laughed at, but not so in the case of Russian, where in this age of the flourishing Russkii Mir ideology, Moscow may choose to address a 'politically significant linguistic matter' of this kind by exerting political or even economic pressure on a 'culprit state' guilty of 'ruining our Russian language'.

Should Abkhazian Russian, Belarusian Russian, Estonian Russian, Kyrgyzstani Russian, Lithuanian Russian, Mongolian Russian, Turkmen Russian, or Ukrainian Russian be seriously considered and introduced into educational and administrative use, alongside books and newspapers, certainly computer and software providers would swiftly reply in kind, in spite of any reservations that Moscow might raise in this regard. Dropdown menus with country-specific Russians would materialize in no time, for instance:

- Russian (Armenia)
- Russian (Azerbaijan)
- Russian (Belarus)
- Russian (Estonia)
- Russian (Finland)

- Russian (Georgia)
- Russian (Israel)
- Russian (Kazakhstan)
- Russian (Kyrgyzstan)
- Russian (Latvia)
- Russian (Lithuania)
- Russian (Lithuania)
- Russian (Moldova)
- Russian (Mongolia)
- Russian (Russian Federation)
- Russian (Turkmenistan)
- Russian (Ukraine)
- Russian (Uzbekistan)

And why not? Some would say 'impossible', because neither Russia nor Russophones outside the Russian Federation want such a development. But don't they, or maybe it is the over-advertised neo-imperial Russkii Mir discourse on the monolithic unity and homogeneity of Russian language, culture, statehood, geopolitics or even 'destiny' that effectively overshadows a vibrant discussion on world Russian*s* that has developed since the turn of the 1980s?

Between Dialect and State Variety

In the Soviet Union the discussion on the use of Russian quite clearly distinguished two lines of research on the language's areal differentiation. The traditional one focused on the dialects of the Russian language seen as coterminous with the historical ethnolinguistic territory of the (Great) Russian (i.e. *Russkii*) nation, extending from Pskov and Smolensk in the west (or Russia's present-day western frontier with Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Belarus) to Nizhny Novgorod and Voronezh in the east (or the former boundary between Rus' and the Golden Horde), and from Karelia in the north (or the former northernmost reaches of the Novgorod Republic) to Belgorod in the south (or today's Russian-Ukrainian border). Importantly, the region of St Petersburg is *not* included in the traditional territory of the Russian dialects, because Muscovy only seized this Ugro-Finnic-speaking region of Ingria from Sweden at the turn of the 18th century. St Petersburg began to be built there in 1703, and nine years later the Muscovian (Russian) capital was moved to this new city on the Baltic littoral (Avanesov & Orlova, 1964; "Map", 1964/2018). In the Soviet thinking on Russian, Ingria and other parts of the former Russian Empire were seen through the prism of

the discipline of philology[7] (linguistics) as areas where Russian language was brought during the modern period, in the course of the imperial extension from the aforementioned traditional (*Russkii*) area of the Russian dialects. Hence, new imperial and post-imperial forms of Russian in this imperial-cum-Soviet-cum-post-Soviet space are seen more as 'territorial variants' (*territorial'nyi variant*) – i.e. varieties – of the language than its dialects. In contrast to the *Russkii* area of the Russian dialects, the imperial space of the Russian territorial variants is seen as *Rossiiskii* in its character. The imperial venture gradually detached the Russian language from its traditional *Russkii* ethnocultural territorial core, associated with Muscovy's Orthodox Slavophone population, and imposed it on ethnically and religiously diversified population(s) of the *Rossiiskii* empire. In a nutshell, that was the way in which Russian was de-ethnicized and became a large language of international communication. The building of the Russian Empire also impacted on the change in the very Russian name of the Russian language. It was known as *Rossiiskii* until the 1830s, and afterward it was changed to *Russkii*. However, until the Bolshevik Revolution the imperial character of the Russian language was emphasized by the official term *Velikorusskii* ('Great Russian') language. In addition, this concept retroactively extended the traditional dialectal area of the (Great) Russian language to Belarus and Ukraine, or the former lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (i.e. the eastern half of Poland-Lithuania), erased from the political map of Europe in the late 18th century, jointly by Russia, Prussia and the Habsburgs ("Dialektologicheskaia karta", 1914; Kamusella, 2012; Symaniec, 2012)

Research on the *Rossiisskii* (or then synonymously known as 'Soviet') territorial varieties of the Russian language began already in the Soviet Union

[7] In ethnolinguistic nation-states the term 'philology' is often preferred to the expression 'linguistics' in popular and even scholarly use. In other countries the word 'philology' is seen as somewhat obsolete and 'pre-scientific'. For instance, in English since the 1920s the term 'linguist' is decisively more often employed than 'philologist' for denoting a person researching language ("Use of the term 'philologist'", 2018). However, in German the term *Philologe* ('philologist') decisively dominated over *Sprachwissenschaftler* ('linguist') until the mid-1970s, and since then a stable parity between both terms has been reached with only a slight dominance of the latter ("Use of the term *Philologe*", 2018). In Russian, the term *filolog* ('philologist') has consistently dominated over *lingvist* ('linguist') during the last two centuries. A parity between these two terms with a somewhat diminished domination of the term *filolog* was achieved during the Soviet period (1920s-1980s). However, since the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 the term *filolog* has been used *twice* more frequently than its counterpart *lingvist*, which is a clear sign of the growing ideological dominance of ethnolinguistic nationalism in today's Russia ("Use of the term *filolog*", 2018).

Ethnolinguistic nationalists express their loyalty to their nation through the 'love of their national language' (cf Dynak, 1994, p. 42). This sentiment merges perfectly with the literal meaning of the Greek term philology, or 'love of word(s)'. Obviously, the term's 'word(s)' may be interpreted as 'reason', 'scholarship' or 'scholarly discipline', but also as 'love of language'. Unsurprisingly, the last reading is preferred by proponents of ethnolinguistic nationalism (cf. "Instytut", 2018).

(V. V. Ivanov, 1980). Impetus came from among Soviet scholars who probed into the areal (territorial) differentiation of French and German as employed in numerous states. At the turn of the 1990s (post-)Soviet researchers also transplanted the German term *Regiolekt* ('regiolect', 'regional lect', or 'regional language' that is synonymous with the German term *Regionalsprache*) into Russian academese as *regiolekt* ("Regiolekt", 2018; Turbinskiĭ, 1992). The new Russian neologism *regiolekt* is employed as a synonym for the aforementioned Russian term *variant* ("Regional'nye varianty", 2018). When the Soviet Union split, and its former union republics became nation-states in their own right, more often than not copying the Central European model of ethnolinguistic national polity, some proposed that it was high time to speak of 'national varieties' of the Russian language (Rudiakov, 2010; Zhuravleva, 2005), including their codification and standardization for official use in the post-Soviet states (cf. Korngauz, 2013, p. 10). However, other scholars deny this possibility or necessity, claiming that so far no Russophone population living outside Russia has evolved into an ethnolinguistically defined nation that would be (ethnically or otherwise) separate from the Russian nation (Stepanov, 2010). This strain of the discourse also dates back to the Soviet period, when the possibility of other state (national) varieties of the Russian language was a priori denied in favour of the 'imminent coalescence' (*sliianie*) of all the Soviet peoples (*narody*) into a single and unified Soviet communist classless nation or people (*narod*) (Mikhailov, 1988, p. 47). Hence, especially in the Russian Federation during this current age of the Russkii Mir ideology, the old Soviet normative opinion is still rife that there may be only one single and always unified monocentric variety of the Russian language, namely the Russian one: *Russia's Russian*. Many believe that maintaining the monocentric unity of the Russian language – so that it continues to consist of a single variant only – is seen as a geopolitical necessity by present-day Russia's political and intellectual elite (Rudiakov, 2010, pp. 51, 70), including President Vladimir Putin ("Putin", 2016). The Russkii Mir Foundation is strongly opposed to acknowledging (let alone recognizing) different state varieties of the Russian language (Serov, 2017). Such varieties are deemed to be mainly a symptom of the insufficient command of this language or a lack of appropriate care and correctness in usage, which must be ameliorated by improved education ("Lekant", 2015). Others present a more objective approach to the subject, proposing that it will be the users and states concerned who will decide in the future whether varieties of Russian should be seen as regional (territorial) or national (state-specific). The latter case is bound to necessitate official recognition and a given state's support for such a variety, while in the former case any emerging difference would not be recognized (let alone encouraged) in any formal manner (Terkulov, 2012).

Without much acknowledgement of the fact, the previous imperial discussion on the historical dialects and territorial varieties of the Great Russian language seems to underpin the current discourse on the national varieties of Russian. Hence, in the Russian Federation and among pro-Russian scholars there is much normative opposition to recognizing as national the state varieties of Russian in the 'traditional dialect area' of Great Russian, namely the Belarusian, Estonian, Finnish, Kazakhstani, Latvian, Lithuanian, Moldovan and Ukrainian varieties of Russian. At the other end of the spectrum one finds territorial varieties of Russian within Russia but outside the country's historical dialectal area of this language, i.e. in Siberia and the Far East. In literature one can come across information on the Russian varieties of Siberia, the Far East and 'Northern Russia' (meaning Russia's section of Karelia), or of such cities as Ekaterinburg, Kursk, Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod, Novosibirsk, Perm, Rostov, Saratov, St Petersburg, or Vologda (cf. Bukrinskaia & Karamakova, 2012; Oglezneva, 2008; "Regional'nye varianty", 2018). Yet little attention is paid to varieties of Russian within the Russian Federation, let alone to the clear possibility that with time each of the country's current 22 autonomous republics could create and encourage their own specific ethnic (republican or even national) varieties of Russian ("Republics", 2018).

National varieties *within* the dialectal core of Great Russian	National varieties *outside* the dialectal core of Great Russian	Ethnic (potentially national) varieties in Russia's autonomous republics	Territorial (non-ethnic, regional) varieties in Russia, outside the historical dialectal core of Great Russian
Belarusian & Trasianka, Estonian, Finnish, Kazakh (Kazakhstani), Latvian, Lithuanian, Moldovan, *Russian*, Ukrainian & Surzhyk [10]	Armenian, Azeri (Azerbaijani), Georgian, Israeli, Kyrgyz (Kyrgyzstani), *Russian*, Tajik (Tajikistani), Uzbek (Uzbekistani) [8]	Adygea, Altai, Bashkortostan, Buryatia, Chechnya, Chuvashia, *Crimea*,[8] Dagestan, Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Kalmykia, Karachay–Cherkessia, Karelia, Khakassia, Komi, Mari El, Mordovia, North Ossetia–Alania, Sakha, Tatarstan, Tuva, Udmurtia [22]	Ekaterinburg, Far Eastern, Kursk, Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod, Northern Russian, Novosibirsk, Perm, Rostov, Saratov, Siberian, St Petersburg, or Vologda [13 & counting]

Fig 8. Potential state-specific, territorial and ethnic varieties of Russian as a pluricentric language.

Nowadays, the discussion on the varieties of Russian – for better or worse – focuses on the possibility of the existence of the language's state-specific variants, namely in the post-Soviet states. Willy-nilly the developing discourse unfolds in conjunction or in opposition to the Russkii Mir ideology. As mentioned above, this ideology denies any state-specific varieties of Russian, sticking to the monocentric norm of the unitary Russian language. Scholars and some politicians outside Russia for one reason or another are more ready to acknowledge and even espouse the reality of state-specific differences in the use of Russian. The discussion is quite intensive on 'Belarusian Russian' (Dem'ianovich, 2014; Norman, 2010; Sloboda, 2009, p. 22; Zhvalevskiĭ, 2010), 'Estonian Russian' ("Professor", 2016; Strakov, 2016; Zabrodskaja, 2006), 'Latvian Russian' (Berdicevskis, 2014; Bobrikova, 2005; "Nash latyshskiĭ russkiĭ iazyk", 2005), 'Lithuanian Russian' (Avina, 2006; Osipov, 2014; Zverko, 2014), 'Kazakh (Kazakhstani) Russian' (Dzhundubaeva, 2016; Zhumabekova & Mirozoeva, 2015, p. 51; Zhuravleva, 2012), 'Moldovan Russian' ("Lekant", 2015; Serov, 2017; Tudose, 2006), and 'Ukrainian Russian' (Kazdobina, 2017; Pugovskiĭ, 2014; Rudiakov, 2008; Simferopol', 2009; Stepanov, 2013, p. 219), or in other words, on the state-specific varieties within the so-called 'Great Russian' dialectal area. The intensity of this discussion reflects Moscow's increasingly heightened claim to this vast area for the very 'cultural' core of the 'Russian world', and the only to be expected disagreement on the part of the post-Soviet countries concerned to such an outside imposition. This discussion is rounded up with a reflection on 'Russian (i.e. *Russkii* or *Rossiiskii*) Russian' (Berdicevskis, 2014; Mikhailov, 1988, p. 47; Rudiakov, 2010, pp. 51, 70; Terkulov, 2012) and the unexpected phenomenon of 'Israeli Russian' (Elenevskaia & Ovchinnikova, 2015, p. 231; GS, 2011; Nosonovskiĭ, 2017), alongside the sociolinguistic and political status of Surzhyk in Ukraine (Bilaniuk, 2004; Hentschel & Zaprudski, 2008; Hentschel, Taranenko, & Zaprudski, 2014) and of Trasianka in Belarus (Hentschel & Zaprudski, 2008; Hentschel et al., 2014).

Decisively less attention is paid to state-specific varieties in other post-Soviet states with relatively tiny native (L1) Russian-speaking communities living there. Russian is employed in these polities predominantly as a de-ethnicized foreign (second, L2) language of wider communication, nowadays frequently in direct competition with English that fulfils the very same function. The Kremlin does not claim these countries for the cultural-cum-political core of the 'Russian world', their membership in the Russian-led Eurasian Union is deemed sufficient (only Georgia stays away). Hence,

[8] Russia's 2014 military seizure of Crimea from Ukraine is *not* internationally recognized. In light of international law, this Ukrainian territory is under Russian *occupation*.

the populations and elites of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan or Uzbekistan are less interested in discussing or developing, respectively, 'Armenian Russian' (Grigorian, 2006, p. 21; "Lekant", 2015), 'Azeri (Azerbaijani) Russian' (Kaushanskiĭ & Mamedov, 2009; "Novyĭ bakinskiĭ dialekt", 2007), 'Georgian Russian' (Chernorechenski, 2012; Khramov, 2016; "Oteli", 2017), 'Kyrgyz (Kyrgyzstani) Russian'[9] ("Russkiĭ iazyk", 2013), 'Tajik (Tajikistani) Russian' ("Logicheskuiu", 2015), 'Turkmen (Turkmenistani) Russian' (Azymov, Ershova, & Bailiev, 1991), or 'Uzbek (Uzbekistani) Russian' (Avrukinesque, 2007; Shafranskaia, 2009; "Tashkentskiĭ dialekt", 2017). In Russophone literature these state-specific Russians are rarely referred to in these terms, while the older imperial and Soviet usage is preferred, namely, construing the aforesaid varieties as 'Russian dialects' of these polities' capitals. Hence, the Russian dialects of Baku, Yerevan, Tbilisi, Bishkek, Dushanbe, Ashghabat (Aşgabat), or Tashkent (Toshkent).

The Russo-Ukrainian War and the Russian Language Question

This lukewarm approach to the question whether Russian is a monocentric or pluricentric language, whether only Russia has the right to 'own' and control it, or maybe this privilege should be shared at least with all the interested post-Soviet states and Israel, changed decisively in the mid-2010s. This change in attitudes was directly connected with the pro-Russian Viktor Yanukovych (Ianukovych) administration in Ukraine, which attempted to introduce Russian as a co-official language in this country. Many Ukrainians feared that the Belarusian scenario would be repeated. The 1995 introduction of Russian as co-official in Belarus marginalized this country's national and state language of Belarusian, in which now fewer than 10 per cent of book titles are published (Moser, 2014; "Tol'ki 8,5% knig", 2012). Opponents of this policy proposed that instead of according such status to Russian in Ukraine, rather a 'Ukrainian Russian' should be acknowledged and developed as different from Russia's Russian. Scholarly research on the Ukrainian variety of the Russian language commenced in 2008 (Rudiakov, 2008), and at the turn of the 2010s the emergence of Ukrainian Russian became widely recognized as much as it was opposed by proponents of monocentric Russian with its cultural centre in Moscow and St Petersburg ("Aleksandr Rudiakov", 2010).

The discussion on Ukrainian Russian grew even more polarized and

[9] In spite of quite an extensive search to this end, thus far I have not found the Russian-language collocation 'Kyrgyz (Kyrgyzstani) Russian', be it in a printed source or on the web.

divisive in the wake of the 2013-14 (Euromaidan) Revolution of Dignity, which toppled President Yanukovych and thus reversed the process of making Russian a co-official but de facto the dominant language of Ukraine. The balance of public opinion in favour of Ukrainian Russian was tipped decisively by Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea and the Russian attack in the same year on eastern Ukraine that produced the de facto polities of the Donetsk People's Republic and the Lugansk (Luhansk) People's Republic. The Russo-Ukrainian War rages to this day (2018). Most consented that a Ukrainian standard of the Russian language must be adopted through a law in Ukraine and should be developed separately from Russia's Russian (Bielokobyl's'ky*ĭ*, 2016; Grabovski*ĭ*, 2016; Hrabovs'kyĭ, 2016; Koshman, 2014; "Neobkhodimo", 2014). Already in 2015 a petition to this end was submitted to the Office of the President of Ukraine (Mel'nyk, 2015). Many Russophones, despite their loyalty to the Ukrainian nation, began to fear that in a single generation Russian would become a 'kitchen language' in Ukraine (perhaps in this manner tacitly acknowledging that this is the unenviable position of Ukrainian as a minority language in today's Russia) (Gusev, 2017). The discourse on the status of the Ukrainian language and Ukrainian Russian became politicized to the point of the ideological denigration of the Russian language. For instance, it was proposed that the Ukrainian language was older than the Russian language ("Ukraïns'ka mova", 2017), that Russian actually originated from Ukrainian (equated with Rus'an) ("Ukraïns'ke pokhodzhennia", 2015), and that Russian was nothing more but a 'distorted dialect' of the Ukrainian language (Ptashka, 2015). Finally, such emotional flare-ups gave way to more balanced views. For example, some maintain – quite sensibly – that neither Russian is a dialect of Ukrainian, nor Ukrainian a dialect of Russian. The Ukrainians and the Russians are separate nations in their own right, and as such they also have the inalienable right to their own separate languages of equal status as national and official Einzelsprachen, including Ukrainian Russian in Ukraine and Russian Russian in the Russian Federation (Lypchans'kyĭ, 2017). On a more worrying note, after so much heated discussion on the subject, *no* legislation on Ukrainian Russian has been adopted to this day (2018), nor has any grammar or dictionary of Ukrainian Russian been produced yet. Hence, all the intensive discourse is back to square one. This retreat does not augur well for overhauling Russian as employed outside the territory of the Russian Federation into an officially acknowledged pluricentric language. If Ukraine under Russia's continuing military attack does not dare, or its officials have no sufficient foresight, to press on with this sociolinguistic-cum-political change, none of the other post-Soviet states seems to be more ready to follow this path, either.

The codifiers and official (academic and state) controllers of both Ukrainian and Russian draw on the very same North Slavic dialect continuum shared with other nation-states' official languages, i.e. Belarusian, Czech, Polish and Slovak. Ideologies, scholarly concepts and theories, alongside political decisions – in other words 'filters-cum-shapers' – may be employed for dissecting a given chunk of a dialect continuum in a myriad of ways; the limit is the very boundaries of human imagination. Divisions imposed on a section of a dialect continuum (usually overlapping with the territory of an extant polity) are not set in stone, let alone provided by nature or any god. Each of these divisions is a result of a human decision (conscious or not), as carried out and maintained by a concerned human group, nowadays usually construed as a state (or a nation in its own state). The application of a certain 'filter-cum-shaper' for delimiting a fragment of a dialect continuum for the sake of creating an Einzelsprache may be a neutral act, not contested by neighbouring human groups (i.e. states or speech communities, the latter often equated with nations in Central Europe). However, under different circumstances, it can be also an offensive act for the purpose of 'justifying' – for instance, in line with the political logic of ethnolinguistic nationalism – why a given language 'is not a language' at all, but 'a mere dialect' of the national and official Einzelsprache of this nation-state that has launched such an ideological onslaught of 'linguistic' character. An example of an 'epistemic' attack of this type is the still widespread and persistent Russian idea that Belarusian and Ukrainian are 'dialects' of the (Great) Russian language.

Conventionally, language – its use for products of culture (fiction, theatre, or the mass media) or as a medium of education – is considered an instrument of 'soft power' (Nye, 2004). But as it could be observed in Ukraine, the Yanukovych regime's arbitrary course of giving more berth to the official use of Russian in the country directly contributed to the growing grassroots opposition that culminated in bloody repressions. In turn, the 2013/2014 Revolution of Dignity broke out and subsequently toppled the delegitimized Yanukovych administration. The laws that boosted the official status of Russian in Ukraine were rescinded. This example proves that language may also be employed as a weapon in the arsenal of 'hard power', once again the only limit in this regard is the human mind's capacity for imagining and generating the social reality (cf. Kowalski, 2015). The traditional cultural organizations of former imperial powers, such as the British Council, Goethe Institut, Alliance Française, or the Instituto Cervantes traditionally were seen as a rather benign expression of the respective countries' soft power (Nye, 2004, pp. 108–109), although some saw them as instruments of cultural or linguistic

imperialism (cf. Phillipson, 1992; Thierfelder, 1940; Tomlinson, 1991). Branches of these organizations spread all over the world ostensibly to teach the former imperial languages of power and imperialism, now recast as languages of culture, cooperation and global-wide communication. Until recently insufficient attention has been paid to the political package of values and convictions that is tacitly transmitted in this process, while the former imperial countries (so-called 'great powers') usually refrained from overemphasizing this package or turning it into an element of hard power (cf. Burns, 2013). Beijing and Moscow seem to have no problems with this transition, and the two countries' newly established counterparts of the aforementioned Western institutes of language and culture, namely the Confucius Institute and Russkii Mir,[10] respectively, are unabashedly deployed also for hard power ends (cf. Chernyshuk, 2014; Pong & Feng, 2017; Sukhankin, 2017; Volodzko, 2015). This ongoing weaponization of language, culture, the social sciences, and – by extension – of the social reality itself gave rise to the novel phenomenon of cyber war; meaning that soft power 'turned rogue'. What is more, clear recognition of the military value of soft power technologized and enhanced through cyberspace allowed it to be deployed in the battlefield, alongside conventional troops, cannons and tanks, thus yielding the novel phenomenon of 'hybrid war', as simultaneously tested and waged by Russia in eastern Ukraine (Fitzpatrick, 2017; Nye, 2017; Yashin, 2016).

With the realization that thinking about the linguistic, alongside scholarly rationalizations and conceptualizations regarding it, has a clear socio-political dimension, the question arises as to whether it is possible to limit the conflictual potential of how 'filters-cum-shapers' are applied to the linguistic. Obviously, this *is* possible, because languages and thinking about them are part and parcel of the social reality, which is generated and controlled by humans and their groups alone, *not* by nature or some divine presence. All depends, in this respect, on human will alone. In the case of the politics of the Russian language and its dialects, as discussed

[10] To a degree, the Russkii Mir Foundation builds on the decades-long experience of the Pushkin Institute (based in the Russian capital) that continues to function as a separate institution in its own right. This institute was founded in 1966 as part of Lomonosov Moscow State University. In 1973 the Pushkin State Russian Language Institute gained institutional independence and became the leading methodological centre for teaching Russian as a second language across the Soviet bloc and the world. During the Soviet period, this institute maintained methodological delegations in the Soviet bloc countries, but unlike Russkii Mir it never opened fully fledged branches in other countries. In turn, in 2010 Russkii Mir opened its own centre (*Russkii tsentr*) at the Pushkin Institute, the latter providing the former with methodological teaching expertise and materials. Between 1966 and 2015 half a million students from over 90 countries attended language courses and summer language schools offered by the Pushkin Institute ("Istoriia", 2018).

above, elements of the highest conflictual potential are two. The first one is the normative insistence – recently reinforced (i.e. politicized) by Russia's official ideology of the Russkii Mir – on the monocentric character of the Russian language (equated, whenever convenient for the Kremlin, with the Russian nation). The other element is the continuing division of the Russian dialects into two conceptually and *normatively* (or politically) separate categories, namely (a) the 'dialects of the traditional or imperial historical core', and (b) (new) 'territorial varieties' as employed outside this core. The latter were produced by the Russian and Soviet imperial expansion during some two or three last centuries. This expansion both brought the (Great) Russian language and extended the North Slavic dialect continuum to geographically vast and ethnically non-Slavic areas, mostly in Asia, along the northern Black Sea littoral, and across the Caucasus.

At present Moscow treats Russian as a genuine language of international communication only in the post-Soviet states located in Asia and in the southern Caucasus. These states' overwhelmingly *non*-Slavic, *non*-Slavophone and *non*-Orthodox populations speak and write the aforementioned 'territorial varieties' of Russian, although a reasonable command of this language tends to be limited to rather narrow intellectual, political and economic elites. Apart from a handful of Russian-speaking ethnic Slavs, such non-Slavic L2 speakers of Russian do not see Russian as a potentially native or national language. A commonality with the *Rossiiskii* – let alone, *Russkii – narod* is hardly attractive, or of any serious social or political interest to these elites and the population at large. These post-Soviet nation-states' own non-Slavic national-cum-official languages successfully constitute an ideological foundation for these polities' specific ethnolinguistic nationalisms. Russian is not any competitor in this regard. The Kremlin accepts this socio-political reality, which is impossible to change without outright annexation and a mass settlement campaign. At the present moment the Russian army is capable of a military action of this kind, but the Russian Federation being in demographic decline (DaVanzo & Adamson, 1997), the country has no pool of prospective settlers of ethnic *Russkii* or firmly *Rossisskii* background in order to flood any 'newly re-conquered' lands.

However, Moscow's perception starkly differs in the case of the historical imperial core of (Great) Russian dialects, as equated with medieval (Kyivan) Rus', nowadays commonly seen as 'early Russia' in Russian historiography and textbooks. In this area, at present split among quite a few nation-states (Belarus, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, western [or 'European'] Russia and Ukraine), Russian is spoken and written by Slavophones or linguistically Slavicized non-Slavs, who constitute a

territorially compact block of speakers of a variety of Einzelsprachen and dialects drawn from the North Slavic dialect continuum. On this linguistic (areal) basis, Moscow perceives these Slavophones as members of the (Great) Russian (that is, ideologically *Russkii*-ized *Rossiiskii*) nation, irrespective of what the concerned populations and their individual members may think about this neo-imperial approach of deciding about their identities from above and abroad. Furthermore, since 2015 when Russian military intervention commenced in Syria for the sake of propping up the faltering regime of pro-Russian Bashar al-Assad ("Russian Military", 2018), it seems that the Kremlin plans to establish a permanent Russian foothold in the Middle East (Malovany, 2016; Winer, 2015). In this manner, the *non*-post-Soviet polity of Israel found itself in the sights of the Russkii Mir ideology and Russia's current Middle Eastern policies (IUdovin, 2017; Mironov, 2015). It seems that Israel falls between the two aforementioned categories of the territorial subdivisions of the Russian language, namely the 'historical dialects' claimed as ethnically Russian (*Russkii*) and the 'territorial varieties' that are not immediately or necessarily of this ethnicity. However, Israel's Russian-speakers in their vast majority stem from the 'historical imperial core of Russian's dialects'. Hence, in many ways Israel's 1.2 million Russophones are perceived (and many also choose to see themselves) as belonging to the broad church-style post-imperial/neo-imperial Russian nation, a tad de-ethnicized to leave its access open to those who define themselves as *Russkii*, but do not feel a commonality either with Orthodox Christianity or Orthodox-influenced culture. In other words, such a person has a *Rossiiskii* identity, a modernized lowest common national denominator limited to Russian as a native (i.e. first, L1) language and to descent from ancestors who used to hold Soviet citizenship.

Peace and Pluricentric Russian

The simplest way to defuse the conflictual nature of the current official Russian thinking on the Russian language would be to replace the traditional set of 'filters-cum-shapers' of the linguistic for another. For instance, the territorial extent of the historical dialects of the Russian language could be reimagined in Europe as limited to the territory of the Russian Federation. On the other hand, in the Asian section of this federation, the territorial varieties of Russian could be rebranded as historical dialects. As a result, the area of the dialects of Russia's Russian would overlap with the territory of the Russian Federation (but perhaps with the exclusion of the territories of the polity's autonomous republics). In order to stabilize this overlapping so that not a single Russian dialect would be 'sticking outside' Russia,

or a non-Russian one 'poking' into Russia, the Russian terms *Russkii* and *Rossiiskii* would need to be firmly equated. Perhaps, for the sake of improved inclusivity, *Russkii* could be fully replaced with *Rossiiskii* in this political role of the official ethnonym and linguonym of the Russian nation and its national language (cf. Demurin, 2016; Gabdrafikov, 2014; Granin, 2007; Tishkov, 2011; Vdovin, 1995, 2007). On the other hand, the employment of the concept of territorial varieties of Russian would need to be extended to all the states with large Russian-speaking populations or where this language is employed in an official capacity. Next the very term 'territorial variety' would need to be overhauled as 'state variety of Russian', obviously entailing the recognition of the pluricentric character of the Russian language. In this way Russia's Russian would overlap with the territory of the Russian Federation, Ukrainian Russian with Ukraine, Israeli Russian with Israel, or Uzbek(istani) Russian with Uzbekistan. In turn, for the sake of research it would be possible to speak of the dialects of Ukrainian Russian and of the dialects of Tajik(istani) Russian as much as of the dialects of Russia's (*Rossiiskii*) Russian. However, in order to defuse the potential for conflict in the current imaginings about the Russian language in the service of Russian politics, the Kremlin would need to give up the offensive use of the Russkii Mir ideology, a development that is unlikely in the near future.

As mentioned above, potentially at least 20 states could develop their own country-specific varieties of Russian (or Russian languages) for official, administrative, educational and computer use. If such varieties are seen as equal to other Slavic Einzelsprachen, the potential transformation of Russian into a pluricentric language could boost the current number of 13 state Slavic languages (Belarusian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Polish, Serbian, Russian, Slovak, Slovenian and Ukrainian) to over 30. And because in essence humans are unpredictable, some of these state-specific varieties of Russian could be declared and made into languages in their own right. Then, a new category of *post-Russian* languages could emerge, not dissimilar to that of the post-Serbo-Croatian languages of Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin and Serbian. The most likely candidates for post-Russian languages are those varieties which are used in the states whose Russophone populations the proponents of the Russkii Mir ideology claim for the (Greater) Russian nation. As a result, Belarusian Russian, courtesy of its Belarusian-language name, could become a Raseian language; likewise, Estonian Russian – a Venean language; Israeli Russian – a Rusit language, Latvian Russian – a Krievu language, Lithuanian Russian – a Rusu language, Moldovan Russian – a Rusa language, Kazkhstani Russian – an Orys language, or Ukrainian Russian – a Rosiiska language.

The redefinition of Russian as a pluricentric language would helpfully decouple citizenship and national identity from language, so that Russian-speakers in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania or Ukraine would cease being treated – be it by their home countries or by the Kremlin – as hostages of the neo-imperial ideology of the Russian World. As there are plenty world Russians, there may be equally numerous Russian world*s* in the plural, conceived as country-specific Russophone cultures. In this new context of the firmly *de*-ethnicized Russian language, Moscow would *not* be able to (ab)use Russophone populaces in the neighbouring countries for the sake of pursuing territorial expansion. Conversely, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, or Ukraine would not need to be ever wary and fearful of the Kremlin's intentions when pondering what their own Russophone citizens and residents might do when appealed to by Moscow. The Russian language would stop functioning as 'fate' or 'destiny', defined through the prism of ethnolinguistic nationalism in the service of the neo-imperial ideology of Russkii Mir. The accident of language would no longer condemn Russian-speakers living outside the Russian Federation to necessarily being members of the ethnolinguistically defined Russian nation, tied to 'their ideological nation-state' as embodied by the Russian Federation. At long last Russophones living outside Russia could see the states of their residence as *theirs* too, with no Russian autocrat capable of credibly claiming their allegiance. In turn, the governments of these states would not have to be ever cautious about their Russian-speaking populations to the point of distrusting them, or even seeing them as 'potential agents' of the Kremlin.

A more stable and peaceful world is possible. A de-ethnicized pluricentric Russian language – thus overhauled into a colourful multiethnic and multicultural plenitude of world Russians – could be a versatile means to this end. The globe's pluricentric Frenches or Englishes are a clear case in point.

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Rosyjski: język monocentryczny czy pluricentryczny?

Wszystkie „duże" języki komunikacji międzynarodowej na świecie (na przykład angielski, francuski lub hiszpański) są pluricentryczne, czyli oficjalne odmiany tych języków są inaczej standaryzowane w tych państwach, w których te języki są używane jako oficjalne. Jedynym wyjątkiem w tym zakresie jest język rosyjski. Pomimo faktu, że rosyjski funkcjonuje jako język oficjalny w wielu państwach postsowieckich oraz w Izraelu i Mongolii, to nadal uważa się go za język monocentryczny, którego normatywnie jednolity standard jest (i musi być) kontrolowany wyłącznie przez Rosję. Układ ten sprzeczny jest z zasadą suwerenności, bowiem zapewnia on Moskwie wpływ, a nawet kontrolę nad kulturą i używaniem języka w tych krajach, w których rosyjski to język urzędowy. Fakt ten został świadomie zauważony i wywołał gorące dyskusje w Ukrainie po rosyjskiej aneksji ukraińskiego regionu Krymu w roku 2014. Jak dotąd dyskusje te jednak nie przełożyły się na żadne oficjalne uznanie przez ukraińskie władze (nie mówiąc już o konkretnym wsparciu) ukraińskiej odmiany języka rosyjskiego.

Słowa kluczowe: de-etnicyzacja, języki monocentryczne, język rosyjski, nie-rosyjska ludność rosyjskojęzyczna, języki pluricentryczne, państwa rosyjskojęzyczne, państwowe odmiany języka rosyjskiego, polityka językowa, wojna hybrydowa, wojna rosyjsko-ukraińska.

Note

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