



THE BALTIC SEA REGION

Cultures, Politics, Societies

Editor Witold Maciejewski



A Baltic University Publication

18 Polish, Kashubian and Sorbian

Sven Gustavsson

1. Polish

Even though Poland was divided in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries between three countries, the Polish language flourished during this period. The Polish language became a refined cultural instrument in the hands of the many great authors who worked both in Poland and in emigration, writers such as the Romantic poets Adam Mickiewicz, Zygmunt Krasiński, and Juliusz Słowacki, the comedy writer Aleksander Fredro, and prose writers Eliza Orzeszkowa, Aleksander Głowacki (Prus), Henryk Sienkiewicz, Stefan Żeromski, and Władysław Reymont. The Polish language and the Catholic church were the cement which united the divided Polish nation.

The Polish state between the two World Wars was not monoethnic. About one third of the population was non-Polish, including Ukrainians, Germans, Jews, etc. In the beginning, the minorities were promised extensive rights, but the actual policy took another form, especially in the eastern parts where the policy favoured Polonization. This policy met with resistance. As an outcome of World War II, the Holocaust, and the driving out of the Germans, the population transfers with the neighbouring Soviet republics, and later emigration of Germans and Jews, Socialist Poland became a national state. The number of people belonging to minorities was for a long time estimated to be rather small but especially in recent years the growing number of people who state that they are Germans has added to the number of non-Poles.

The status of the Polish language was undisputed in post-war Poland. The minorities, Slovaks, Poles, Czechs, Ukrainians, Belarusians, and Lithuanians, eventually got the right to use their language in education, to form organizations and to publish journals and the like. In spite of the fact that Poland was a part of the Socialist bloc, the role and status of Russian was rather low in society. Russian was, it is true, obligatory as the first foreign language in the Polish schools but the results of this teaching were poor due to the lack of interest and resistance among the pupils. Of course, Russian had an impact on some spheres of life, especially on the language of politics, and was a source of influence on the official newspeak, the so-called *nowomowa*. Russian has now lost its position in the Polish school system and been exchanged for Western European languages such as English and German. At the same time, the negative attitude towards the use of Russian seems to have diminished in Polish society.

2. Kashubian

The Kashubian area, which today stretches from the Baltic Sea northwest of Gdansk about 80 kilometres southward but which earlier had a larger extension, has passed from hand to

bo Pón Bóg mǎze świéczył nad nima
i bǎdǎ królowlé na wieczi wieków.
6 I rzekł mie:
„Ne słowa są wórtne wiaré i pró-
wdzévé,
a Pón, Bóg dǎchów, proroków,
wésólł swojego aniola,
żebé swojim slégóm ukazac, co są
wnetka muszi stac.
7 A hewo wnetka przǎidę.
Błogosławiony, chto strzeże słów
proroctwa ny knédzi!”
8 To prawie jǎ, Jan,
czéjé i widzę ne rzeczę.
A czéj jem uczul i uzdrzól,
upódl jem, żebé zložéć poklón
przed stopama aniola, jaczi mie je
ukózł.
9 Na to rzekł do mie:
„Czǎ le, nie róć tego,
bo jǎ jem pospólslégǎ twojim
i twojich bracyńów, proroków,
i ných, co strzeżǎ słów ti knédzi.
Bogu samému zložéć poklón!”
10 Ponemu rzekł do mie:

„Nie kładzǎ pieczćé na słowa pro-
roctwa ny knédzi,
bo szǎrk sǎ zbliżǎ*.
11 Chto krziwǎdy, niech jesz krziwǎdę
wǎrzǎdzy,
é plégóć niech sǎ jesz barzi splé-
gawi,
a sprawidǎlwi niech jesz barzi spra-
widǎlwié postépuje,
a swięti niech sǎ jesz uswićy!
12 Hewo wnetka [jǎ] przǎidę,
a moja zǎplata je ze mnǎ,
żebé kóždému tak odpłacéć, jakǎ je
jego robota.
13 Jǎ jem Alfa i Ómega,
Pierwszi é Slédny,
Zǎczǎtk é Kucif.
14 Błogosławiony [jǎ], chtërny plǎ-
czǎ swaje ruchna*, żebé mogǎ pano-
wac nad drzewiécǎ żécǎgo
é żebé wehódelé do Miasta wierze-
jama.
15 Buten [za murǎ miasta] sǎ psǎ*,
gusłórze, rozpustnikowie, mordórze,
téczele bǎdków
é kózi, chto miluje leż i w ni żéje.

ZAKUŃCZENIE

16 Jǎ, Jezés, posłǎl jem mojego
aniola,
żebé wama zaswiadcze ó tim, co są
tikǎ Koscolǎw.
Jǎ jem *Odnoga i Rǎd Dawida*,
*Gwiǎzda jǎsnǎ, poréczénǎ***.
17 A Duch* i Oblubienica* mówǎ:
„Przǎidzǎ!”*

A chto czéje, niech powié:
„Przǎidzǎ!”
I chto mó prǎgnǎczǎkǎ, niech przǎi-
dze,
chto chce, niech wodé żécǎgo za
darmo nabierze.
18 Jǎ swiódzczę
kóždému, chto sléchǎ słów proroct-

22.10 Przǎr. 1.3.
22.14 Symbol óżiwaniǎ sakramentalnych
spósobów oczǎszczeniǎ dǎszé – zastrzǎdź przǎ
wstǎpie do Niebieskiego Jeruzalem, miastǎ
niemiertǎnych.

22.15 Gwǎsto przǎgǎdka do téch, co grǎszǎ
seksualnymǎ nadużécama (przǎr. Pwt 23,18b).
22.16 Iz 11,1; 1,10; Rz 1,3; Lb 24,17.
22.17 „Duch” = trzeci Ósobǎ Boskǎ; „Ob-
lubienica” = Kosob; „przǎidzǎ” – liturgiczne
Marana tha! (przǎr. 1 Kor 16,22; Flp 4,5).

Figure 80. The New Testament in Kashubian, translated by Eugeniusz Gołǎbk, 1993. Photo: Witold Maciejewski

very important. Kashubian Masses are now held in the churches and the Bible is being translated. The Kashubian literary language has thus broadened its functions in society in the last few years, a change which will probably increase its prestige among the Kashubers themselves.

3. Upper and Lower Sorbian

It is hard to tell how many Sorbs there are today. According to estimates made by a Sorbian research institute in 1987, the number of Sorbian speakers was 67,000, but the number of people with a Sorbian ethnic consciousness was lower, 45,000. Less than 20% percent of the Sorbs are Lower Sorbs. The number of Sorbs has shrunk considerably the last century as well as the extension of their settlement area. In 1880-84, their number was estimated to be 166,000 people.

The Thirty Years War devastated the Sorbian area. Perhaps half of the Sorbian population perished in this war. The population losses were, however, regained in the next century, and it is estimated that the number of Sorbians amounted to 250,000 by the end of the 18th century. The Congress of Vienna in 1815 gave most of the Lusatian area to Prussia, and from the beginning of the 1900s one can witness an increase in the Germanization pressure. This led to a rising assimilation tempo, and the number of Sorbs was sharply reduced. According to estimates in St-Petersburg in 1849, only 142,000 Sorbs were left. At the same time, Romanticism and pan-Slavism caused a reaction among educated Sorbs. Protestant Sorbs usually studied at German universities where they formed Sorbian organizations, where-

In spite of the restricted possibilities, Socialist Poland saw the publication both of books in Kashubian and books about the Kashubers and the Kashubian area. The work on the codification of the Kashubian literary language continued. In this connexion one of the problems was, and is, that the dialectal diversity makes it hard to find a common denominator which could be accepted by all Kashubian speakers.

In the last few years, both before and after 1989, cultural activities among the Kashubers have increased considerably. Knowledge about Kashubian culture, history, and language are included in some school curricula, Kashubian matters have gained a more prominent place in the mass media, and more Kashubian books have been published. The changed attitude of the Catholic church towards the Kashubian language is of utmost importance for the attitudes towards the language among the Kashubers themselves. In this context, the Pope's visit in May 1987, during which he appealed to the Kashubers to preserve their traditional values including their language, was

as Catholics since the beginning of the 18th century had their most intimate connexions with Prague.

Originally, the writings in Sorbian were dialectally quite diverse. But the efforts to codify the language soon became concentrated around the Budyšin and Chošebuz dialects. By the end of the 17th century, the Diet of Upper Lusatia had created a commission which had as its task the standardization of the Upper Sorbian Protestant language. In the 19th century one can talk about three standards: the Lower Sorbian, the Upper Sorbian Catholic, and the Upper Sorbian Protestant standards. After World War II a new spelling system became obligatory for the whole Sorbian language area.

After World War I, the Sorbs tried to get independence, but their efforts did not meet with any success. In the Weimar Republic, however, they had more hopeful possibilities. The organizations *Domowina* and *Sokol* were formed, and the *Mašica Serbska* continued its activities. In Nazi Germany these organizations were forbidden, as was the public use of Sorbian. The Germans also had plans to deport the Sorbs to Ukraine.

4. The Sorbian languages today

To the Sorbs, post-World-War-II development has been both advantageous and disastrous. On one hand the Sorbs were guaranteed extensive rights in Socialist Germany and got rather good financial support for their cultural activities. At the same time, the possibilities to act freely in the GDR were circumscribed, and the activities of the revived *Domowina* were governed by the Party. The huge social changes were also negative for the Sorbs. The influx of displaced Germans, the continued and intensified brown coal mining in the area which destroyed many Sorbian villages, and the collectivization which broke down the traditional village life were all disastrous for Sorbian national coherence. The German-Sorbian bilingualism which was widespread before became even more pronounced and, as a result, the use of Sorbian shrunk both in public and in the families. The German language is dominant in many spheres of life, and it is reported that the majority of the Sorbs know German better than their own language.

Many Sorbs have lost Sorbian totally. The official language of the GDR, with its propaganda of Socialist and Communist values became, of course, a model also for the Sorbian official language(s), to the extent that official Sorbian was like a calque on the German prototype. Lower Sorbian was most affected by these changes and today has very few truly native speakers in the younger generations. Campaigns for the use of the language and for intensified teaching of the language in the schools to young Lower Sorbs did not yield any conspicuous results. The language they studied was to a great extent a foreign language for them. At the same time the post-War period has seen amazing activity in the field of Sorbaistics. The two Sorbian languages got their full normalization and codification in this period.

In the short period after the unification of Germany, the Sorbs have met with new problems. The position of the Sorbs in the united Germany was unclear in the beginning. It is more regulated now, and the Sorbs have the same rights as the other minorities in Germany, the Frisians and the Danes, and cooperate with them. The Sorbian culture is supported by a foundation financed by the Bonn government and by the Bundesländer where the Sorbs live, i.e. Saxony and Brandenburg. In 1993 this foundation had 41 million German marks at its disposal. This has meant that it has been possible to support most parts of Sorbian cultural life, although in some cases on a diminished scale. The economic situation in the area is bad, however, and unemployment has risen enormously.

The Sorbs



Map 30. Sorbian territory in east Germany. Ill.: Radosław Przebitkowski

The Sorbs live today in a relatively small area to the west of the river Neisse/Nysa, in Luzica/Łużyce (Lusatia, Lausitz). The Sorbian language area is divided into Lower Sorbian dialects around the central area for the Lower Sorbs Chošebuz (Cottbus) and Upper Sorbian dialects with the centre in Budyšin (Bautzen). Between the two main dialect groups there is a belt of transitional dialects stretching from east of Běła Woda (Weisswasser) to west of Wójerecy (Hoyerswerda). The Sorbian dialect area is now divided due to immigration of Germans and to the intense mining of brown coal, which has devastated a huge part of the Sorbian living space. The most compact settlement of Sorbian speakers is the Upper Sorbian Catholic area between Kamjenc (Kamenz) and Budyšin (Bautzen) with about 15,000 inhabitants. It is estimated that about 2/3 of the people who actively use Sorbian live in this area.

Figure 81. The age-old Upper Sorbian Catholic tradition of Eastern Ride (*jutrowne jachanje*). On Easter Sunday the procession travels from village to village to announce the resurrection of Christ. However, Sorbian culture is, more than folklore, a political work to develop the national institutions, not the least education in the Sorbian language



Table 7e. Non classified languages (pidgins) of the BSR

“Tutejšy” (Prosta mova, Po-prostu) (Slavic, Polish-Belarusian)	Lithuania, Belarus
Surzhyk (Ukrainian-Russian)	Belarus, Ukraine
Trasianka (Russian-Belarusian)	Belarus
• Tattare Romani (Nordic-Romani)	Norway, ?Sweden
Scandinavian (samnordiska)	The Nordic countries
†Nuckó (Swedish-Estonian)	Estonia

Table 7f. Slavic languages of the BSR

Slavic	Territory	Majority l.	Minority languages	Earliest written record	Regional usage
West Slavic:					
Kashubian († Slovincian included)	North-Western Poland	–	‡50,000 – 150,000	16th c.	Slavic “Rokytno” Community, Western branch
Polish	Poland	39,000,000	1,000,000 Eastern Baltic region	14th c.	
Sorbian (2 languages, Upper and • Lower Sorbian)	South-Eastern Germany	–	70,000	16th c.	
East Slavic:					
Russian	Eastern Baltic region	+	+	17th c. (11th c.)	East Slavic (Russian) community
Belarusian	Belarus	6–7,000,000	Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania	16th c.	Slavic “Rokytno”, Eastern branch and East Slavic communities
Ukrainian	Ukraine	‡30,000,000 – 45,000,000	+	14th c.	
Lemko (Rusyn, †Ruthenian)	Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine	–	About 70,000 in all countries	19th c.	Polyglossia

Table 7g. Remaining languages of the Baltic Sea region

Others:
Extern Baltic region: Czech, Slovak, Old minorities: Old Believers, Russian, Greek, Georgian, Armenian
Church languages: Class. Arabic, Grabar (Old Armenian), Hebrew, Latin, Church Slavonic

Explanations

† – extinct language

! – endangered language. According to a general, socio-linguistic rule of thumb, a language is endangered if there are less than twenty thousand speakers and/or the transmission of it to the young generation encounters difficulties. The safe level for survival of a language is reached with more than six hundred thousand users.

<(number of speakers) – less than ...

The linguistic communities of the Baltic Sea region

Witold Maciejewski

In view of the general aims of the Baltic University Programme the Baltic region (and, possibly, all the other similar regions) can be treated as a **linguistic structure** composed of three levels:

- The level of **ethnic languages**, such as German, Polish, Russian, Swedish or Ukrainian. There are about 50 languages in usage in the entire region, as registered in Table 7.
- The level of **local languages**, used also as languages of **cross-ethnic communication**. Some of the ethnic languages are spoken outside of their main territories by bilingual and multilingual populations. Besides Russian and German, there are also Polish, Swedish, Finnish and, in a smaller scale, Danish, which occupy this position. Similarities among different languages, derived from their common origin and history, means that several of the “Baltic” languages are, to some extent, mutually intelligible in a “natural” way, i.e. with no aware linguistic training. It is possible to cross the linguistic divisions. Television also plays an important role in the training of passive competence in foreign languages. It is necessary to stress that cross-linguistic natural communication depends on the medium. Generally, the standard languages are more distant from each other, whereas oral communication within a closely related linguistic group is quite a common phenomenon. The cultural discrimination between the standard Slavic languages is evident at first sight considering the different alphabets in use. On the other hand, the relations among some Nordic languages (Danish and Swedish) are directly opposite: the written languages are mutually intelligible to a higher degree than the spoken ones. This property is consciously strengthened by the Nordic authorities (Nordiska Rådet) by means of a common linguistic policy.

Besides that, there are mixed languages (pidgins) in use in direct spoken communication. Languages of this kind do not have their own native speakers, are more or less ephemeral and not protected by law. Pidgins are usually treated as “unclean”, less prestigious means of communication. The so-called Scandinavian (samnordiska), Surzhyk, Tattare Romani, Trasjanka and Tuteyshy are examples from the Baltic region.

- The level of **languages of pan-regional usage** – in this particular case English, the language of global usage, is the only language which may function as the “Baltic” language. English has taken its regional function after the fall of the Soviet Union. The fact that none of the local languages can compete with English as a cross-ethnic tool of communication may be interpreted as a sign of the power of ethnicity in the Baltic region. The national standard languages are probably seen as national symbols or as value-media and that is why none of them can unanimously be accepted in the international role.

Languages of cross-ethnic use constitute **communicative communities** stretching themselves outside the national (and state) barriers. Communication, although often defective, is frequently restricted to trade, tourism and everyday matters. The communities can be distinguished by heterogeneous criteria:

- Some of them exist without any help of a third, consciously acquired language. It refers to a part of the Slavic (“Rokytno”) languages, all the Nordic and some of the Ugrofennic languages. The criterion is mutual (or, in one particular case, asymmetric) **intelligibility**.
- Some other communities use a **third language**, which may be a “natural” construct (a “mixed” language of indigenous origin) or a “foreign” language, as in the case of Russian as the common language of every-day use in the Baltic countries (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia).
- The third kind of communities are a result of **diglossia**. This is generally true when referring to the ethnic minorities.

The pure linguistic criteria, related to structural similarities and differences among languages, seem to be less important in the context of inter-ethnic communication. Some of the communities are strongly dependent on the communicative willingness of participants, or the political and economic state of affairs. It is quite easy to show examples of communities that are reluctant to use their natural competence (the Balkans, the Iberian Peninsula and so on).

According to above-mentioned criteria and with respect to data collected by linguistic geography the following inter-ethnic communities can be distinguished in the Baltic region:

1. The **Nordic community**, which includes all the languages of the Nordic branch. The core of this community is composed of Swedish, Danish and the two Norwegian languages with their dialects. Several of the Nordic dialects are also recognised by some of their speakers and by linguists as separate languages (this is the case of Gotlandish, Bornholmian and Älvdalian). The Nordic community is possibly the most distinct of all; its existence is consciously supported by political means. The local languages dominate English in every-day communication among the inhabitants of the Scandinavian Peninsula, although almost all of them speak English. Mixed forms of languages are willingly accepted and several attempts to create a Common-Nordic (samnordiska) have been undertaken. About 17 million people belong to this community.

The linguistic communities of the Baltic Sea region

2. The **Slavic community**, so-called “Rokytno” (the term of Gyula Décsy) is the most populous. Rokytno, a city in Ukraine, is situated at the very centre of the community (see Table 7). The community includes spoken languages classified into three branches: 1. The western branch, composed of Kashubian, Polish, two Sorbian languages (esp. Low Sorbian) and extinct Slovinian, 2. The eastern branch includes Belarusian, Lemk (= Ruthenian, Rusinian), Ukrainian, “Tuteyshy”, extinct Ruski (Old Belarusian, the language of the Great Duchy of Lithuania), Surzhyk (a Russian-Ukrainian pidgin), 3. Outside the Baltic region: Czech and Slovak). Speakers of Polish and Ukrainian are the most numerous groups.



Figure 82. A ‘tuteyshy’ (‘local’) boy in Lithuania. Photo: Alfred F. Majewicz

The territory of the “Rokytno” community is covered in its eastern part by a competing,

Russian speaking community. The notion of “creolized Russian” refers to Russian-speaking minorities in Belarus, Ukraine and the Baltic republics. Russian is their first language irrespective of their ethnic background.

3. An asymmetric **Finnish-Estonian community** has been created by the Finnish TV, and was received in some parts of Estonia during the Soviet period. Those parts of Estonia not covered by the Finnish broadcasting do not belong to the community; Finnish is not intelligible there. From 1990 the community has been strengthened by tourism and business.

4. **Finnish, Karelian, Vepsian and Ingrian** are closely related to each other. The number of Karelian speakers is decreasing as a result of emigration to Finland. Finnish is the main language of this group.

5. **Estonian and Votian** are close to each other. Both are members of the so-called (Décsy 1973) “Pejpus League”.

6. The three so-called **Baltic states** are traditionally considered to form a political and cultural unity. Still, linguistic differences between Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian are considerable and no direct interethnic communication is possible. Russian is the “tool of communication” used by middle-aged and elderly people in this group.

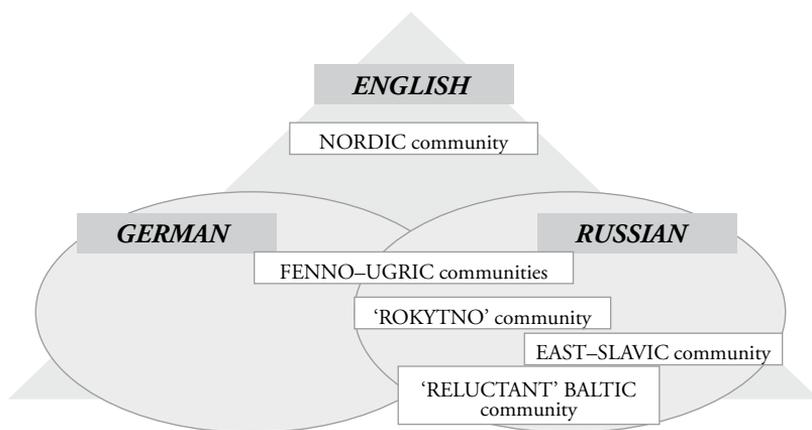


Figure 83. Interdependence among linguistic communities of the Baltic region. Ill.: Witold Maciejewski

LITERATURE AND REFERENCES

- Contacts de langues et de cultures dans l'aire beltique – Contacts of Languages and Cultures in the Baltic Area*, Mélanges offerts à Fanny de Sivers, 1996, M. M. Jocelyne Fernandez & Raimo Raag (eds.). Uppsala: Centre of Multiethnic Research
- Dulichenko, A.D., 1981. *Slavjanskije literaturnyje mikrojazyki*. Tallinn
- Baltic Literature and Linguistics*. 1973, Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press
- Bieder, Hermann, Die Gegenwärtige Sprache- und Kultur-politische Entwicklungen in Weissrussland. in *Die Welt der Slaven* 37, 1+2 (N.F. 16, 1+2), p. 142-168
- Börestam Uhlmann, Ulla 1994. *Skandinaver samtalar. Språkliga och interaktionella strategier i samtal mellan danskar, norrmän och svenskar*. Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet
- Comrie, Bernard, 1981. *The Languages of the Soviet Union*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Csató, Éva Ágnes 2001. *Spoken Karaim*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz
- Décsy, Gyula 1973. *Die linguistische Struktur Europas, Vergangenheit – Gegenwart – Zukunft*. Wiesbaden
- Gustavsson, Sven and Svanberg, Ingvar, 1993. *Gamla folk och nya stater*. Stockholm: Gidlunds
- Gustavsson, Sven, 1990. Socialism and Nationalism. Trends and Tendencies in the Language, National and Minority Politics of the Socialist Countries in Post War Europe. in *Sociolinguistica* 4, 50-83, Tübingen: Univ. Press
- Koptjevskaja-Tamm, Maria, 2000. Den språkliga mångfalden kring Östersjön, Kerstin Dahlbäck (red.). *Att förstå det mänskliga*. Stockholm: Natur och Kultur
- Lundén, Thomas 1993. *Språkens landskap i Europa*. Lund: Studentlitteratur
- Majewicz, Alfred F. 1995. *Minority Situation. Attitudes and Developments after the Comeback of "Post-Communists" to Power in Poland*. Stęszew: International Institute of Ethnolinguistics and Oriental Studies
- Majewicz, Alfred F. and Wicherkiewicz, Tomasz, 1990. *National Minority Languages in Media and Education in Poland*. Poznań: Adam Mickiewicz University
- Musaev, Kenesbaj M. 1964. *Grammatika karaimskogo jazyka*. Fonetika i morfologija. Moskva: Nauka
- Runblom, Harald 1995. *Majoritet och minoritet i Östersjöregionen*. Stockholm: Natur och Kultur
- Sammallahti, Pekka, 1998. *The Saami Languages*. Kárásjohka: Davvi girji
- Schenker, Alexander and Stankiewicz, Edward, 1980. *The Slavic Literary Languages*. Yale University
- Simon, Gerhard, 1986. *Nationalismus und Nationalitätspolitik in der Sowietunion*. Baden Baden
- Synak, Brunon and Tomasz Wicherkiewicz (eds) 1997, *Language Minorities and Minority Languages in the Changing Europe*. Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego
- Uibopuu, Valev 1988, *Finnougrierna och deras språk*. Lund: Studentlitteratur
- Wiggen, Geirr 1996. Majoritetspråk og minoritetspråk i et nordisk perspektiv, *Språk i Norden*, Nordisk Språksekretariat, ss. 137-174
- Winsa, Birger 1998. *Language Attitudes and Social Identity. Oppression and revival of a minority language in Sweden*. Occasional Paper Nr 17. Canberra: Applied Linguistics Association of Australia.
- Zajăczkowski, Ananiasz 1961, *Karaims in Poland. History, language, folklore, science*. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe