Language: Talking or trading blows in the Upper Silesian industrial basin?[1]

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Abstract

In the 19th century, in the eastern half of Prussia's region of Upper Silesia, continental Europe's second largest industrial basin emerged. In the course of the accelerated urbanization that followed, an increasing number of German- and Germanic-speakers arrived in this overwhelmingly Slavophone area that historically skirted the Germanic dialect continuum to the west. The resultant dynamic interaction between Slavic- and German/ic-speakers led to the emergence of an Upper Silesian Slavic-Germanic pidgin that, in the late 19th century, became creolized. The 1922 partition of this region between Germany and Poland led to respective Germanization and Polonization of a population that was typically multiglossic in the creole, in the local Slavic dialect, in standard German, and in standard Polish. Successive dramatic reversals in these policies of Germanization and Polonization between 1939 and 1989 ensured the survival of a Polonized version of the creole, which the local population perceives either as a dialect of German, or a dialect of Polish, or their own (national) Silesian language.

Keywords: dialect continuum, ethnolinguistic nationalism, Germany, Poland, Upper Silesia, Upper Silesian Creole, Silesian language, [Upper] Silesians

1. Introduction

Upper Silesia used to be a peripheral territory lost among forests and swamps. It entered the annals of political history after Prussia had wrenched most of the Duchy of Silesia from the Habsburgs in 1740–42, during the First Silesian War. The main territorial prize at the time was Lower Silesia, with its large urban center at Breslau (Wrocław). However, in the course of the post-war settlement, Upper Silesia was

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partitioned. The southernmost portion of the area, which remained under Habsburg rule, evolved into the Crownland of Austrian Silesia. Prussia's section of the region remained an administratively undifferentiated part of the Duchy of Silesia, which spoke volumes about the economic and political insignificance of this area at that time.

The 19th century 'War of Liberation' (*Befreiungskrieg*), as it is known in German historiography, or more appropriately the War of the Sixth Coalition against Napoleon, commenced with the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm III's appeal to his subjects delivered at Breslau in 1813. This thrust Upper Silesia into the political limelight. The Klodnitzkanal (Kanał Kłodnicki), completed a year earlier, linked Gleiwitz, the nascent center of the Upper Silesian coal and steel industry, to the River Oder (Odra), which facilitated the supply of weapons indispensable for the success of the Prussian war effort. The Iron Cross (*Eisernes Kreuz*) military decoration, synonymous with Germanness and military valor, was produced for the first time ever in 1813 at a foundry in Gleiwitz (Ullmann 1985: 105; Weczerka 1977: 231).

The state border not only divided Upper Silesia. Since Enea Silvo de' Piccolomini (later Pope Pius II), in his 1458 treatise *De Europa*, mentioned the Oder as the dividing line between territories inhabited by Germanic- and Slavic-speakers (Lubos 1995: 68) language difference has also become part and parcel of the region's history. But until the rise of ethnolinguistic nationalism across Central Europe during the Napoleonic Wars it was a minor element of one's identity, the main social cleavage being that between the estates and the serfs. The social and spatial immobility of the peasantry that this entailed, a peasantry that accounted for the vast majority of the population at that time, also kept the language boundary stable.

The situation began to change with the gradual dismantling of serfdom in the first half of the 19th century, followed by the achievement of full male suffrage in 1871, when a German Empire was founded. The development of coal mining and metallurgy in Upper Silesia, the pace of which had been moderate up to that time, accelerated immensely in the last three decades of the century. Workers, technology specialists, and managers streamed to the rapidly growing cluster of industrial villages and townships from all over the German Empire, Austria-Hungary, and the Russian Empire. The frontiers of the three empires converged on Upper Silesia's easternmost end near Myslowitz (Mysłowice). Across the border, on the shared coal field similar industrial basins sprang up in eastern Austrian Silesia and around what was then the Russian town of Dombrova (Dąbrowa Górnicza).

The village of Kattowitz (Katowice) nicely exemplifies the sudden urban growth which accompanied this rapid industrialization. Between

Figure 1. *Postcard showing the meeting-point of the three empires.*

1825 and 1866 (i.e., one year after receiving its municipal rights) the locality's population grew from 675 to 4,815, and then almost tenfold to 43,137 in 1910 (Rozwój 2005). Meanwhile, Prussia became the core of the German Empire, which was founded in 1871 as a German nation-state. The linguistic dimension of German nationalism was reflected in the legally enshrined insistence that German would be the sole official language of the state and its offices, as well as the exclusive medium of education. To qualify as a German, one needed to speak and write this language and, ideally, also profess Protestantism. It would not do, as it had been before, that one could be a good Prussian speaking another language and attending Catholic masses. Now the state required one to become German first, and one's linguistically non-German Prussianness had to follow suit, or else. On top of that, the *Kulturkampf* ('war of cultures'), which was waged by Berlin against the Catholic Church, was not to come to a compromise conclusion until the latter half of the 1880s (Fulbrook 1990: 131–133).

2. From the insignificance of language to ethnolinguistic nationalism

The surge in spatial and social mobility caused by industrialization and urbanization began to blur the division between the germanophone western section of Upper Silesia and the Slavic-speaking part east of

the Oder. People could no longer speak merely to communicate. One was required to speak or write in something reified as 'a language' that, in this line of reasoning, could be acquired from one's parents and siblings, presumably, only in an imperfect manner. The task of 'perfecting' one's speech into a 'real' language was entrusted to the popular elementary education system. Although initiated in the late 18th century in Prussia, the system had managed to eliminate mass illiteracy in the region only by the 1870s (Hytrek 1996: 41).

Which dialect and which set of linguistic practices amounted to a language was initially decided by the noble elite after they had traded their previously preferred Latin and French in favor of local vernaculars connected to centers of state power (usually, capitals). Then industrialists stepped in, as they required a qualified workforce who could communicate in an unambiguous manner; without carrying that out standardized industrial production was difficult or dangerous, and even impossible. Scholars came in handy turning out dictionaries, grammars, and textbooks for the sake of imparting this sought-for uniformity through increasingly popular elementary education systems. Simultaneously, nationalists-turned-politicians took their cue from revolutionary France, where in 1794 the use of other languages than French or dialects too different from the Parisian one were banned in administration, education, and the public sphere (Edwards 1994: 154).

In Prussia the German language was elevated in this way, and the polity's Germanic-speaking population, whatever their dialectal difference might be, came to be perceived and to perceive themselves as speaking nothing else but German. A similar process with regard to Upper Silesia's Slavic-speakers commenced in 1849, when standard Polish was introduced as a medium of education to their elementary and secondary schools.[2] This language had not previously been used for this purpose in the region, but at that time the utilitarian needs of traditional monarchic politics and the economy still took precedence over ethnolinguistic nationalism. The argument which won the day in the wake of the 1848 ethnonational revolutions was that Upper Silesia's Slavic-speaking children would be at an educational advantage if they were initially taught in a language closer to their vernacular. This, in turn, would later ensure that they mastered German and, thus, would facilitate their swifter entrance into the mainstream of Prussia's society. The success of this initially Catholic linguistic policy was such that, almost immediately, it was also applied in schools for Protestant Slavic-speakers. However, the practice of using languages other than German in schools across Prussia was largely terminated in 1873, two years after the founding of the German Empire (Świerc 1990).

From the late 18th century to the 1870s the previously largely separate Germanic and Slavic dialect continua[3] had gradually become intermingled and overlapping in Upper Silesia, due to an increase in the permanent interaction between Germanic- and Slavic-speakers, one of the consequences of industrialization and urbanization in the region. The industrial basin emerged at the region's eastern end, in the very midst of the Slavic-speaking area. The abandonment of the use of Polish in elementary education did not allow, at least in the eyes of Upper Silesia's Slavic-speakers at that time, for associating their local Slavic dialect(s) with the Polish language which would have mirrored the earlier process of subsuming the region's Germanic dialects under the rubric of the German language.

Due to the geographical and linguistic closeness of Upper Silesia's Germanic dialects to the Meissen dialectal base of standard German (Kamusella 2009: 83), the initially marked dialect−standard language diglossia[4] present among the region's Germanic-speakers swiftly faded away. At the same time, a similar diglossia both intensified and became more complex among the Slavic-speakers. First, they continued to communicate in their families and with one another in their dialect(s). Polish remained a language of pastoral services (with the exception of the Catholic liturgy, conducted exclusively in Latin until the early 1970s) and religious instruction as offered in churches. German was the medium of school education, social advancement, state offices, and public life.

At the turn of the 20th century the Polish national movement infiltrated Upper Silesia from the German Empire's province of Posen (Poznań) and across the Austro-Hungarian frontier from Galicia. This added to the politicization of language. German had already been perceived as the badge of Germanness, while Polish now metamorphosed from being largely an ecclesiastical language into the sign of Polishness in Upper Silesia. By that time most Slavic-speaking Protestants in the northwestern corner of the region and in the adjacent areas of Lower Silesia had identified themselves as Germans on a confessional basis, which also facilitated the shift of their vernacular from Slavic to German. (Interestingly, in their Polish-language publications they kept their difference vis-à-vis Slavophone Catholics by employing the Gothic type, or *Fraktur*.[5] The Catholics printed their books and periodicals in Polish with the use of Antiqua, or today's regular type of the Latin script [Fielder 1987]).

However, this ongoing politicization of language did not touch upon and was not of interest to the majority of Upper Silesia's inhabitants until after the Great War. Meanwhile, in the booming industrial basin,

as a consequence of marrying across the language line and of the necessity of communicating in an unambiguous manner in shops, coal pits, and on the workshop floor, people adopted various innovative communication strategies. Some acquired the language of their spouses, employers, or co-workers. This was usually German, as the process was facilitated by German-medium popular elementary education. But in most cases, the majority of the Slavophone population who had finished only elementary education and had at best a shaky command of German, persisted in using their dialect(s), which became infused with German(ic) lexical and syntactic loans. More often than not German(ic)-speakers living in the midst of Slavic-speaking neighborhoods had no choice but to accommodate to this trend by introducing parallel Slavicisms into their speech, which brought it closer to the Germanized Slavic dialect(s).

As a result, a Germanic-Slavic creole arose, becoming the industrial basin's vibrant and ubiquitous lingua franca. This was equally despised by German and Polish nationalists given to guarding the perceived purity of their respective languages, which were to serve as the instruments of clear-cut differentiation between members of the German and Polish nations. The creole disturbed this equation of language with nation. Taking its different elements one could classify the creole as belonging to German or to Polish, or even to treat it as a language in its own right, which, from the viewpoint of ethnolinguistic nationalism, would amount to the recognition of the creole's speakers as a separate nation (Kamusella 1998: 145−147).

3. The creole: An unwanted child of ethnolinguistic miscegenation

The aforementioned concept of 'dialect continuum' stems from creole linguistics, where it made its first appearance as 'speech continuum' (*Sprachkontinuum*) in the early 20th century[6] (DeCamp 1971; Reinecke & Tokimasa 1934; Schuchardt 1914). A creole arises when speakers of two or more mutually unintelligible languages meet and maintain permanent economic and social contact. Initially, elements of both languages fuse into a pidgin (restricted language form) for ad hoc communication across the language barrier, among adults. When later the pidgin becomes the first language of children born to pidgin-speaking parents of different linguistic backgrounds, it develops into a distinct language and is termed a 'creole'.

The usual association of language with social status influenced by popular education in a standard language alters the communication situation, opening a creole speech continuum[7] of varying language

forms, usually ranging from low status creole to high status standard language(s). In Upper Silesia the standard language of high social status was undoubtedly German, though Polish retained its respectability as a church language. It also offered to those who mastered Polish a respectable ecclesiastical career if one chose to become a Catholic priest. Between 1850 and 1945, all priests educated at the Catholic divinity seminary in Breslau were required to acquire Polish alongside German, because the Breslau Diocese's Catholic population was concentrated in Upper Silesia and half of them were Slavic-speakers (Köhler 1997; Kopiec 1991: 90–94).

In the early 20th century the development of the region's Catholic publishing industry in Polish offered Polish ethnolinguistic nationalists 'proof' that these Slavic-speakers spoke Polish and were thus members of the Polish nation. Most of Upper Silesia's Slavic- and creole-speakers did not share this view and considered the very ethnonym 'Pole' a slur when applied to them (Kacíř 1997: 54). By the same token, the majority of Poles from Galicia and the Province of Posen did not believe that Upper Silesia's Slavic- and creole-speakers were Poles either (Pallas 1970: 50). However, the politicization of Polish in Upper Silesia made this language attractive to some Slavic- and creole-speakers there, especially outside the traditional sphere of religious and church use.

The elevated status of German and Polish as standard languages of recognized national identities put the very creole and Slavic dialect(s) at a disadvantage. The creole was disparaged in German as *Wasserpolnisch* ('watered down Polish') and in Polish as *popsuta polszczyzna* ('corrupted Polish') (Pallas 1970: 19–20). Besides the creole, German, and Polish as the reference points between which the creole speech continuum extended in Upper Silesia, one should not overlook the Slavic dialect(s). This dialect(s) was (were) associated with the rural areas from which most of the industrial basin's workforce stemmed. Many smallholders doubled as workers commuting to mines and metallurgical works, while an equally large number of workers worked on inherited plots of land in their ancestral villages or maintained vegetable gardens and kept chickens and pigs in the backyards of multi-family houses in towns and cities. The division between the urban sphere and the country was thus indistinct and highly permeable (Linek, unpublished work in progress). Likewise, although the Slavic dialect(s) came to be disdained among the town dwellers as 'reeking of the pigsty', nevertheless command of this dialect/these dialects was/were maintained in the industrial basin, whereas the knowledge of the creole also spread to the rural areas.

4. The Slavic-Germanic creole exemplified

It is difficult to present the dynamics of the post-creole continuum as it unfolded between the creole and the standard languages of German and Polish in Upper Silesia, because almost no research has been done on it so far. Any probing into the issue could have an adverse effect on the linguistically based claims of either German or Polish nationalism. For this reason it was (often actively) discouraged. As a result, to this day one can come across emotional reactions against any possibility of making such a creole a subject of scholarly scrutiny, and even applying elements of creole linguistics to analyze the sociolinguistic situation in Upper Silesia can prove controversial. This position is buttressed with the argument that it is appropriate to speak of creoles only in a non-European, colonial context, which in itself seems to be a reflection of Eurocentrism if not of outright racism unexpectedly mobilized in the service of Central European ethnolinguistic nationalisms (Wyderka 2004).

As presented below, I have put together the exemplification of Upper Silesia's post-creole continuum from a range of German- and Polish-language publications, usually from folkloristic and published literary sources. Hence, Germanic and Slavic elements in these quotations are recorded with the use of either German or Polish orthography. I have marked the Germanic elements **in bold** and the Slavic *in italics*. Syntactic, lexical, orthographic, or inflectional overlapping of Germanic and Slavic elements is marked ***in bold italics*** (Kamusella 1998: 155–156).

Examples (1–6) range from a Standard German-dominant pole to a Standard-Polish pole:

(1a) **Über Dächer über Häuser, wie der Kater zu die Mäuser, also schleicht sich** *Antek* **hin zu dem Bett von Schwägerin. Bruderlibe**. (Reiter 1989: 117)
'Over rooftops, over houses, like a cat chasing mice, Antek sneaks into the bed of his sister-in-law. Brotherly love.'

Comment: No article precedes the noun **Schwägerin** 'sister-in-law', which is typical in Slavic, but not in German. However the words and morphology are German, with the exception of *Antek* which is a diminutive derived from the Slavic (Polish) personal name *Antoni* ('Anthony'). Also note the non-standard plural **Mäuser** 'mice' (it is **Mäuse** in standard German), typical of the Germanic dialect of Upper Silesia. In addition the nominative plural **die Mäuse** occurs in place of the dative plural **den Mäusen**.

(1b) **Du** *Hach**er*** **verfluchter**, *pieron**nisch**er*** **Bux**. (Kaluza 1992: 198)
'You, accursed rascal, damn brat.'

Comment: *Hachar* or *hachor* and *bux* or *buks* are Silesian for 'brat, rascal, rogue, scoundrel' and so forth. *Pieron**nisch**er* is derived from the Silesian profane adjective *pieroński* 'damn, bloody', which comes from the popular expletive *pierona!* (literally 'let it/you be struck by a lightening') in the function of the English generalized expletive 'fuck.' *Hachar* rendered here as *Hach**er*** and *pieroński* as *pieron**nisch**er* take German suffixes, and *Hach**er*** begins with the capital letter, which is normal for German nouns in writing, but not for Slavic ones. **Bux** seems to be a Silesian word of Germanic origin, here written as a German noun with the initial capital letter, and with the use of the letter **x** that in Slavic is usually rendered as *ks*.

(2a) ***Maryka*** **übern Reifen springt**, **was die** *pajacy* ***ham*** **mitgebringt**.
(Reiter 1989: 117)
'Mary jumps over the hoop, which the urchins have brought along.'

Comment: ***Maryka***, or more usually ***Marika***, is a Silesian and German diminutive derived from the name ***Maria*** ('Mary'). *Pajacy* is the plural of the Silesian and Polish word *pajac* 'clown'. The auxiliary verb ***ham*** is of the Upper Silesian Germanic dialect, and corresponds to the standard German **haben** ('have').

(2b) **Sollt ich kapitulir***owatsch? ... Tatulek* **hat Krieg gemachen**.
(Kaluza 1992: 203–204)
'Should I surrender? … Dad went to war.'

Comment: The German verb **kapitulieren** here takes the suffix of the Slavic infinitive *-ować*, rendered phonetically in German spelling (*-owatsch*), from the Silesian verb *kapitulowoć*, which corresponds to Polish *kapitulować*. *Tatulek* is a diminutive for *tata* (or *tato*) 'dad'. **Sollt** is an Upper Silesian Germanic dialectal form of the auxiliary verb that is written as **soll** with the first person singular in standard German.

(3a) **Mach dem** *kanarek* **mal die** *klotka* **auf**, **da kann er sich rein und raus***hopsać*. (Reiter 1989: 117)
'Let the canary out of its cage, so it could hop in [its cage] and out [of it again].'[8]

Comment: *Klotka* is Silesian for 'cage', rendered as *klatka* in standard Polish. The verb **raus***hopsać* is composed of German **raus** 'out' and

Silesian *hopsać* 'to hop'. In turn *hopsać* stems from the noun and expletive *hop* 'to jump', and/or German **hopsen** for 'to hop'. Because German syntax allows for the easy production of composite verbs from two or three elements, this possibility has been amply utilized in the Upper Silesian creole and Silesian to blend together Germanic and Slavic elements.

(3b) **Die** *Mamulka* **denkt sich** *w doma*, **was sich macht Soldaten**, **denkt sich**, *żre kapusta, kloski*, **trinkt sich Wein** .... **Hab geschrieben Mutter gestern, hab *kanon*** *puzowatsch*, ***is*** *psiakrew* **kaput gegangen, muß** *go* **bezahl*o*watsch**. ... ***S*abioł *szablą* ganz alleine tausendzwölf turkusen**. (Kaluza 1992: 204)
'Mom thinks at home what soldiers [may] do [in their barracks], she thinks, eats cabbage, dumplings, [and] drinks wine …. I wrote to my mother yesterday [that] I cleaned the cannon, [but] damn it, it went down, and [now] I must pay for [it]. … With a sword he alone killed 1012 Turks.'

Comment: *Mamulka* is Silesian for 'mummy' and corresponds to Polish *mamusia*, both forms derived from Slavic *mama* 'mum'. *W doma* ('at home') is a combination of standard Polish *w domu* and its Silesian counterpart *doma*. *Kloski* is the plural of Silesian *kloska* (or more appropriately, *klouska* in Polish spelling, and *klōska* in standard Silesian spelling[9]) 'dumpling', derived from Germanic *klöse*, which is rendered as *kluska* in Polish. In *puzowatsch* 'to clean' and **bezahl*o*watsch** 'to pay [for]' the Slavic infinitive suffix *-wać* is phonetically rendered in German spelling as *-owatsch*. The Silesian verb *pucowoć* and its Polish counterpart *pucować* come from the German one of **putzen**. In ***s*abioł** '[he] killed' the initial consonant is rendered phonetically in German spelling, but in Slavic it is the grapheme *z* that denotes the desired consonant, so the word is *zabioł* in Silesian, or *zabił* in Polish. The German elements of the sentence's syntax are modeled on Slavic grammar, including the use of the reflexive pronoun.

(4a) ***Alexander*** *scho na* **wander***, kupiou buty za trzy knuty.* (Reiter 1989: 118)
'Alexander went for a walk, [and] bought shoes [in exchange] for three whips.'

Comment: In the phrase *na* **wander** 'for a walk', Slavic syntax and a Slavic particle are combined with the German/ic word, which is typical of the Upper Silesian creole and the Silesian language. The Silesian verb *scho* 'went' for the male third person singular is rendered phoneti-

cally in German spelling, and could be written in Polish spelling as either *szoł* or *szou*. The latter possibility is actually employed in *kupiou* (or *kupioł*) 'bought'. In standard Silesian spelling, the verbs are written as *szŏ* and *kupiŏ*, and correspond to the Polish verbs *poszedł* and *kupił*.

(4b) *... **Szlajfyrze** mieli ta łośka z bruskami zamontowano na **linksztandze** przi kole.* (Łosprawki 1995: 10)
'The [knife] sharpeners had their little axis with whetstones [attached to it] fitted onto the bicycle's handlebar.'

Comment: The singular of Silesian ***szlajfyrze*** is *szlajfyrz* for 'cutter, grinder, polisher'; originally from German **Schleifer** and **schleifen** 'to polish, to grind', which also correspond to the Polish pair *szlifiarz* and *szlifować*. The Silesian verb for 'to polish' is closer to the German original as *szlajfowoć*. *Łośka*, today written in standard Silesian spelling as *ôśka* is a diminutive derived from *ôś* 'axis'. The diminutive and the noun correspond to Polish *ośka* and *oś*. Silesian *bruska* or *bruśka* 'whetstone' stems from the Slavic verb *brusić* 'to mill, grind'. Silesian *koło* 'bicycle' (literally 'wheel') is a calque of German **Fahrrad** (frequently shortened to **Rad** 'wheel'), while in Polish 'bicycle' is *rower* (though in non-standard varieties of the Polish language *koło* occurs in this meaning, too.) Silesian ***linksztanga*** 'handlebar' comes from German **Lenkstange** 'steering rod'. Silesian *przi* 'at' corresponds to Polish *przy*.

(5a) ***Mary**ko ty stara kryko, ty mos tyn pysk jak stary* **wertiko**. (Reiter 1989: 118)
'Mary, you old hag [literally 'walking stick'], you have a face as [big and flat as] a sideboard.'

Comment: The case of the name **Maryka** is explained above in (2a). The suffix *-ko* is of the Slavic vocative case here. *Kryka* is Silesian for 'walking stick' or metaphorically for 'old, ugly woman'. The Silesian verb *mos* 'to have', here in second person singular, reflects a limited eastern Upper Silesian pronunciation, typical of the industrial basin, but the usual form is *mosz*,[10] which corresponds to Polish *masz*. From the viewpoint of Slavic syntax there is no need for the demonstrative *tyn* 'this' in the phrase *mos tyn pysk*, and it would be more usual for it to read *mos pysk*. Here, the demonstrative *tyn* reflects the use of the definite article in German. In this way the use of the German definite article has become a distinctive syntactic feature of the Upper Silesian creole and the Silesian language. Silesian *tyn* corresponds to Polish *ten*. **Wertiko** is Silesian for 'sideboard for underwear and bedclothes', but also occurs in Polish specialized jargon pertaining to furniture.

(5b) *A potym* **geburstag** *moł jego baba i* ***bajtel***. (Krystofek 1997: 5)
'And then his wife and their kid had their birthdays.'

Comment: Silesian *potym* 'then' corresponds to Polish *potem*. German **Geburstag** for 'birthday' is the same in Silesian, while Polish for this meaning employs *urodziny. Baba* is Slavic usually for 'old woman', but in Silesian it simply means 'woman'. The phrase *jego baba* literally 'his woman', meaning 'wife', is a calque from the German expression **ihre Frau** for 'wife'. **Bajtel** is Silesian of Germanic origin for 'kid, small child'. Silesian *moł* (or *mioł*) 'had', or *mō* (*miō*) in standard spelling, corresponds to Polish *miał*. In the phrase *moł jego baba i* ***bajtel*** the male form of the verb is in agreement with the male gender of the noun **bajtel**, which is unusual in Slavic, for such an agreement is typically marked between the verb and the subject noun that directly borders on the verb. And *baba* is obviously of female gender, entailing that the verb should take its female form, namely, *moła* (*mioła*) or *mōa* (*miōa*).

(6a) *Za komuny szło nejwyżi pozaglondać na* ***fajerwerki*** *w telewizorze.* (Krystofek 1997: 5)
'Under communism, one could [have some fun] only by watching fireworks on television [on New Year's Eve].'

Comment: the sentence is in heavily Polonized Silesian. The only concessions to Silesian are the adjective *nejwyżi* and the verb *pozaglondać* that correspond to Polish *najwyżej* and *pooglądać*, respectively. However, a genuine Silesian-speaker would pronounce the verb as *pozaglondo̲ć* rather than *pozaglonda̲ć*, which sounds more Polish than Silesian. Silesian shares *szło* (literally 'it went so' meaning 'one could') with colloquial Polish, and ***fajerwerki*** is a loanword from German (**Feuerwerke**) that was adopted in many languages across Central Europe.

(6b) *... Dziołcha była piykno – no wiycie: krew a mleko, jak to padajom.* (Strzałka 1976: 57)
'The girl was beautiful, you know, [as they say, beautiful and fresh] as blood and milk.'

Comment: Silesian *dziołcha* (*dziōcha* in standard spelling) 'girl' corresponds to Polish *dziewczyna*, Silesian *wiycie* 'you know' to Polish *wiecie*, and Silesian *padajom* 'they say' to Polish *mówią*.

5. The rise of ethnolinguistic nation-states in Central Europe: The dialect and creole purged

After 1918 Central Europe's previously non-ethnolinguistically-based political order of multiethnic empires was replaced with ethnolinguistically defined nation-states. In the wake of these events, the German Empire's Upper Silesia was divided between Germany and Poland (though a small sliver of the land was ceded to the new state of Czechoslovakia). Prior to the division of the region in 1922, the vast majority of eligible voters (that is, men), estimated at between 350,000 and half a million, had wanted Upper Silesia to remain undivided, either by becoming an independent nation-state or an autonomous state within Germany's borders, and with German and Polish as its official languages (Schmidt-Rösler 1999: 11).

Against most Upper Silesians' wishes, language had been adopted in Central Europe at this period as the main ideological instrument of creating, maintaining, and legitimizing national statehood. Hence, the region's multilingualism and diglossia were anathema to the national centers, and as such these linguistic phenomena became political targets for elimination. First, between 1922 and 1939, 190,000 Upper Silesians who considered themselves Germans left Poland's section of the region for Germany, and 100,000 self-identified Poles left Germany's part of Upper Silesia for Poland (Kamusella 1999: 56). Subsequently, after a four-year transitional period, the use of German in state offices in Polish Upper Silesia was discontinued, and the authorities gradually limited the access of dialect/creole-speakers' children to the German-medium minority educational system, because officially they were deemed to be Poles. Similarly, Berlin barely tolerated the Polish-language minority schools which had been established in Germany's section of Upper Silesia on the insistence of the Allied victors in the Great War, and did its best to dissolve them. Warsaw perceived the region's Slavic dialect(s) and the Slavic-Germanic creole as a 'corrupt' form of Polish in dire need of 'purification', though after 1926 concessions were made legalizing the public oral use of the dialect/creole as long as it was purged of 'ugly Germanisms' (Gerlich 1994; Kopeć 1980: 56; Linek 1999). However, it was impossible reasonably to deny the Slavic character of the dialect/creole, so the German authorities emphasized its difference vis-à-vis Polish, and denied Warsaw's claim that it was a dialect of Polish. Likewise, bilingualism was encouraged as a possible intermediate stage on the path toward future German-language monolingualism. On the ideological plane the concept of *eigensprachige Kulturdeutsche* (non-German-speaking Germans united with the German nation through the shared German national culture) was proposed,

which allowed officialdom to consider Upper Silesia's dialect/creole-speakers to be an *Adoptivstamm* ('adopted tribe') of the German nation, and their creole/dialect a *Kulturmundart* ('cultural dialect') of the German language. (Eichenberger 1994: 35; Pallas 1970: 31)

During World War II, all of Upper Silesia was reincorporated into Germany, and the policy of creating a homogenous (including at a linguistic level) German nation (*Volksgemeinschaft*) was pursued. This also meant the imposition of German as the sole language of public and of private life (a totalitarian novelty). By the same token, the use of other languages was prohibited, which, in the case of Upper Silesia, meant a ban on the use of the dialect/creole, now, quite ironically, identified as the Polish language (Kneip 1999: 340). After 1945, when the entire Upper Silesia, as part of the German territories east of the Oder-Neisse line (*deutsche Ostgebiete*), was incorporated into communist Poland, a similarly strict policy was followed, but now of stern Polonization. It was couched in terms of 're-Polonization' and 'de-Germanization'. This assumed the 'natural Polishness' of the region from time immemorial which only in recent times had been concealed under the 'narrow veneer of the German façade.' The 'transfer' (that is, expulsion) of Germans from the German territories east of the Oder-Neisse line granted to Poland was not applied to Upper Silesia. The major instrument deployed to 'polonize' the territory was language. German was effectively banned and the use of the dialect/creole discouraged, because during the war it had been receptive to even more Germanisms, and thus now appeared to the incoming Polish administration and settlers to be a 'dialect of German' (Linek 1997; Wyderka 1998).

The postwar border changes and expulsions eliminated the traditional broad borderland zone of bi- and multilingualism and of creoles, which had spanned the North Slavic and Germanic dialect continua from Białystok and Allenstein (Olsztyn), via Poznań, Oppeln (Opole) to Olomouc, Prague, and Brno. Both German and Polish sections of Upper Silesia had been in the midst of this transitional zone. Totalitarian and authoritarian language policies discouraged anything other than monolingualism, enforced the use of the 'correct' national-cum-state language, and leveled dialects. Later, this monolingualizing change was maintained and fortified by popular elementary education and the development of increasingly ubiquitous mass media (press, cheap books, radio, and television). The rapid Soviet-style urbanization and industrialization facilitated this process. As a result, the North Slavic dialect continuum was split among the areas of the use of standard national-cum-official languages, almost perfectly overlapping with the territories of Poland in the case of Polish, and of Czechoslovakia in the case of Czech and Slovak. Although everyday dialectal differen-

tiation was preserved to a varying degree in both German states and in Austria, the sharp political border of these three German-speaking states with Poland and Czechoslovakia was translated into an equally definite frontier between the increasingly de-dialectialized Germanic and North Slavic dialect continua. It was an unprecedented event, as earlier changes in political frontiers had rarely, if ever, been reflected in linguistic borders between dialect continua. And even if such an adjustment should occur, it was usually through a gradual, organic process taking several generations.

6. The limited survival of linguistic pluralism in post-1945 Upper Silesia

After the conclusion of the population expulsions in 1950 and the subsequent scaling down of the draconian measures required by re-Polonization and de-Germanization, an uneasy status quo developed. The local, multilingual, German, dialect/creole and Polish speaking population were not expelled, due to Warsaw's ideological decision to recognize them as Poles under the ambiguous label of 'autochthons' (*autochtoni*). But the main, though under-advertised, reason for retaining them was the fact that the authorities needed this pool of highly skilled workers to run the Upper Silesian industrial basin, which (as it had not been destroyed during World War II) generated about half of Poland's GDP in the second half of the 1940s (Samsonowicz *et al*. 2007: 181). Succumbing to the authorities' pressure, the autochthons stopped transmitting German within families, in order not to condemn their children to permanent social and economic exclusion. Schools and mass media, using standard Polish exclusively, increasingly polonized the dialect/creole. Meanwhile, many autochthons did their best to leave communist Poland for West Germany, both in order to be reunited with family members, and because of the pull factor of the West German *Wirtschaftswunder* ('economic miracle'), which contrasted sharply with the overall drabness and, later, stagnation of the communist economy in Poland. Despite the de facto sealing off of Poland from the outside world, between 1950 and 1989, 558,000 autochthons were allowed to emigrate, or 'escaped' to West Germany (Kamusella 1999: 70).

This phenomenon of continuous emigration kept replenishing the dialect/creole with Germanisms, as employed by autochthons in West Germany. (In West German bureaucratese, they were referred to as *Aussiedler*, or 'resettlers [from the formerly German territories east of the Oder-Neisse line].') The emigrants had an increasingly antiquated knowledge of German (in comparison to the West German usage of the language) if born prior to the mid-1930s, or almost no command of

this language if born shortly before or after 1945. Thus they rarely mastered German, and their language remained infused with Slavic and Polish linguistic loans. On the contrary, their children speak and write almost exclusively in German and know only a handful of dialect/creole expressions. But beginning in the 1970s these emigrants were allowed to visit their families in Poland, which led to the boosting of the Germanic dimension of the creole/dialect in Upper Silesia.

In practice Upper Silesia's autochthons were treated as second-class citizens or even 'crypto-Germans' in communist Poland, which translated into their social, economic, and cultural isolation from the mainstream of Polish society. This isolation was reinforced by a marked preference for endogamy, a preference which was moderated only in the latter half of the 1980s. By then the economic situation in Poland had become so desperate that autochthons, who had a better chance of being allowed to leave for the West than average Polish citizens, thus became more desirable marriage partners for ethnic Poles. Nevertheless, their general social isolation and vibrant family contacts with West Germany kept their dialect/creole from becoming an indistinguishable part of the Polish language.

The re-Germanization of the creole/dialect intensified after the fall of communism, when German-language satellite television became available throughout Central and Eastern Europe, the teaching of German was permitted in Upper Silesia and the German minority was legally recognized in Poland. Over a quarter of a million autochthons living in Upper Silesia have received German citizenship and passports to date (Kamusella 2003: 712). This has allowed them legally to undertake seasonal or permanent work in Germany since the early 1990s, thus reinvigorating the knowledge of the dialect/creole among the Upper Silesian emigrants in Germany and de-polonizing this dialect/creole in Upper Silesia itself.

7. Everything is in the observer's eye

There is no generally accepted linguistic definition of 'a language'. What a language is is decided by politics, meaning the current language use, often in conjunction with relevant legislation on such use. And the stronger the politicization of language use (as in Central and Eastern Europe), the more decisions on what a language is are detached from current linguistic reality. That is why Moldovan and Romanian, which are practically identical in speech and writing, have retained their official status as separate languages, and why the breakup of Yugoslavia was paralleled by the split of the Serbo-Croatian language into Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian, and Montenegrin, which in the vast majority of

communicative cases (if not in all) are mutually intelligible (Greenberg 2008). On the other hand, Swiss German and Low German, which are scarcely mutually comprehensible, are considered to be dialects of the German language. By the same token, speakers of Dutch and Low German, although having little trouble in communicating with one another, are encouraged to believe that their idioms are or belong to different languages.

Languages are as imagined as nations. It is speakers, in the context of an overall political and social situation in which they happen to live, who decide what they speak and how they choose to interpret and construe their given ethnolinguistic situation (Kamusella 2004; Preston 1993). At present, in Upper Silesia both standard Polish and the dialect/creole are used on an everyday basis and are transmitted in families. Autochthons acquire German at school and during seasonal or permanent work in Germany. German is of much less interest to ethnic Poles. Both Upper Silesia's ethnic Poles and autochthons strive to master English, but only in its function as a global lingua franca, which (at least as of now) has no bearing on their national, ethnic, or linguistic identity.

Interestingly, but not atypically, autochthons who speak the dialect/creole sometimes interpret what it is quite differently, though predictably in line with their identificational choices. Hence, those who consider themselves to be Germans use the creole/dialect as a sign of their non-Polishness, because in most cases they have little or no knowledge of German. Some even see it as a dialect of the German language. Not surprisingly, the dialect/creole appears to be a dialect of Polish in the eyes of those autochthons who define themselves as Poles. In the last Polish census in 2002, over 170,000 autochthons declared themselves to belong to the Silesian nation.[11] According to them the creole/dialect is nothing less than their national language of Silesian (Polish census 2009).

In today's Poland, from the ethnolinguistic perspective, Upper Silesia, split between the provinces of Opole and Silesia (Katowice),[12] is the country's most multiethnic and multilingual region. A single village or town there may be inhabited by Germans, Poles and Silesians, who speak German, Polish and Silesian. However, in many cases these three languages may happen to be the same dialect/creole, and the actual experience of multilingualism may be limited to code-switching between it and standard Polish.

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Notes

1. In October 2007, an early version of this article was delivered as a paper at the conference, 'Lieux communs de la multiculturalité dans les villes centre-européennes (fin XIXe siècle−début XXIe siècle)', Centre Interdisciplinaire de Recherches Centre-Européennes, Université Paris IV Sorbonne, Paris, France. I would like to thank Delphine Bechtel from the university who inspired me to write the article, and also Richard J. Watts for gentle reminders to overhaul the piece for publication in *Multilingua*. A word of thanks also goes to the anonymous reviewer for his helpful comments, corrections and suggestions, and to Michael O'Gorman who helped me polish the prose of my article.
2. In the same function, the Slavic language of Morawec (Moravian), based on a local dialect, was introduced to schools in the southernmost portion of Prussian Upper Silesia contained within the boundaries of the Archdiocese of Olmütz (Olomouc). The rest of this region, together with Lower Silesia, was included in the Diocese of Breslau, so the ecclesiastical boundary gave rise to the implementation of different educational policies, and to differences in the language of instruction adopted. I refrain from discussing the subject due to the present article's brevity; the interested reader will find a more extended treatment of the Morawecs in Kamusella (2007).
3. The term 'dialect continuum' denotes a territory within which a chain of mutually intelligible dialects unfolds, imperceptibly changing from village to village, from region to region. However, differences cumulate with distance, and speakers of dialects from the opposite ends of the continuum may have difficulties in understanding each other. See Chambers & Trudgill (1998: 6).
4. Diglossia refers to the situation of bi- or multilingualism in which a speaker or community uses two or more languages or distinctive language forms to communicate in different spheres of life, for instance, one in family and neighborhood situations, another in office and school situations, and yet another in church. See Ferguson (1959).
5. *Fraktur*, literally 'broken letters' (from Latin *fractus* for 'broken') generally refers to the Black Letter (Gothic) type, but also more specifically to a subgroup of Black Letter typefaces, which were in use across Central Europe and Scandinavia from the 19th until the mid-20th centuries.
6. A speech continuum is social in its essence (see above: endnote 3). But when its main idea (of a chain of interrelated language forms imperceptibly [continuously] changing from one to another) is projected onto the spatial plane rather than social, it yields the concept of dialect continuum.
7. The (creole) speech continuum is often qualified as 'post-creole', because its opening often heralds the beginning of the end of a given creole, the continuum functioning as a conveyor belt from the creole to a standard language(s). In a stable situation in which everybody goes to elementary school and most attend secondary school with the standard language as the medium of education, such a shift from the creole to the standard is completed in one or two generations. Obviously, the dynamics change diametrically if a creole is elevated to the status of official language, thus, in turn, becoming a standard language, which then many may aspire to acquire.
8. Silesian is not a standardized language, and one of my native-speaking informers gave a slightly different translation of the sentence, namely 'Let the canary out of its cage, so it could clean itself and hop in [its cage] and out [of it again].' Comment: **Sich rein** 'to clean oneself', typical of Upper Silesian Germanic dialect, is a calque of Silesian *ŏczyścić sie* (or *łoczyścić sie* in Polish spelling).

9. As proposed at the 2008 conference on the Silesian language held in Katowice, the standard of Silesian spelling was worked out in 2009 by a group of linguists and Silesian language enthusiasts headed by Andrzej Roczniok and Jolanta Tambor. Roczniok leads the unrecognized Związek Ludności Narodowości Śląskiej (Union of the Population of the Silesian Nationality), publishes books in Silesian, applied for the ISO 639-3 classificatory code *szl* for the Silesian language that was granted in 2007, and founded and publishes the first-ever periodical where some articles appear in Silesian, *Ślůnsko Nacyjo*, now written as *Ślōnsko Nacyjo* in agreement with standard Silesian spelling. Jolanta Tambor is a linguist based at the University of Silesia, Katowice. The aforementioned spelling standardization group also included representatives of the two following organizations, Pro Loquela Silesiana ('For the Sake of the Silesian Language') and the Tôwarzistwo Piastowaniô Ślónskij Môwy Danga ('Society for the Cultivation of the Silesian Language − Rainbow'). They promote the use and standardization of the Silesian language. All the aforementioned actors constitute a pressure group that, on the basis of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, lobbies for granting Silesian the status of regional language in Poland, by adding it to the Polish Sejm's 2005 Act on National and Ethnic Minorities and the Regional Language.
10. The phonetic shift from affricates and fricatives (<cz>, <sz> , <ż> and <dż> in Polish orthography; or <ch>, <sh>, graphological variants for [ʒ] and <j> in English spelling) to sibilants (<c>, <s>, <z> and <dz> in Polish spelling; or <ts>, <s>, <z> and <ds> in English orthography), as reflected here in the Silesian opposition of *mosz* to *mos*, is known in Slavonic linguistics as *mazurzenie*, or Mazuration. The name of the phenomenon is derived from the kindred names of the regions of Mazovia (or Mazowsze in Polish) and Mazuria (Mazury in Polish), where it is widespread and was described for the first time. Mazuration is also observed in eastern Upper Silesia and Wielkopolska (Gogolewski 2001: 128).
11. Across the border, in Czech Silesia the phenomenon was also observed. In 1991, in the last Czechoslovak census, 44,000 people declared their nationality to be Silesian. But ten years later, in the first Czech census (2001), the number of these declarations plummeted to a quarter, to a mere 11,000. (Nekvapil *et al.* 2009: 71)
12. The now curiously named contemporary Province of Silesia was known as the Province of Katowice before 1999. Only one third of its territory consists of historically Upper Silesian lands, and all told, this province is just the tiny easternmost segment of historical Silesia, straddling the Silesian−Małopolska border.

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