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
hand. In the 14th century it became a part of the territory of the Teutonic Order, in the middle of the 15th century the area became Polish, in the 17th century parts of the area became Swedish, and in 1772 Kashubia became Prussian. Since World War I it has been Polish.

The approximately 300,000 Kashubes are the only survivors of the Baltic Sea Slavs who earlier in history inhabited most of the area from the Elbe eastward. The Kashubian dialects, of which the total number of speakers is not known, are also the only representative of the Baltic Sea Slavic languages.

The first printed religious works in Kashubian had already been produced by the 16th century. But the first real attempts to codify the language were in the second half of the 19th century under the influence of Romanticism and pan-Slavism and as reactions against the Germanization of Kashubia. Florian Ceynowa, the father of Kashubian regionalism, asserted that the Kashubes were a separate people. Hieronim Derdowski, who coined the expression “There is no Kashubia without Poland, and no Poland without Kashubia”, was advocating a Kashubian identity within the Polish nation.

The Young Kashubes of the early 20th century, Aleksander Majkowski, Jan Kamowski, and Leon Heyke, who were the real authors of the Modern Kashubian literary language, adhered more to Ceynowa’s line of reasoning. Probably most of the ethnically conscious Kashubes today have a double identity. They are aware of their ethnic distinctiveness but feel that they belong to the Polish nation.

The Kashubian movement had problems both with Prussian and Polish authorities between the Wars. Nevertheless, it was able to work and to publish books in Kashubian. During the German occupation and in the Stalinist post-war period, such possibilities were nil or minimal.

With the end of the Stalinist period in 1956, the Kashubian movement was revitalized. A Kashubian organization was created and a Kashubian journal began to appear.

The attitudes towards the Kashubian strivings in Socialist Poland after 1956 were relatively negative. The official goals were urbanization and industrialization and so preservation of the traditional values and folk-culture of the Kashubes was looked upon with suspicion. From time to time activists in the Kashubian-Pomeranian Association were accused of separatism and pro-German tendencies. Such attitudes from the authorities, as well as negative Polish stereotypes about the Kashubes, have resulted in a depreciation of the Kashubianess among the Kashubes themselves. Sociolinguistic research has shown that the use of Kashubian is widespread in the countryside and in the older generation but that families very often use Polish in their contacts with their children. Among the young Kashubes the Kashubian language is very often a low-prestige language, whereas Polish has high prestige.
In spite of the restricted possibilities, Socialist Poland saw the publication both of books in Kashubian and books about the Kashubians 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 Kashubes 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 Kashubes themselves. In this context, the Pope’s visit in May 1987, during which he appealed to the Kashubes to preserve their traditional values including their language, was 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 Kashubes 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-
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 Budyšín 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 Matica 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 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 Chośebuz (Cottbus) and Upper Sorbian dialects with the centre in Budyšín (Bautzen). Between the two main dialect groups there is a belt of transitional dialects stretching from east of Běła Woda (Weisswasser) to west of Wojerecy (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 Budyšín (Bautzen) with about 15,000 inhabitants. It is estimated that about 2/3 of the people who actively use Sorbian live in this area.

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

Figure 81. The ageold 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7c. Non classified languages (pidgins) of the BSR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Tuteyshy”</strong> (Prosta mowa, Po-prostsu) (Slavic, Polish-Belarusian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surzhyk (Ukrainian-Russian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trasianka (Russian-Belarusian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tattare Romani (Nordic-Romani)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scandinavian (sammordiska)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>†Nuckö (Swedish-Estonian)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7f. Slavic languages of the BSR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slavic</th>
<th>Territory</th>
<th>Majority l.</th>
<th>Minority languages</th>
<th>Earliest written record</th>
<th>Regional usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Slavic:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashubian</td>
<td>North-Western Poland</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>750,000 – 150,000</td>
<td>16th c.</td>
<td>Slavic “Rokyno” Community, Western branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(† Slovincian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>included)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>39,000,000</td>
<td>1,000,000 Western</td>
<td>14th c.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorbian (2 languages, Upper and Lower Sorbian)</td>
<td>South-Eastern Germany</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>16th c.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Slavic:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>Eastern Baltic region</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>17th c. (11th c.)</td>
<td>East Slavic (Russian) community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belarusian</td>
<td>Belarus</td>
<td>6–7,000,000</td>
<td>Poland, Ukraine, Lithuanian</td>
<td>16th c.</td>
<td>Slavic “Rokyno”, Eastern branch and East Slavic communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>≥30,000,000</td>
<td>45,000,000</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>14th c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemko (Rusyn, Ruthenian)</td>
<td>Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>About 70,000 in all countries</td>
<td>19th c.</td>
<td>Polyglossia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7g. Remaining languages of the Baltic Sea region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Others:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extern Baltic region: Czech, Slovak,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old minorities:</td>
<td>Old Believers, Russian, Greek, Georgian, Armenian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church languages:</td>
<td>Class. Arabic, Grabar (Old Armenian), Hebrew, Latin, Church Slavonic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 Tuteysky 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 everyday 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.
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 Slovenian, 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.

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.

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

**Figure 83.** Interdependence among linguistic communities of the Baltic region. Ill.: Witold Maciejewski
Contacts de langues et de cultures dans l’aire baltique
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