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A missing chain?
On the sociolinguistics of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania[1]

1. Introduction

It is no exaggeration to say that Leszek Bednarczuk (1993, 1994, 1997, 1999, 2010a, 2013) made a pioneering contribution to the study of multilingualism in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL). In particular, his research has been concerned with structural affinities in the languages used in the GDL due to heavy contact in the years between the Union of Lublin (1569) and the Moscovite invasion of 1655 (Bednarczuk, 1994, p. 109). Based on the theory of communicative networks as elaborated by Zabrocki (1963), Bednarczuk resorted in his study of multilingualism in the GDL to the concept of communicative (speech) community ("wspólnota komunikatywna"). The existence of this community, according to Bednarczuk (1994, p. 110, 1997), determined the formation of Lithuanian and Belarusian, northeastern borderland Polish,

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[1] From the Editors of *Acta Baltico-Slavica*: This article was reviewed by a historian with some reservations. In view of the scholarly significance of the problem of the Ruthenian ("руський") language in the chancellery of the Great Duchy of Lithuania and a positive review of the second reviewer, a linguist, the proposed text is published with the author's corrections made in accordance with the reviewers' comments.

the languages of the Lithuanian Tatars, Karaites, Jews as well as the local variety of Roma.[2] Subsequently, Bednarczuk (2013, pp. 30–31) added to the aforementioned community of major and secondary languages the dialects of the Narew river (see Dini, 1997, pp. 214–217, 2014, pp. 299–306; Zinkevičius, 1992) and, latest of all, the dialects of Russian Old Believers who appeared in Lithuania in the late 17th century (see Čekmonas, 2001; Grek-Pabisowa, 1999). In this respect, one should also give credit to Reczek (1989) who drew a clear distinction between the autochthonous and colonial languages ("języki ludności napływowej"). Among the autochthonous languages, this scholar named Slavic, including Polish, Belarusian, and Ukrainian, and Baltic, i.e., Old Prussian, extinct before the 18th century, Latvian and Lithuanian, although a list of the latter languages is far from exhaustive (Dini, 2014, pp. 290–320); Reczek also mentioned a number of smaller communal languages such as German, Yiddish, Romani, Tatar, Karaite, and Armenian all accounted for by Bednarczuk in his subsequent studies dealing with the multilingualism of the GDL.

In this paper I review the concept of communicative networks as applied in the study of multilingualism of the GDL (see Bednarczuk, 1999, pp. 113–114; Marcinkiewicz, 2000) during the period of relatively stable language contacts and cultural tolerance in the state of the two nations (Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) (Ochmański, 1990, pp. 136–137; Topolska, 2002, pp. 11–123).[3] In particular, my study is concerned with the place of Belarusian and Ukrainian in the system of linguistic interrelations in the GDL. I determine reasons behind the misleading use of the term Belarusian in scholarly literature in reference to the East Slavic language (Ruthenian) employed in the administration of the GDL. I first dwell on some methodological shortcomings of the communicative networks approach to the study of multilingualism and, by default, multiculturalism in the GDL (Section 2). In Section 3.1 both linguistic and philological arguments are adduced with an eye to refuting the aforementioned concept as obscuring our understanding of the sociolinguistics of the GDL. Section 3.2 offers a critical assessment of the current state of the study of multilingualism in the GDL as reflected in the nomenclature of the designations of the East Slavic language and the respective ethnic components, including the Ukrainian one. In Section 4, I provide

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[2] In the course of his research Bednarczuk changed his interpretation of the speech (communicative) community in terms of convergences leading ultimately to the emergence of a linguistic league like the Balkan Sprachbund. At the outset, Bednarczuk (1994, p. 110) argued that the nature of such a community in the GDL did not achieve the level of this "classical" linguistic alliance. As late as 2013, however, he admitted that one could speak about the GDL "as a multilingual system of communication – not unlike the Balkan Sprachbund and other linguistic communities in some respect" (Bednarczuk, 2013, p. 21; for a critical discussion, see Danylenko, 2011).

[3] Actually, the GDL was a kind of dual Lithuanian-Ruthenian, or even a Ruthenian-Lithuanian polity before becoming a Polish-Lithuanian-Ruthenian federation in 1569, with the mass arrival of Polish landowners and clergy in the territories of the GDL (Danylenko, 2011, p. 145; Plokhy, 2006, p. 87).

general conclusions and possible ways out of the methodological impasse in the study of the sociolinguistics of the GDL, thus restoring one missing chain in the "mosaic" of the early modern alliance of different peoples and languages co-existing in this political entity.

2. The theory of communicative networks and the multilingualism of the GDL

The theory of communicative networks, first elaborated by Zabrocki in 1963, has been, most explicitly, applied to the study of multilingualism in the GDL by Marcinkiewicz (1997, 2000; see Bednarczuk, 1994, 1999, 2010a). In order to critically assess the theoretical premises of this approach, I discuss in this section the sociolinguistic scenario of multilingualism, as outlined by Marcinkiewicz who based his reasoning on the following two postulates.

First, any communicative network, including that within the GDL, should be viewed as an autonomous structure whose binding forces are the need to communicate and a shared code of communication. A particular communicative network, constrained by certain social and psychological laws and historical processes, produces a means of communication, that is, a dialect or a language to fulfill concrete social functions (Marcinkiewicz, 2000, p. 48).

Second, such a language may undergo changes as different communicative networks come into contact; it may eventually succumb to assimilation processes and suffer complete replacement by the language of another communicative network. According to Marcinkiewicz (2000, p. 48) it is only by examining the history of communicative networks and the principles governing their development that we can gain insight into the reasons why languages appear and disappear, or why they change.

Changes of the communicative networks (for instance, wars, migrations, colonization, appearance/disappearance of tribal, cultural, political or religious associations, and the like) can be described in terms of social integration and disintegration, and consequently must lead to linguistic integration and disintegration (Marcinkiewicz, 2000, p. 49). Moreover, two speech communities within a single communicative network are typically antagonistic with respect to each other and will fight to preserve their own integrity and to strengthen their own position. One of them will gradually dominate the other to become the superior speech community and will try to eliminate the rival (inferior) community (Marcinkiewicz, 2000, p. 50).

All the above allowed Marcinkiewicz (2000) to argue that the integrational processes within the communicative networks in the GDL might have taken place in two stages. During the first stage the Ruthenian language was dominant, while the second stage was marked by the domination of the Polish language. During the first centuries

of the existence of the GDL whose territory had been heterogeneous and organized around distinct language centers, Ruthenian, called by Marcinkiewicz "(Old) Belorussian", served as a lingua franca. It helped not only in communicating with eastern princes but also proved indispensable in collecting taxes, recruiting soldiers, and the like. It is not surprising that the Lithuanian code of laws (Lithuanian statutes) of 1529, 1566 and even 1588 was compiled in chancellery Ruthenian.

Deserving of attention is the status of chancellery Ruthenian. Based on the Old Eastern Slavic tradition, this language of administration showed, in fact, largely Belarusian features (see Гумецкая, 1965, p. 39). To take phonetic features as an example, one can mention a rare use of the letter *ě*, sometimes in the place of the etymological *e*; the use of unstressed *e* instead of the etymological *ja* (< *ę*); the dispalatalization of *r´*, although *krivda* 'a wrong deed'; the intermittent use of hard and soft *l* and *n* in the environment before consonants and after vowel (see Жураўскі, 1989). Yet some of those features were also attested in the proto-Ukrainian-speaking territories, although the consistent use of these and other features in Belarusian might speak about the Belarusian dialectal basis of this language during the first period of the linguistic integration in the GDL.[4]

The Polish language took over the processes of linguistic integration influencing the nobility of the GDL after a slow demise of Ruthenian already in the late 16th century after a series of decrees and unions (Marcinkiewicz, 2000, pp. 56–60) and its final disappearance as a lingua franca in Lithuania-Poland in the late 17th century.[5] In fact, there are several well-known reasons behind the increase of the influence of Polish, especially in the 16th century. Kurzowa (1991, p. 34) mentioned, in particular, a series of decrees starting with the Union of 1386 to the Hrodno Union of 1400 as well as the 1401 Union of Vilnius and the 1413 Pact of Horodło leading in the long run to the assimilation of Lithuania at the cost of the Ruthenian element and Orthodoxy. Additionally, one should bear in mind the predominant role of landed gentry ("szlachta") who enjoyed a politically and economically privileged position as compared with the local Lithuanian and Ruthenian population. Investigators agree that the Lithuanian and Ruthenian gentry

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[4] Clearly, the dominance of Ruthenian was less pronounced among the Lithuanians. Suffice it to mention here Erasmus Vitellius, a secretary to Grand Duke Alexander and his envoy to Pope Alexander VI, speaking about the Lithuanians: "Linguam propriam observant. Verum quia Rutheni medium fere ducatum incolunt, illorum loquela dum gracilis et facilior sit, utuntur communius" (They stick to their language. Yet, as almost one half of the Duchy was populated by the Ruthenians, they use their language more often because it is a sophisticated and simple language) (Theiner, 1861, p. 278; see Marcinkiewicz, 2000, pp. 55–56; Totoraitis, 1938, p. 256).

[5] In a 1569 charter reassessing the privileges given to the Kyiv palatinate, it was proposed to limit the role of Ruthenian and expand the use of Polish as compared with the 1529 and 1569 Lithuanian Statutes (*Volumina legum*, 1859, pp. 86, 83); the Ruthenian language was subsequently abandoned in all the territories of the GDL and the Polish Crown in 1697 (*Volumina legum*, 1860, p. 83; see Gordziejev, 2004).

who were assimilating *en masse* to Polish culture and language, were a very important driving force for the spread of Polish and the ultimate polonization of the social life and language(s) in the GDL (Kurzowa, 1991, pp. 30–31; Topolska, 2002, pp. 195–206; Zielińska, 2002, pp. 361–365). The strife between Polish, on the one hand, and Lithuanian and Ruthenian, on the other, slowly decreased since the landed gentry became in the 15th – 16th centuries particularly supportive of the union of the two nations (Ochmański, 1990, p. 131).[6] Arguably, the Lithuanian and Ruthenian landowners who constituted the ruling elite of the GDL were reluctant to adopt the Polish-Latin order in the newly formed federation. It is not surprising then that it was the local nobility in the GDL who petitioned the local parliament (*Sejmik*) of Navahrudak (Polish *Nowogródek*) to make the Polish language official. As early as 4 September 1696 the *Sejmik* of Navahrudak approved a resolution according to which, on 5 February 1697, all the local representatives had to vote for such a reform in the parliament (*Sejm*) of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Sliesoriūnas, 2002).

Finally, the growing role of Polish in the GDL, and especially in its Ruthenian element, was triggered by the conversion of Lithuania to Catholicism in 1387 by Jogaila, Grand Duke of Lithuania and, later, King of Poland; as history has it, he established the cathedral church in Vilnius and also built first seven churches in such localities as Ukmergė, Maišiagala, Nemenčinė, Medininkai (in eastern Lithuania), Krėva, Oboltsy, and Haina (in what is now Belarus) (Turkowska, 1985, p. 163).[7] All this lead to the appearance of two Churches in a nascent conflict, the Catholic one enjoying all kinds of privileges and the Orthodox one deprived of its previous affluent status. Yet, as early as 1434, Grand Duke Sigismund Kęstutaitis (Zygmunt Kejstutowicz) changed this situation by bestowing the same rights and privileges upon the Ruthenian Orthodox and Lithuanian Catholic nobility (Kurzowa, 1991, p. 33). However, the arrival of Reformation in the first part of the 16th century mostly from the Polish Crown changed the socio-linguistic and cultural environment by strengthening the status of Polish culture and, especially, language which was introduced into the liturgy of

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[6] It should be borne in mind, however, that speakers of the communal languages, less integrated in the social life, were not that much open to the new Polish-Latin order. Of interest is the reaction of the Lithuanian Jews of Vladimir (Ludmir) who found themselves after the Union of Lublin in the new Polish-Lithuanian state. Having received a privilege charter issued by King Stefan Batory in Latin, the Jews asked that the charter be translated first into Polish and copied into the town records in Ruthenian. A year later, the Jews of Trakai (Polish *Troki*) petitioned King Stefan Batory to reissue the privilege charter of King Sigismund II in Ruthenian instead of Latin "for better understanding" (Дубнов, 1909, p. 25; see Martel, 1938, pp. 33–66).

[7] The fact that Długosz invented this ideological program, or rather tenet long after Jogaila was dead does not change either the line of the chronology of argumentation with regard to the role of Catholicism in the spread of Polish culture and language. And indeed, as Baronas (2007) showed, reliable sources allow us to suppose that the establishment of churches started in Lithuania in 1387 and it evolved as a continuous undertaking, which took place for centuries to come (see Baronas & Rowell, 2015, pp. 261–326).

a new Church, scriptural translations, and religious polemical literature on the whole. Counterreformation also contributed to a factual fusion of the Polish-Lithuanian-Ruthenian society by the foundation of colleges and similar institutions with Polish as the language of instruction[8] and the expansion of *Latinitas* as a scholarly discourse (Augustyniak, 2008, pp. 192–199, 215–220; Ulčinajtė, 2004).[9] After the union of Brest in 1596 as a result of which the Orthodox Church entered into communion with, and placed itself under the authority of, the Pope of Rome, Polish became a second language of *Latinitas* in the interconfessional polemic between the Orthodox Ruthenians and the Catholic/Uniate Church, thus resembling the function of Latin in the Arian-Calvin-Catholic debate (Niedźwiedź, 2012, p. 305).

3. Revising multilingualism

The aforegoing scenario is well known in Polish scholarly tradition. Yet, explicated with the help of the theory of communicative networks only, this scenario needs revision. The point is that the idea of linguistic strife between stronger and weaker linguistic stuctures fails to provide insight into the socio- and ethno-linguistic nature of the multilingualism and multiculturalism of the GDL. This idea becomes less convincing if confronted with the thesis of Walczak (2004, p. 27) who maintained that the Polish acculturation had never removed from the language map of Poland-Lithuania any other language.

Arguably, the communicative networks approach concentrates not on multilingualism (and multiculturalism) as a system of interrelations but on a variety (or a number of certain varieties) of separate langauges and their feaures. Remarkably, this approach does not fully account for the role of Latin and Church Slavonic and

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[8] Of interest here is the case of Krzysztof Radziwiłł (1585–1640), a notable magnate, politician and military commander, who considered learning foreign languages an important part of the education of his son Janusz (1612–1655). However, among those languages, save for Hungarian as a language of a neighboring political power, Krzysztof Radziwiłł did not mention either Lithuanian or Ruthenian which seemed to him to be redundant (Niendorf, 2006, p. 113; see Wisner, 1969).

[9] Before the Union of Lublin (1569) an important discussion began among the humanists of the Vilnius court. This discussion included two opposing tendencies: on the one hand, the exalted role of the native language as the sole basis of Lithuanianness, and, on the other hand, a tendency represented by those who, through such ideas, preferred to speak rather about the affinity of Latin and Lithuanian. The latter group of thinkers, in particular Michalo Lituanus and Augustinus Rotundus, argued that the link with a classical language like Latin, unreservedly a language of *dignitas*, guaranteed a more favorable comparison in competition with other languages of high culture used in the GDL, especially Ruthenian (Lituanus, 1615, pp. 21–26). According to Augustinus Rotundus, Latin in the GDL must have been used more often than Ruthenian, in all spheres of social life, public and private. In letters, preference should be given to Latin letters over Ruthenian, and State laws should be published in Latin (Dini, 2014, pp. 421, 425; Jurkiewicz, 2005).

their relationships with Polish and Ruthenian as secular counterparts as well as respective vernaculars.[10] As Wiemer (2003, p. 106) stated, and rightly so, many descriptions are provided on the background of some contact varieties rather on the latter's structure and relationships. It should be added that, more often than not, analyses of separate varieties, primarily of Ruthenian and Polish heralding the consecutive stages in the linguistic integration in the GDL, are conducted almost exclusively from the perspective of standard languages. The fact that non-standard varieties are sometimes mentioned on a par with standard varieties does not change the overall picture. The impact of dialects on Polish and Ruthenian and the impact of spoken vernaculars on Latin and Old Church Slavonic, as well as the communal languages, are accounted for only fragmentarily.

As a result of viewing the speech community of the GDL as a sum of languages and convergent features, the students do not look into the mechanisms of stuctural affinities, if any, while choosing them randomly and out of the contact situation. In Section 3.1 I discuss several structural affinities which can hardly be determined by contacts within the GDL speech community. Even more so, the approach based on the theory of communicative networks does not help explain away some controversial issues of the ethno-linguistic nature. Thus, Section 3.2 is concerned with the problem of the identification of the East Slavic language employed in the GDL; this issue has long been a true bone of contention in ethno-linguistic literature and can hardly be resolved with the help of the current understanding of the multilingualism in the GDL.

3.1. Structural affinities

Bednarczuk (1994, pp. 118–119, 1999, pp. 67–74, 81–86) cited eight phonological and morphosyntactic features which allegedly attest to the existence of a separate speech community in the GDL. The features, shared by all (?) the communal languages, including the pagan dialects of the Narew river are the following: (1) the expansion, under Polish influence, of palatalization in Belarusian (cf. *dzekanne* and *cekanne*) and in Lithuanian, especially in Dzūkian; this feature is "occasionally" found in Tatar, Karaite, and northwestern Yiddish; (2) unification of the vocalic structure as reflected in the expansion of *a* at the cost of *o* and *e*, e.g., the change of *ŏ* into *a* and the front vocalization of *ě* in Baltic, the Belarusian *akanne*, and similar phenomena in northeastern borderland Polish and "sporadically" in other communal languages; (3) change of *v* into *u̯* in the environment before a consonant or at the end of the morpheme/word, especially in Lithuanian and Ruthenian; (4) the

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[10] As an instance of such an impact, though in the lands of the Crown, one can mention the Peresopnycja Gospel (1556–1561) whose authors aimed to combine Church Slavonic with Ruthenian rather than with the Ukrainian vernacular.

loss of the neuter gender, partly realized in East Baltic and under way in Belarusian, northeastern borderland Polish, and Yiddish; (5) the use of derivative formants, including numerous diminutive, personal, and agentive suffixes of the type *-ek*, *-(č)uk*, *-ko*, *-š-ko* and the like in Baltic, Slavic, and peripheral oriental languages; (6) influence of the Slavic aspectual system on Lithuanian (e.g., prefixed perfectives like *pa-darýti* 'to do'), as well as on Yiddish and Lithuanian Tatar; (7) the *u* + genitive possessive construction which is commonplace in East Baltic, northern East Slavic, and northeastern borderland Polish; (8) the use of the past active anteriority participles in resultative constructions.

Following Bednarczuk's reconstruction, Wiemer (2003, p. 109) assumed that the aforementioned eight structural convergences in eastern and southern Lithuania and northern Belarus resulted from intensive language contacts particularly during the existence of the GDL and in the preceding centuries. On closer inspection, however, not a single feature from those proposed by Bednarczuk and accepted by Wiemer may be treated as a solid contact-induced one (Danylenko, 2011, pp. 157–167).[11] In the remainder of this section, due to space constraints, I limit myself to the arguments related to feature (6).

To begin with, synchronically, there is a great number of perfective / imperfective looking pairs of prefixed vs. unprefixed verbs in Lithuanian like *darýti* : *padarýti* 'to do', although different prefixes always modify only the lexical meaning of the verb and are not a grammatical feature in Lithuanian. Representative lexical modification of this kind is observed in the lengthened zero-grade *-ū-* root vowel of the type *pa-lūk-éti* 'to wait a little bit'. The pattern with the prefix *pa-*, the lengthened grade of the root, and present conjugation in *-i* (with a diminutive attenuation) has been extended to other verbs, whence *pa-bėg-éti* 'to run a little bit', *pa-ėj-éti* 'to walk a little bit', *pa-kyl-éti* 'to rise a little bit', *pa-nėš-éti* 'to carry a little bit'. Leaving aside certain aspectual phenomena in Lithuanian, the difference between the prefixed derivatives and their unprefixed counterparts in Lithuanian is not in the Slavic sense aspectual, but lexical (Danylenko, 2011, pp. 162–164). In sum, the prefixes in verbal derivatives play in Lithuanian an important role in conveying various fine semantic distinctions of circumstantial and procedural nature (see Stang, 1966, p. 309).

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[11] Bednarczuk (2013) has recently added two more affinities which are the following: (1) the use of cases (semantic functions, use of prepositions, lack of a vocative) and (2) the use of finite verb (tendency to zero-copula in the present tense and lack of a number distinction in the 3rd person of finite verbs). Together with numerous borrowings, all the ten (eight + two) features provide, according to Bednarczuk (2013, p. 35), extra evidence in support of the claim for a linguistic, cultural and ethno-psychological community of the GDL (Sprachbund), which has survived to some degree to this day. Yet this claim is a far-fetched hypothesis, and the last two affinities are particularly resistant to the contact-related explanation. Moreover, the author does not elaborate on the mechanisms of the alleged contact-induced changes leading purportedly to the formation of a speech community compatible with that of the Balkan Sprachbund.

Danylenko (2015b, pp. 536–537) demonstrated that the prefix *pa-*, coupled with the iconic lengthening, conveys an iterative and/or distributive meaning. A similar iterative meaning, sometimes with an iconic (expressive) tinge, is encountered in Belarusian, Ukrainian, and, to a lesser extent, in Russian formations with the doubled prefix *po-po-* (Lithuanian *pa-*): Ukrainian *po-po-xodyty*, Belarusian *pa-pa-xadzic´*, Russian (dialectal) *po-po-xodit´* 'to walk a little bit' (Lithuanian *pa-ėj-éti*). Such double-prefixed derivatives in Ukrainian and Belarusian can render contextually various degrees of multiplicative action, e.g., Ukrainian *po-po-jisty* 'to eat a little bit (picking many small pieces of food)' next to Belarusian *pa-pa-jëdac´* 'to eat much' (Danylenko, 2011, pp. 167–168); in Lithuanian, one comes across dialectal forms tending sporadically to have the doubled prefix *pa-pa-* with an iconic (expressive) element in their meaning, e.g., *pa-pa-riñkti* (= *suránkioti*) 'to choose'.

Thus, the pattern with the (doubled) prefix *pa-pa-* and the lengthened (iconic) grade in Lithuanian conveys a twofold quantifying procedural of a particular action that may be conceived as multiplicative with a certain degree of intensity but not "completed" in the Slavic aspect sense (Danylenko, 2015b, p. 537). All this speaks of parallel rather than contact-induced processes of the development of aspect in Lithuanian and East Slavic. Leaving aside the core vocabulary and derivational patterns that have a minimum impact on the delimitation of the GDL as a linguistic area, the question arises as to what mechanisms can be responsible for possible convergences in the languages used in the territories of the GDL.

Quantitative methods only can hardly be helpful in determining the confines of a respective speech community. I argue that the emergence of Sprachbund-forming convergences is not immediately dependent on the areal diffusion of the features either via borrowing proper or replication, which presupposes acquiring some new grammatical features (structures) on the model of another language (Heine & Kuteva, 2006, pp. 48–96). However, even these mechanisms, – let alone lexical borrowing, grammatical interference or "inter-lingual transposition" in Bednarczuk (2013, pp. 32–35), – can hardly explain why and how the corresponding change could have involved particular structures or elements in the entire area of the GDL. I believe, instead, that the appearance of possible convergences might be linked to the development of similarities of the languages in contact due to a particular configuration of the pertinent societal factors. According to Trudgill (2010, pp. 62–63) such factors as (1) community size, (2) density of social networks, (3) amount of shared background information, and (4) degree of social stability may be only some of the most important.[12] Conceivably, long-term, intense mul-

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[12] Values of the societal factors tended to differ substantially depending on a particular speech community. For instance, the Karaite community was characterized by a small number of speakers, dense social networks, and large amounts of commonly shared information (see Gąsiorowski, 2008, p. 478).

tiple contacts between both "big" and "small" communities in the GDL involved all their members, including adult speakers accommodating to imperfect skills of an interlocutor. All this tended to lead to selection or creation of structures that are acceptable to all the speakers of inflecting systems of Slavic and Lithuanian as primary languages in the GDL. In this case one can speak about the strengthening of analyticity conducive to the regularization of irregularities, an increase in lexical and morphological transparency, and the loss of redundancy (Trudgill, 2011, pp. 62–63). Among such changes, one can name, for instance, (a) deflexion (reduction in overt case marking), e.g., lack of the vocative case, (b) the increase of prepositional usage, (c) reduction/loss of conjugations and declensions, and (d) increase in periphrastic verb forms and some other features.

Remarkably, all the above changes were identified by Bednarczuk (1994, pp. 118–119, 2013, p. 35), including the use of *dla* 'for' + genitive (Bednarczuk, 2010b, pp. 32–33). As one of the newly developed analytic constructions, this pattern is liberally attested in western Polissian Ukrainian as well as Pidljaššja comprising both Ukrainian, Polish and (transitional) Belarusian dialects (Gardzińska, 2001; Бідношия, 2007). There is, however, one difference between the Polish construction and its western Ukrainian counterpart whose grammaticalization has not yet run to its completion. It is not, therefore, surprising to find the dative instead of the genitive case expected in this prepositional phrase, whence dialectal *dla vnukam* (dative) 'for the grandchildren' in West Ukrainian. Thus, different stages in the grammaticalization of this construction prove that we deal here with an independent development rather than borrowed or transferred from other (Polish?) dialects (Danylenko, 2015a, pp. 283–284).

In sum, search for structural affinities should be aimed not at separate features, randomly chosen, but at the explanation of mechanisms of linguistic changes occurring in accordance with linguistic tendencies as determined by multiple societal factors.[13]

However, the Ruthenian community, which at some point was the largest in the GDL (Ochmański, 1990, p. 58), demonstrated comparatively loose dense social networks and smaller amount of shared information. Ideally, to get a more detailed picture of the values of the corresponding factors, each speech community should be separately profiled and aligned along prototypical communities defined here as primary versus secondary. Instead of positing the existence of a linguistic area (Sprachbund) in the GDL, I (Danylenko, 2011) proposed to first delimit separate concentric micro-areas, asymmetrical from the standpoint of chronology and vectors of interaction, such as Ruthenian-Lithuanian, Ruthenian-Polish, Lithuanian-Polish, Tatar-Ruthenian, and so on.

[13] Remarkably, while trying to gauge the Polish interference in the language of the Luc´k Karaite, Németh (2010) argued that sometimes it is not easy to delimit the Polish interference from the Ukrainian and, for a later period, the interference of Russian. For example, in a Karaite-language letter extant from 1914, I identified 14 Ukrainian features out of thirty-eight cases of Slavic interference, e.g., *nemohum* from Ukrainian *ne mohu* 'I cannot' rather than Russian *ne mogu* with a separate Ukrainian articulation [h] as suggested by Németh (2010, pp. 204–205).

3.2. Restoring a missing chain?

Despite the doomsday scenario suggested by Marcinkiewicz, Ruthenian never fell out from the communicative newtworks in the GDL. To be sure, one can speak about its disappearance as a chancellery language in Lithuania and Poland, although with reservations for the left-bank Dnieper Ukrainian lands where this language was in use in the adminstration untill the late 18th century (Danylenko, 2007). In Lithuania its vernacular variety even gained new grounds at the cost of Lithuanian since Ruthenian has never ceased to be a lingua franca until 1795 when Lithuanian became to be used in printing. In fact, the Ruthenian vernacular was still employed as an interethnic and official language by Lithuanian Tatars, Jews, Karaites, Armenians and other minorities living in the GDL (see Niendorf, 2006, pp. 118–119; Дубнов, 1909). In other words, the Polish acculturation (Polonization) brought about the disappearance of the standard variety of Ruthenian in the milieu of local elite while the commoners and landed gentry remained diglossic in practicing local varieties of non-standard (vernacular) Ruthenian in combination with either Polish or Lithuanian (Zinkevičius, 1987, pp. 144–145).

Long before being ousted by Polish, Ruthenian was viewed as a common language (*rusьkij jazykъ*) irrespective of the ratio of its dialectal components. As early as 1935, Stang's research evidenced that chancellery Ruthenian could hardly be completely identified with (Middle) Belarusian. Zinkevičius (1987, pp. 117–119) argued that Ruthenian as used in the ducal and even royal chanceries, roughly between the 1385 Act of Krėva and 1480, was greatly influenced by South Ukrainian, a missing chain in the argumentation of most of the Belarusian linguists who called this language *starabelaruskaja litaraturna-pis´movaja mova*, that is, the Old Belarusian written language (see Ragauskienė, 2013, p. 144; Свяжынскі, 2003; Шакун, 1994). Simultaneously, alongside the southern Ukrainian influence, another trend began emerging in the texts copied by scribes whose spoken language originated in the Volhynja region with its center at Luc´k, intermittently under the GDL control from 1239 to 1563 (Stang, 1935, p. 21). Later still, in the middle of the 16th century (the time of Sigismund Augustus) chancellery Ruthenian again changed significantly, since gradually the characteristics of South Belarusian (North Ukrainian) disappeared. Instead, the linguistic traits of central Belarusian dialects became more pronounced, thus making the chancellery language look thoroughly "Belarusianized"; it was this variety of Ruthenian that was ultimately ousted by Polish in 1697.[14]

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[14] For the period of the 14th–15th centuries, Kuraszkiewicz (1937) posited the existence of a "central dialect" ("narzecze środkowe") of Ruthenian which demonstrated predominantly Polissian features like (1) unstressed *ě* realized as e, (2) the syllabization of *r*, (3) unstressed *ę* realized as *e*, (4) the *o* reflex after palatals, 5) the dispalatalization of *r´* and some other morphological and lexical phenomena. All this allowed Mojsijenko (Мойсієнко, 2002) to postulate for the transitional (Ukrainian-Belarusian) dialect

However, in reality, the "Belarusianized" Ruthenian did never turn into Belarusian Ruthenian until the very demise of the GDL. Instead, this language acquired even more standardized features which were better designed for serving new and sophisticated genres.[15] Called *prostaja mova* 'a plain language', this language heralded the appearance of a new literature with "more elevated genres" (polemical and theological writings, poetry, grammars, primers, chronicles) (Shevelov, 1979, pp. 572–580). However, and this should be emphasized again, both chancellery Ruthenian which at some point revealed intermittently (more) Belarusian and (fewer) Ukrainian dialectal features, and the *prostaja mova* as a vernacular standard can hardly be called (Old) Belarusian as practiced by Bednarczuk (e.g., 2013, p. 24) and many Polish scholars (Grek-Pabisowa, 1997, p. 146; Smułkowa, 1988, p. 237; Topolska, 2002, p. 117; Zielińska, 2002, p. 364), though with some exceptions (Augustyniak, 2008, pp. 297–299; Lizisowa, 2000, pp. 37–40); remarkably, the bulk of Lithuanian scholars today seem to side with the mainstream Polish-Belarusian tradition to view Ruthenian as Old Belarusian (see Ragauskienė, 2013, pp. 144–150).[16] In sum, by labeling the Ruthenian language Belarusian (or Ukrainian), a scholar inadvertently accepts one of the controversial clichés held together under the force of extralinguistic pressure rather than enhances the cultural tradition of the given nation.[17]

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zone the existence of a separate Polissian vernacular standard developed on the northern Ukrainian (Polissian) basis (Danylenko, 2006a, pp. 100–108). Interestingly enough, Shevelov (1979, pp. 399–401) argued that the secular language used in the 14th century to the early 15th century in the GDL was basically (northern) Ukrainian, with Polissian features.

[15] It is not surprising that only the standardized features were consciously emulated by the speakers of some peripheral communal languages, in particular by the Lithuanian Tatars. For instance, the Belarusian *cekanne* and *dzekanne* were not reflected in their texts (Wexler, 1977, p. 169); nor reflected either was the Ukrainian non-sharping of consonants before *e* and the change *o > u* in newly closed syllables. What is important for our discussion, is the fact that some of the Lithuanian Tatar texts, including the oldest manuscript, housed nowadays at the St Petersburg University library under signatura 893, were written in the Ukrainian variety of Ruthenian revealing conspicuous (northern) Ukrainian features (Danylenko, 2006b).

[16] Niendorf (2006, pp. 117–118) posited a similar equation "das Altweißrussiche (Ruthenische)", that is, Old Belarusian = Ruthenian. Interestingly, Niedźwiedź (2012, p. 38) used almost a mirror-image equation of "Ruthenian (Old Belarusian)", while emphasizing that this language was a spoken vernacular. Yet chancellery Ruthenian was an artificial product in regard to its official use. Being "crystallized and uniform", this language, according to Niedźwiedź (2012, pp. 39, 42), demonstrated various admixtures of Polish, Church Slavonic, and Lithuanian. Consequently, as one can assume, chancellery Ruthenian did not have any Ukrainian admixture which looks somewhat contradictory in the light of the postulated artificial character of Ruthenian. The latter was shaped not only in the ducal chancery in Vilnius but also across the whole polity.

[17] For a discussion of the designations of this language in different (Slavic) scholarly traditions, including the Russian imperial one, see Danylenko (2006c). Another term, "a Belarusian variety of West Russian" used by Bednarczuk (1997, p. 56) also looks awkward. In fact, this designation is premised on the geographical identification of Belarusian and Ukrainian as dialects of Great Russian in the impe-

The question of the respective language designation(s) becomes nagging if one resorts to the chronology of the name *White Rus´* and its ethnic derivative *White Rusian* characterized by a wide array of interpretations dependent on changing countours of what is called Belarus´ and the Belarusian language. In fact, the name *White Rus´*, in tandem with the Baltic-Finnic tribe of Karels, is first attested in the 13th century in the anonymous *Descriptiones Terrarum*, an introduction to a now lost history of the Tatars (Colker, 1979). Leaving aside the symbolic interpretation of *albus* 'favorable, propitious' in the Catholic tradition going back to the Pontifex Maximus, the name *White Rus´* referred, in the early 14th century, to the Galician land (Łatyszonek, 2006, pp. 32–35, 306). Remarkably, the ancestors of modern Belarusians adopted this name as the designation of their lands in the late 16th century under the influence of the Polish historiographic and geographic tradition. For instance, Jan ze Stobnicy (Iohannes de Stobnicza) wrote in his *Introductio in Ptolomei cosmographiam* (1512) that White Rus´ (*Alba Russia*) encompassed all the Ruthenian lands of the GDL together with Novgorod the Great (*Nouegrot*) (Stobnicza, 1519, f. 21–22). Marcin Kromer added to White Rus´ in 1555 not only Novgorod but also Volhyn´ and Podlasie and even the region of Kyiv (Łatyszonek, 2006, pp. 83–85).

Thus, the contours of White Rus´, as interpreted in the Polish tradition and adopted later by the White Rusians, were fuzzy before getting its final shape within the confines of the GDL in the late 16th century. Łatyszonek (2006, p. 306) aptly compared the changing referential realm denoted by the term *White Rus´* with waves expanding from Halyč, the hotbed of diffusion, thus covering more and more eastern Slavic territories up to Moscow and Tver´. As late as the first partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the local Ruthenians managed to come up with a very general idea of self-identification supported by the broadly conceived terms *White Rus´* and *White Rusian*. Thus, one wonders whether there is any ground for speaking about the East Slavic language used in the GDL until the end of the 16th century as Belarusian.

In order to resolve the aforementioned controversy, one should keep apart, as was suggested by Shevelov (1974, p. 146), at least three aspects of the identification of this language which are as follows: (1) the history of literatures, (2) the history of standard languages, and (3) the history of vernaculars. Speaking about the literary process, the Ukrainians and Belarusians lived in one and the same country, adhered to one and the same church with the same liturgical language. The participation of the Belarusians in the population movements in the *reconquista* of the lands below Kyiv in the15th–16th centuries and the part they played in the formation of

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rial theory of the formation of three East Slavic languages from the common (Old) Russian language (see Symaniec, 2012, pp. 264–267, 554–556). The use of the "bleached" term *kanceliarine slavų kalba* (= *rusėnų kalba*) in Lithuanian scholarly tradition implies the existence of Ruthenian as a written language employed in the administration only (Zinkevičius, 1987, p. 133; see Danylenko, 2006c, p. 98).

the Cossack state are well known. No less known – and no less important – was the constant influx of intellectuals from Ukraine to Vilnius. As rightly stated by Shevelov (1974, p. 147), under these conditions one must speak of one literary process.[18] Then differences between Belarusian and Ukrainian histories of literature for the period of the GDL would be not so much in the scope of authors, genres, and styles analyzed as in a different degree of attention paid to the history of such local centers as Vil´na/Wilna (Vilnius), Zabludaŭ, Ostrih, L´viv, and others (see, e.g., Niedźwiedź, 2012).

The situation with the standard language(s) of that period is much more complicated. No doubt, the standard language, conventionally called Ruthenian, until the end of the 16th century was Belarusian at its core. In fact, there were no conditions for any synthesis of Belarusian with Ukrainian in the language being shaped at the Vilnius ducal chancery (Shevelov, 1974, p. 148). The Ukrainians in their use of this language now and then introduced some Ukrainian features (Ukrainianisms) precisely as they had done in Church Slavonic. Ruthenian as the standard language of that time, when used outside of the region of its rise not only admitted but even in most cases required fairly regular substitutions which were most obvious in orthography and phonetics. For instance, one should not allow Belarusian *akanne* into writing; nor such Ukrainian features as *u* from *o* and *e* in newly closed syllables were permitted.

In sum, one should speak of Ruthenian as one common secular standard for both Belarusians and Ukrainians just as Church Slavonic was their common standard ecclesiastical language (see Augustyniak, 2008, p. 297; Мякишев, 2008, p. 349). Shevelov (1974, p. 149) was right to argue that in the histories of the Belarusian and Ukrainian literary languages Ruthenian should be considered as one language, the one shaped in North Belarus´. Arguably, if a student speaks about a Belarusian (or Ukrainian) language of the 16th century, he employs an ambiguous term. One should speak, instead, of Ruthenian as used by Belarusians and Ukrainians. Thus, neither a Belarusian nor a Ukrainian standard language existed at that time. Consequently, to call Ruthenian, a secular (vernacular) standard in the GDL, either Belarusian or Ukrainian is erroneous, to say the least.

Unlike the unity of the standard language, there was no unity in the spoken (non-standard) vernacular used in the GDL. As Shevelov (1974, p. 140) pointed out, that was not agglomeration of regional dialects either. Such dialects existed but they were subordinate to more general patterns: that of Belarusian and that of Ukrainian, with the transitional Polissian pattern which can be identified as a basis

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[18]   Clearly, exceptions should be made for those works which only existed in manuscript or were used only regionally as is the case of such Belarusian tales as *Atÿla* and *Trÿščan˝* (Maszkiewicz, 2006).

of a separate Polissian vernacular (see fn. 13). It is an objective of linguists to delimit texts generated in one of the patterns which has been successfully fulfilled by some scholars (see Жураўскі, 1967, pp. 69, 264–272; Німчук, 2014, 2015). Shevelov (1974, pp. 149–154), for instance, introduced a concept of substitutions and departures (minor substitutions due to insufficient training or slips of the writer, printer, or scribe which reflect the spoken vernacular). To name just a few substitutions, they are (1) the treatment of *ě*, with *ě > e* in any position in Belarusian, *ě > e* if unstressed only in Polissian, and *ě* kept intact in Ukrainian, (2) the treatment of *r*, with *ry* in Belarusian and Polissian (*kryvavyj* 'related to blood', and *r* in Ukrainian (*krvavyj*), (3) the treatment of *ę*, with the *e* reflex in an unstressed environment in Belarusian and Polissian (*svetyj* 'holy'), and *ja* in Ukrainian (*svjatyj*), (4) the spelling of *i* in such oblique cases of the pronoun *(u)ves´* 'whole' as *usix˝* (genitive/locative) in Belarusian and Polissian, next to *usěx˝* in Ukrainian, and many other substitutions and departures, e.g., the use of prothetic *v* before stressed *o* in Belarusian. The abovementioned substitutions (and departures) make the identification of a text (and of a spoken vernacular) quite feasible. One can mention again Belarusian *Atyla* and *Tryščan˝* (Maszkiewicz, 2006), on the one hand, and the *Peresopnycja Gospel* (1556–1561), revealing primarily Ukrainian features, on the other hand (Danylenko, 2006a, pp. 94–95).

Overall, the aforementioned interpretation of Ruthenian allows us to state that employing the terms Ukrainian and Belarusian *avant la lettre* is likely to distort the sociolinguistic picture of the GDL viewed in hindsight.

4. Conclusions

What follows from the foregoing discussion is a dubious state and status of the Ukrainian chain in the postulated communicative networks of the GDL. In fact, one can speak about its actual absence in contemporary studies of the multilingualism in this political entity. Yet its absence as well as the misleading use of the term *Old Belarusian* in reference to Ruthenian, seem not to be mere philological foibles.

In regard to the use of ethnic designations, it is profitable to resort to Łatyszonek's (2006) scenario of the development of the Belarusian self-identification and the use of the respective term *Belarus´* and its derivative ethnic designation *Belarusian*. At least, the historical attestations of these names cast a serious doubt on the naming of Ruthenian as "(Old) Belarusian" or "(Old) Ukrainian".

The theory of communicative networks, based on the postulate of a linguistic strife and an intermittent replacement of prestigious languages, tend to simplify complicated processes taking place within the alliance of peoples and cultures in the GDL. This theory, in particular, does not take into consideration differences

between standard and non-standard varieties of the languages in contact as well as the dynamic hierarchy of both major and minor speech communities. Moreover, possible contacts are viewed mechanistically and speech communities as acting entities are divorced from their speakers. Consequently, the linguist finds it hard to explain the level and intensity of contact and, more importantly, the mechanisms of possible convergences in the languages used in the GDL, including different regional varieties of borderland Polish (see Bednarczuk, 2010b; Zamblera, 2013). As a result, one can question the formation of a linguistic alliance defined by eight or even ten structural features within the confines of the GDL. If there existed a kind of "Kulturband" as postulated, for instance, by Niedźwiedź (2012, p. 190; see Walczak, 2004), one can also wonder if its impact on linguistic processes was strong enough to help generate a linguistic unity of the type described, for instance, by Heine and Kuteva (2006).

To address the latter conundrum, one may resort to the theory of grammaticalization and the respective mechanisms of contact- and non-contact-induced replication. Moreover, the social typology of Trudgill can be instrumental in understanding linguistic changes, including convergences. This approach is based not on the mechanistic interpretation of contacts between separate communities but on the explanation of mechanisms of changes and borrowability as determined by multiple societal factors operative in the history of the GDL.

In sum, in order to further our knowledge of the multilingualism in the GDL, one needs to reconsider some old postulates and introduce, instead, new approaches to the study of the sociolinguistic situation in this polity.

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A missing chain?
On the sociolinguistics of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania

Abstract

The article critically assesses the theory of communicative networks and its applicability in the study of multilingualism as found in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL). The author analyzes foundations for postulating the existence of a speech community in the GDL and adduces counterarguments against viewing this community as a linguistic alliance of the Balkan type. The article offers new sociolinguistic and areal-typological methods of the study of language contacts. The author

substantiates a systematic approach toward the problem of the ethnic attribution of Ruthenian. Based on the literary, linguistic, and cultural parameters, the author offers to drop the term 'Old (Middle) Belarusian' or 'Old (Middle) Ukrainian' in reference to this language.

Keywords: Grand Duchy of Lithuania; multilingualism; language contact; speech community; Ruthenian; Belarusian; Ukrainian

Brakujące ogniwo?
Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie w świetle socjolingwistyki

Streszczenie

W artykule poddano krytycznej analizie teorię sieci komunikacyjnych i jej zastosowanie w badaniach nad wielojęzycznością na terenie Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego (dalej WKL). Autor rozpatruje podstawy zarówno postulowania istnienia wspólnoty językowej w WKL, jak i kontrargumenty przemawiające przeciwko postrzeganiu tej wspólnoty jako sojuszu językowego na wzór bałkański. Artykuł podaje nowe metody socjolingwistyczne i przestrzenno-typologiczne w badaniach kontaktu języków. Autor uzasadnia systemiczne podejście do zagadnienia etnicznej atrybucji języka rusińskiego. Na podstawie wskazań literaturoznawczych, językoznawczych i kulturowych postuluje zaniechanie posługiwania się w odniesieniu do tego języka terminami 'staro-(średnio-)białoruski' lub 'staro-(średnio-)ukraiński'.

Słowa kluczowe: Wielkie Księstwo Litewskie; wielojęzyczność; kontakt języków; wspólnota językowa; język rusiński; język białoruski; język ukraiński

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Competing interests: The author declares that he has no competing interests.