LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL BORDER CROSSINGS
IN THE GRAND DUCHY OF LITHUANIA
OR, CAN THE GRAND DUCHY OF LITHUANIA
BE DEFINED AS A SPRACHAREAL?

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1. INTRODUCTION
Despite recent research on the structural affinities characterizing European languages as a whole (Heine, Kuteva, 2006) or particular linguistic areas, such as the Central European linguistic area (“mitteleuropäische Sprachareal”) (Kurzová, 1996), it remains unclear how exactly delimitation of linguistic diversity is to be defined, especially if approached from the historical perspective. In this regard, a seemingly distinct linguistic unit can be found in a European region which is characterized by a similar developmental time span and an overlap with some of the languages belonging also to the Central European Sprachareal.1 The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was comprised of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL) in constitutional union with the Kingdom of Poland from 1569 to the Deluge, including the Swedish invasion (1655-1661) and the Xmel'nyk Uprising (1648-1658), which ended an era

1. According to Kurzová (1999; cf. Newerka, 2002: 215-216), among the Central European languages are German, Hungarian, Czech and Slovak as the focus languages, which are primarily affected by the Standard Average European generalization of the finite nominative-accusative sentence, and Polish with Slovene as the peripheral languages which demonstrate some syntactic patterns deviating from the finite nominative-accusative structure.

In this paper, I will discuss conditions of multilingualism obtaining in the GDL and later PLC that make it possible to tentatively assess the extent of cultural and language contacts within those political bodies. All this will allow me to shed a fresh light on those properties which tend to be explained as structural affinities acquired as a result of convergent processes. In reference to the cultural and ethno-linguistic groupings in the GDL, I will use summarily the notion of the ethno-linguistic, or simply linguistic area, covering cultural and ethno-linguistic relationships between major and minor speech communities living side by side. The main objective of the present paper is, thus, to determine the nature of the above linguistic area, i.e., whether the GDL can be defined in linguistic terms as a Sprachareal.

1.1. Understanding the multilingualism in the GDL.

Relationships among the cultures and languages that coexisted in the GDL and later the PLC, is a topic that has a long history in Polish linguistics, starting with the pioneering monograph, *Polish Language and Its History*, where Polish was taken in conjunction with the other languages in the Polish lands (Ulaszyn et al., 1915). In addition to the history of Polish, Lithuanian, Belarusian, and Ukrainian as used in the PLC from prehistoric times until the early 20th c., the authors surveyed in detail the other languages and dialects which had long been in contact with the above languages, Old Prussian, Yotvingian, Latvian, Latgalian, Livonian and Estonian, Colonial German, Yiddish, Hebrew, Tatar (Kipčak), Karaite, Romani (Gypsy) and Romanian dialects.

The above approach to the history of Polish has generally been retained in Polish linguistics until now. Suffice it to name a study of Reczek (1989), who painted with broad strokes the socio-linguistic situation in the PLC (*Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów*). Emphasizing multilingualism (“wielo-języczność”) as a unique property of the First *Rzeczpospolita*, Reczek (1989)

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2. This term-coinage is modeled on the notion of linguistic area as defined, following Murray Emeneau, by Heine, Kuteva (2006: 3-4) in reference to various kinds of areal linguistic grouping. Clearly, the notion of ethno-linguistic area can hardly be compared with the term *Sprachbund*, in particular its paradigm case of the Balkans. The main difference lies in that the Balkan *Sprachbund* developed over a period of 1,500 years, which overbalance the development time ascribed to the Polish-Lithuanian-Ruthenian ethno-linguistic area (see fn. 4).
made a clear distinction between the autochthonous and colonial languages ("języki ludności napływowej"). Among the autochthonous languages, he enumerated Slavic, including Polish, Belarusian, and Ukrainian, and Baltic, i.e., Old Prussian, extinct before the 18th c., Latvian, and Lithuanian, adding a long list of smaller communal languages such as German, Yiddish, Romani, Tatar, Karaite, and Armenian. What was innovative in Reczek’s approach is a combination of the socio-linguistic with linguistic analysis of contact-induced phenomena in typologically and genetically different languages, e.g., the distinctive palatalization of consonants in Karaite and the use of Slavic agentive suffixes in Lithuanian (Belarusian) Tatar. Reczek (1989) also elaborated on the classification of liturgical languages used in various ethnic and religious communities — Latin by the Catholics, Old Church Slavonic by the Orthodox and Uniates, Hebrew by the Aszkenazic Jews and Karaites, Arabic by the Lithuanian Tatars, Old Armenian (Grabar) by the Armenians. Non-liturgical (secular) dignitas was fulfilled, according to Reczek (ib.), by chancellerly Ruthenian, a state language of the GDL over a long period of time, and to a lesser extent by Czech, French, Italian, and Greek, which all played a secondary role in the cultural life of the PLC, while exerting influence on Polish primarily via Latin. Despite somewhat impressionistic argumentation, Reczek’s work can be viewed as the starting point for most of the recent discussions of multilingualism in the GDL / PLC, especially in the studies of Polish scholars.

Of interest in this respect are the studies of Grek-Rabisowa (1997) dealing with the socio-linguistic situation in the borderland territories of Lithuania and Belarus’ (after the partitions of the PLC), and Ivanov (2003, 2005) who offered a socio-linguistic overview of the languages cultivated in the GDL and later the PLC.3 However, most influential in the field are Bednarczuk’s articles of 1993, 1994 and 1997. Bednarczuk was the first to introduce the notion of the ‘linguistic community’ (“wspólnota komunikatywna”) in reference to all the

3. Remarkably, the author disregarded studies of the Polish scholars, as well as the corresponding works of Wexler (1973, 1980) who was the first to analyze in detail the structural affinities between the Jewish, Tatar, Karaite, and Slavic communal dialects within the GDL, and their importance for Belarusian/Ukrainian historical linguistics. Ivanov also remained oblivious of a synopsis of Celunova (1997/1998) and the important study of Wiemer (2003) who placed dialect and language contacts in the territories of the former GDL from the 15th c. until 1939 in a wide context of the multilingualism in European language history.
communal languages, or ethnolects (“etnolekty”) traditionally singled out for this linguistic area. Although Bednarczuk (1997: 60) stopped short of delimiting a center from a periphery in this area, he nevertheless pointed out in passing that Ruthenian, Polish, and Lithuanian were all likely to constitute the core languages of the above community, due to their structural convergence during the 16th to the late 17th cc.

In view of much progress in this field (see Dini, 1997: 273-339), I will limit myself in the present study to the socio-linguistic and linguistic factors that indicate an exceptional density of areal relationship in the Polish-Lithuanian-Ruthenian ethno-linguistic area. My goal is also to probe the density of areal relationship in this area and ascertain the structural affinities, if any, in Lithuanian, Ruthenian (Belarusian and Ukrainian), and Polish as guidelines for further research.

2. THE SOCIO-LINGUISTIC SITUATION IN THE GDL BEFORE 1569: A TANDEM OF MAJOR PLAYERS.

The русский язык (Ruthenian) had long been used by Lithuania’s rulers in maintaining relationships with the Russian tribes incorporated into the Lithuanian state in the 13th-14th cc., with the help of chancellery Ruthenian (Лит. канцелярине слау калба) (Zinkevičius, 1987: 134-135). This choice was not arbitrary. The Grand Dukes, holding (since the times of Mindaugas) Lithuania proper, entrusted their brothers and sons with the eastern and southern borderlands inhabited by Slavs. The realm could only gain by this development, so long as friendly relations were maintained between the different scions of the dynasty. Following the Tatar invasion of Rus’ in the 13th c. and Lithuania’s subsequent annexation of Russian lands, the enlarged GDL became a multiethnic entity, with the русский язык playing in this case a unifying role between the pagan Lithuanian realm at the core and the Christian Slavic component. The Slavic population in the expanded GDL was comprised

4. To be sure, one should be very cautious about applying this term, as first suggested by Wiemer (2003: 109). In amplifying the traditional political term Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, this scholar drew mostly on the multicultural and multilingual nature of the GDL before the Union of Lublin in 1569 after which the Polish acculturation of the East Slavic and Lithuanian gentry accelerated (Ochmański, 1990: 58ff.). Kurzowa (2003: 19), however, posited the emergence of the multiethnic, Polish-Lithuanian-Belarusian-Ruthenian Rzeczpospolita after the Union of Lublin, albeit this type of ethno-linguistic unity was likely to have crystallized much earlier.
primarily of Belarusians and Ukrainians, and much later Polish settlers. According to Ochmański (1990: 58), the entire territory of the Lithuanian state in the late 13th-14th cc. made up approximately 800,000 km², only about 10% of this land was populated by ethnic Lithuanians. Thus, before the mid-14th c., when the Grand Dukes began accepting other peoples for the colonization of these sparsely inhabited lands and for military service, the GDL was a kind of dual Lithuanian-Ruthenian, or even a Ruthenian-Lithuanian polity (see Plockhy, 2006: 87); it became a Polish-Lithuanian-Ruthenian federation two hundred years later on July 1, 1569, with the mass arrival of Polish landowners (the szlachta class) and clergy in the Lithuanian and Slavic territories (Jurkiewicz, 1994: 244-248).

In the Lithuanian state, the number of bilinguals, especially among the élites and landed gentry was extremely high. It was a particular sort of bilingualism with Ruthenian used primarily as a written language and Lithuanian as a spoken one, for instance, for public matters in the urban centers or diplomatic negotiations (Zinkevičius, 1987: 144-145). Under this sort of bilingualism, the Lithuanian boyars conserved their cultural and religious separateness, especially prior to the official Christianization of Lithuania in 1386-1387, thus avoiding being thoroughly “Ruthenianized” (cf. Frick, 2005: 54). Moreover, despite the privileged status of the russkij jazyk, there were certainly some

5. One projection assumes that the Lithuanians of the GDL found themselves outnumbered four to one by their East Slavic neighbors (Plockhy, 2006: 85, fn. 1); according to others, there was virtual parity in populations, though not land (Kiaupa et al., 2000: 109-110).

6. The Jewish, Karaites, and Tatar settlers appeared in the GDL approximately at the same time, in the second half of 14th c., spreading almost evenly throughout the ethnic Belarusian and Ukrainian lands. To varying extent, all these settlers mastered a local Slavic dialect and most likely official chancellery Ruthenian (russkij jazyk). Peculiar forms of the newly-acquired Slavic vernacular are found in the Middle Belarusian and Ukrainian interludes, which all depict various ethnic and social groups, such as Tatars, Gypsies, Germans, and Jews, who are known, for instance, to have confused hushing and hissing sounds. Having given up their native language but retained Turco-Arabic script, the Lithuanian Tatars adopted as early as the 15th c. an East Slavic vernacular, based either on Belarusian or Ukrainian dialects (Danylenko, 2006b). With the Polonization of Slavic speakers in the GDL, the Lithuanian Tatars resorted to Polish as the language of literature and culture, producing a translation of the Qur’an into Polish in the early 17th c. (Suter, 2004: 21).
segments of population in the GDL who were not familiar either with the rus'kij jazyk', on the one hand, or with Lithuanian, on the other.

The rus'kij jazyk' prevailed in all official spheres, as evidenced in the Lithuanian Metrica and the Lithuanian Statutes of 1529, 1566, and 1588, as well as in various legal entries (Celunova, 1997/1998: 83). For instance, the writing of patronyms with the Slavic suffix -ovič, -evič became commonplace in the local registry documents in the late 16th-early 17th cc., e.g., Narbutovič or Rimgalovič, instead of Lithuanian Norbutaitis and Rimgalaitis, as found under the years 1602-1616 in the parish books at the St. John Church in Vilnius (Zinkevičius, 1977: 154-156). The patronyms in -ovič, -evič became so popular in Lithuania that they rivaled native suffixes in -aitis, -onis, -ūnas and the like. According to Bednarczuk (1994: 119), the introduction of the suffixes -ovič, -evič in Lithuanian is a result of convergence processes within the confines of the linguistic community in the GDL. Yet this assumption warrants additional consideration, once one recalls objections in Safarewicz (1982) who compared Polish last names Mickiewicz, Sienkiewicz, and Kurhlowicz with their analogous patronyms in Lithuanian as discussed by Zinkevičius. Consequently, Safarewicz (1982: 336) argued that there could hardly be consensus whether the above names had been borrowed directly from Belarusian or, in Belarusianized forms, from Lithuanian, though he was inclined to opt for the latter possibility.

The real scenario becomes clearer vis-à-vis personal names in -(k)evič which, according to Shevelov (1968: 310-312), might have originated in the central or western part of Belarus' as early as the mid-15th c., spreading west to Poland and south to Ukraine. Shevelov did not specify, however, whether this type was transferred to Poland via Lithuania due to the growing influence of the local elites in the GDL, albeit in strict linguistic terms the Belarusian origin seems more appropriate. The use of -evič after palatal and palatalized consonants and -ovič in other cases makes us agree with Shevelov that central and western Belarusian, as well as western Polissian and Volynian Ukrainian until the late 15th c. had progressive palatalization of -k- and that the Belarusian names in -kevič arose originally not after -k- but after such a -k-', though the original distribution became subsequently obscured (ib.: 241).

The spread of the names in -ovič and -evič in the core languages of the Polish-Lithuanian-Ruthenian ethno-linguistic area might have been determined by different factors. In Ruthenian (central and western Belarusian and northwestern Ukrainian) this was an internal development, which is likely to have triggered the use of parallel, typologically favored forms in Polish, while in Lithuanian one deals with shift-induced phenomena that emerged even
earlier than in Polish under overwhelming cultural pressure (cf. Thomason, Kaufman, 1988: 100). 7 

Conversely, the influence of Lithuanian on the *ruski jazyk* within the GDL was conceivably minimal (Stang, 1935: 146-147). The number of Lithuanisms in Ruthenian and Middle Polish fluctuates from 300 to 450, originating primarily from the legal texts written in Lithuania proper (Urbitis, 1969; Dini, 1997: 282), while in Middle Belarusian Žuraŭski (1970: 146-150) counted only forty reliable Lithuanian borrowings. 8 To adduce most representative forms, one can cite *djakło* (1473) (Lith. *deklas*) “deliveries of grain to the state, duty” (Urbitis, 1969: 55-56), *mezleva* (1477) (Lith. *mėziava*) “deliveries of animals to the state”, *bonda* (1468) (Lith. *banda*) “a certain type of personal property” (cf. Turska, 1979) and the like (Žuraŭski, 1970: 148; Zinkevičius 1987: 124-130). Some of the loanwords became particularly popular and were attested, with a somewhat bleached meaning, in later East Slavic texts written beyond the GDL, e.g., *doliła*, *doliła* (1450) (Lith. *dailida*, *dailidė*) as encountered in standard Belarusian and its dialects (Urbitis, 1969: 56) and especially in a Ukrainian collection of poems compiled by Klymenťij Žinovijiv in the late 17th-early 18th cc. in the southern Černihiv or northern Poltava region: “O telsjax, abe tež o plošču* a) o doliida(x) po liti(š)u*” (Žinovijiv: 135). Nepokupnyj (1971: 57) argued that the adverb *po litovš* is used here in the meaning, “(in) Belarusian”, thus referring in fact to the *ruski jazyk* of the old GDL (Danylenko, 2006d: 123-134).

7. A similar tendency was operative later, in the late 17th-early 18th cc. as discussed in Maciejkauskienė (1993). According to her statistics, native Lithuanian names make up 42%, of which almost 32% are still attested today. Remarkably, the Slavicization of Lithuanian patronyms of the type *-inas, -onis, -aitis* transformed into *-unic, -anis, i.e., -unic, -onic*, was irregular, and can, I believe, be treated as shift-induced morphological adjustment, not a real category borrowing.

8. These statistics are not, however, as true for some of the Lithuanianisms, cited by Žuraŭski; they are also encountered in (Middle) Ukrainian: *dolida/deilida* “carpenter”, *djakło* “deliveries of grain to the state”, *klunja* “barn”, *stodola* “barn”, *styrta/skryta* “stack”, and others (Tymčenko-M; Hrinčenko). In Modern Belarusian, there are approximately 20 Lithuanianisms only, though more Lithuanian borrowings are attested in its dialects adjacent to the Lithuanian-speaking territory, and in borderland Polish (see Urbitis, 1969).
On balance, the number of Slavic borrowings in written Lithuanian steadily increased, especially when Polish gradually became the language of culture, religion, and government in the GDL from the mid-16th c. onward.9 Apart from the earliest borrowings, there is a multi-layered system of Slavic loanwords, comprising East Slavic proper, Polish or loanwords mediated by Polish.10

9. As a result of the functional asymmetry between the ruski jazyk and Lithuanian, some Latin-educated Lithuanians propagated Latin as a language with a dignitas which could compete with all other languages in the GDL, including the idiom Ražėnorum. According to Michalo Litas (1550) and Augustinus Rotundus (1576), Latin as a progenitor of Lithuanian had to be introduced in the public and private spheres of the state (Martel, 1938: 51-54; Dini, 1995). Yet their program remained basically unclaimed by Lithuanian élites who were aware of political and cultural advantages provided by Ruthenian and then by Polish in the GDL. Although used, to a different extent, in various public spheres (Toporov, 1998: 21-22), Latin seems to have gained a steady access to Lithuanian primarily through the Polish language as cultivated in the Polish Catholic church and later in the works of Reformists (Zinkevičius, 1987: 138-140).

10. There is another source language which could have contributed to the enrichment of Slavic borrowings in Lithuanian, i.e., German or, to put it more precisely, German dialects spoken in East Prussia. On the whole, the penetration of Germanisms into Lithuanian was facilitated by the bilingualism of the inhabitants of the DP. The latter flourished in the time of the ruling of Albrecht Hohenzollern who particularly favored the preparation and publication of Protestant books in Prussian and Lithuanian. It comes then as no surprise that a first Lithuanian book, the Calvinist Katekizmas (Catēchismus pras ty szade, maklas skaitima raschtą yr giemūs [..] “Simple words of the Catechism, the Art [Skill] of Reading, and Writing, and Hymns”), was published in Königsberg (1547) by Martynas Mažvydas from Lithuania Major. As a result, in addition to the Germanisms, borrowed in their Middle High German forms, there are also German loans in Lithuanian; they were most likely mediated by Polish, which was gaining prestige in the 16th c., e.g., MLith. lėmpa “lamp” (MPol. lampa and MHGr. Lampe), MLith. kylikas “goblet” (MPol. kielich and MHGr. kelich) (Čepienė, 1992). In the mid-17th c., Ruthenian continued to play a somewhat residual mediating role. Thus, the anonymous Lexicon Lithuanicum, compiled in the DP, contains few East Slavic borrowings which, in their turn, might have been mediated by Polish e.g., Scheibe – toller, tollerka (cf. MUkr./MBel. talēka, MPol. talerz in Tymčenko–M, 2: 384; SSP, 9: 112), Schenke – βινκορυς’ (cf. MUkr./MBel. žynkars, MPol. szynkar in Tymčenko–M, 2: 494; SSP, 8: 592), Uhr – siegurs (MUkr./MBel. zekhart, MPol. zegar/zegcr in Tymčenko–M, 1: 319; SSP, 11: 310) (see Gobber, 1993: 328). The place of such Slavized Germanisms in the Lithuanian vocabulary is infinitesimal and obscured by subsequent morphological changes.
Leaning on the argumentation of Urbutis (1992), Dini (1997: 334) maintained that, contrary to the traditional view, almost three quarters of old borrowings are likely to be of either Belarusian or Polish provenance, while for the fourth quarter the proportion of Belarusian and Polish borrowings seems to be two to one. By the 20th c., however, of about 3,000 Slavicisms, chosen by Skardžius (1931), only 10% appear in standard modern Lithuanian, about 35% are found in various dialects; all the remaining loanwords, 55%, are now unknown or very rarely encountered (Zinkevičius, 1998: 245). Evidently, most of the Slavic borrowings were limited to written discourse, as demonstrated in the functionally unsymmetrical Ruthenian-Lithuanian bilingualism at that time.

Despite its merits, the above revisionist view eschews ascertaining the complex nature of the rus̄kij jazyk which at different periods of its development was based on different East Slavic dialects, later integrated in standard Belarusian and Ukrainian (Celunova, 1997/1998: 83-84). In other words, depending upon the particular period, the influx of Slavicisms may have been intermittently Ukrainian, Belarusian, or Polish, though their morphonological features may appear very fuzzy (see section 2.1).

2.1. The Polissian vernacular standard

As early as 1935, Stang’s research evidenced that chancellery Ruthenian as used in the GDL could hardly be completely identified with (Middle) Belarusian, an approach still popular among Polish (Bednarczuk, Šmulkowa u.a.) and Belarusian (Svjažynski, Šakun, u. a.) scholars. In following Stang, Zinkevičius (1987: 117-119) argued, on the contrary, that chancellery Ruthenian as used in the ducal and even royal chanceries, roughly between the 1385 Act of Krėva and 1480, was greatly influenced by South Ukrainian. Simultaneously, alongside the southern Ukrainian influence, another trend began emerging in the texts copied by scribes whose spoken language originated in the Volhynja region with its center at Luch’, intermittently under GDL control from 1239 to 1563 (Stang, 1935: 21). Later still, in the middle of the 16th c. (the time of Sigismund Augustus) chancellery Ruthenian again changed significantly, since gradually the characteristics of South Belarusian (North Ukrainian) disappeared. Instead, the linguistic traits of central Belarusian dialects became predominant, thus making the chancellery rus̄kij jazyk thoroughly Belarusianized; this Belarusian Ruthenian was slowly ousted by Polish, which had become the written language of the entire Polish-Lithuanian state by 1697.

It is noteworthy that in the 14th-15th cc. the rus̄kij jazyk was not clearly marked by either southern Ukrainian or Volhynja features. This fact allowed
Kuraszkiewicz (1937) to posit a “central dialect” (“narzeczce śródkowe”), or a written vernacular, demonstrating predominantly Polissian features, shared by other Russian speakers in the GDL, and they are the following: 1) unstressed è realized as e, 2) the syllabization of r, 3) unstressed e realized as e, 4) the o reflex after palatals, 5) the dispalatalization of r’ (with the rj reflex in a crossing zone of sharpening and non-sharpening dialects) and some other morphological and lexical features (Danylenko, 2006a: 100-108). Labeled in the ducal and royal chanceries as ruski jazyk, the Polissian vernacular standard was widely used in the 14th to the late 16th c., gradually bringing forth two ethnically differentiated varieties, the more Slavonicized (southwestern) Ukrainian regional variety and the more Polonized (central) Belarusian variety of what was self-designated at that time as the prostaja mova.

Remarkably, the above Polissian features were consciously emulated by the speakers of peripheral languages used in the GDL, in particular by the Lithuanian Tatars. It comes therefore as no surprise that the Belarusian cekanne and dzekanne were not reflected in their texts (Wexler, 1977: 169); not reflected either was the Ukrainian non-sharpening of consonants before e and the change o > u in newly closed syllables, although one might expect the above features to be retained in a text generated primarily on the basis of a spoken vernacular (Danylenko, 2006a: 94).

3. The socio-linguistic situation in the GDL after 1569: a clinch of major players?

In the 16th c. the ruski jazyk was still commonly used, although challenged by Latin and especially Polish in the GDL. Immediately after the Union of Lublin, the Polish royal chancery began replacing chancellery Ruthenian with Polish, issuing more and more documents written in this language, despite the privileged status of the ruski jazyk as guaranteed in the Second Lithuanian Statute of 1566. A series of protests and complaints (1569, 1571, 1576, 1577) were submitted to the Polish king by the nobility in Pidlaššja (Pol. Podlasie), Polissja, Volhynja, Braclav, Podolja, and the so-called Ukraine (in a narrow sense), which had been incorporated after the Lublin Union into the Polish Crown lands and which had previously used the ruski jazyk in the GDL (Martel, 1938: 33-66). As a result of the influx of Polish gentry into the newly-acquired lands and the Polonization of the local nobility, the position of chancellery Ruthenian was undermined in the late 16th-early 17th cc. By that time, the ruski jazyk had absorbed so many Polonisms that it became almost a Polish language written in Cyrillic, whence the appearance of Polish
documents introduced with Ruthenian boilerplate plus a Ruthenian colophon and other types of a dualistic interpretation (Strumins’kyj, 1984: 22).

The dualistic interpretation of the rus’kij jazykъ was exported to the vernacular standard of educated people, the prostaja mova, which was used in “more elevated genres”, e.g., polemical and theological writings, poetry, grammars, primers, chronicles, etc. (Shevelov, 1979: 572-580). Such application fits well in the context of both the Reformation argument for “intelligibility” and Counter-Reformation concern for limits on the use of vernacular. In such a context, given the unintelligibility of Greek and Church Slavonic among the “foolish” Orthodox Rus’, it is instructive to note the appearance of Protestant and Orthodox polemical writings, written and printed in both Church Slavonic and Ruthenian parallel texts (Danylenko, 2006a: 89-90), e.g., Vasily Cjapinski’s Homiliary Gospel of 1570/1580, a translation made in two languages from the 1572 version of Symon Budny’s Bible (Zurański 1967: 201-225); Leksii slovenskie Zlatoustado otＢ besèdь evanheìskih otＢ iereja [D.] Nalivajka vybranie (ca. 1580); Testamentъ [...] Vasiliю cesara kbreckhoi in Lëkarstvo na ospalyj umysłь ělovëčîj (Ostrih, 1607) and other works (Danylenko, 2006a).

From the above follows another type of dualistic interpretation of the prostaja mova found in Polish-Ruthenian texts, in particular those representing Biblical, patristic and hagiographic literature. In the case of Kazanie svjatoho Kirilla Patriarhь ierusalimьskogo [...] (Kazanie ś. Cyrylla Patriarchy Ierozolimskiego [...] ) (1596) by Stefan Zyzań (Martel, 1938: 119, 133), or the Volhynian Arian Valentykh Nehalevs’kyj’s [Niegaliweski] Ruthenian translation from the Polish Gospel in 1581, which the Calvinist Marcin Czechowic had published in Cracow in 1577, one can speak about a direct transliteration from Roman (Latin-based) into Cyrillic script, with only slight changes in phonetic correspondences, while retaining stable East Slavic morphology and revealing some local features. Similar vernacular publications are hardly more than paraphrases in such cases, with confessional bias in the wording of the text and, even more, in the glosses and comments. All in all, Orthodox Ruthenian authors of this period seemed to be more concerned about script than
jazykъ/mova, i.e., the symbolic façade rather than the verbal means of communication (Strumins’kyj, 1984: 21).\(^{11}\)

Unlike the russkij jazykъ, used until the mid-17th c., the prostaja moya knew but a short period of flourishing, from the mid-16th c. to 1597, when the first Orthodox work in Polish appeared; from 1605 onward the bulk of polemical writings by Ruthenians were in Polish, and 1628 onward, Polish was the only language used in religious polemics (Martel, 1938: 142). That was the logical end of the process of Polonization of the Ruthenian (both Ukrainian and Belarusian) authors.\(^{12}\) To illustrate the total dominance of Polish in seventeenth-century Ruthenian lands, suffice it to say that only about 350 East Slavic words are attested in Polish texts of that time. More remarkably, up to 80% of these words are stylistically marked as exoticisms or regionalisms and only 63 lexemes of Ukrainian provenance penetrated the vocabulary of the Polish language in the 17th c. (Ritter, 1998).

Clearly, the process of Polish acculturation of the Ruthenian elites was different from that of the Lithuanian boyars, and can be viewed from two vantage points – confessional and linguistic. The whole process was likely to be less painful to the Lithuanians who, after 1386-1387, were no longer separated by confessional difference from the dominant culture in the PLC, although many of them clung to paganism indefinitely. For the Ruthenians, a crucial part of whose identity was connected with eastern Orthodoxy, the overall process was the more complicated (Frick, 1994: 213). Linguistically, both Lithuanians and Ruthenians would switch gradually to a native-Polish bilingualism, albeit primarily in the official spheres; in the literary or folkloric genres, Lithuanian was used in both Lithuania Major and Lithuania Minor, and the prostaja moya was used in the Ruthenian lands. As the Lithuanian elite became Polonized, it increasingly opted for Polish, while Ruthenians faced a much subtler problem. Though using Cyrillic script, they spoke a language

11. Generally, the use of Cyrillic script in the written works of that time is quite enough to identify them as Ruthenian, while it is much more difficult to differentiate them as Middle Ukrainian or Middle Belarusian (Danylenko, 2006a: 109-110).

12. “[…] even while writing in Ruthenian, [the Ruthenian authors] thought in Polish, graduated from Polish schools and drew on Polish sources. And very strange appear their records, with their Polish word order and choice of expressions, but with the Ruthenian endings, printed in Cyrillic, works of the Union […] which is deeper, inasmuch as it is spiritual and testifies to the achievements of Polish culture in the east” (Brückner, 1896: 579).
closely related to Polish and more often than not perceived as a regional or social variant of more privileged Polish. All this involved a greater potential for tensions in individual ethno-linguistic identification (ib.), accompanied by a different degree of Polonization.13

Some differences between Lithuanian and Ruthenian can help to predict linguistic results of their contact with Polish. For example, there could be no confusion between Lithuanian and Polish regardless of what script was being used. In the late 16th c., Lithuanian was not substantially endangered by lexical or phonetic borrowings from Polish; besides, for bilingualism involving such typologically and genetically distant languages, only a few morphosyntactic borrowings were admissible. As for the Ruthenians, they were tempted to introduce as many Polish loanwords as the communication situation would allow; yet they might be insouciant about the syntax, which felt typologically and genetically similar to the Polish. Of paramount importance for their ethno-linguistic self-identification of Ruthenian speakers was how their language would look in writing and would sound in public use. Could this concern be a reason behind the comparatively stable phonetics and morphology in the language of the educated Ruthenian bilinguals?

Based on the works of Martynas Mažvydas, Jonas Břetkůnas, Mikalojus Daukša, and Konstantinas Sirvydas (Zinkevičius, 1988: 28-40ff., 173-265ff.), Dini (1997: 335) delineated a bifurcated tendency in the Duchy of Prussia (DP) and in the GDL. Thus, the major Catholic authors of the GDL (Daukša, Sirvydas) tended to use a puristic version of their native vernacular, which avoided borrowings from Slavic, Latin, and German. By contrast, the major Protestant authors (Petkevičius, Břetkůnas), especially in East Prussia where

13. The opposite poles of the Polonization scale are exemplified by the cases of Vasil’ Čjapinski and Fjodor Eļļašoŭski. In the introduction to his Homiliary Gospel of 1570 / 1580, Čjapinski, who would sign all official documents in Ruthenian, chastised those noblemen who did not dare sign them in their native vernacular (Danylenko, 2006a: 108, fn. 43 ; cf. Martel, 1938: 255). Highly Polonized Belarusian is found in the Historical Notes of Fjodor Eļļašoŭski (late 16th or early 17th cc.), who liberally used Polish language means, thereby straying from the norm of the prostaja mova. According to Eļļašoŭski (1967: 336), this is an extreme case of the “macaronic Belarusian-Polish jargon” which demonstrates Polish interference in the syntax and, what is much rarely observed in Middle Ukrainian texts, in the phono- and morphological patterns: vedlja praktýkí tej ne mjâlo stati nic takekho (Eļļašoŭski: 12) (= Pol. według praktyki tej nie miało stać nic takiego) “according to this practice, nothing like that could occur”.
Lithuanian had a privileged status, were less concerned about borrowings from Slavic. In concrete cases, however, this generalization may become obscured, since the bulk of the literary works of this period were translated from Polish by authors with varying educational background and expertise.

The first Lithuanian book, Martynas Mažvydas’ Katekizmas (1547), is very representative in this respect. While phonemically and morphologically showing South Žemaitian dialect features, the Katekizmas is heavily modeled on Polish written tradition, particularly its vocabulary and, to some extent, syntax (Zinkevičius, 1988: 34-40). Non-indigenous syntactic phenomena, however, look more like transfers than borrowings. For instance, the only impersonal pattern seems to be found in an obvious Slavic (Polish) calque, [...] *kaipo* (as) *fchwentaie Euangelyai* (holy Gospels-loc.) *parafhyt* (write-n. sg. PPP) *irã* (is) “as is written in the Holy Gospels” (Gerullis, 1923: 24), a formula which is commonly found in medieval religious texts written or copied in ethnic Lithuanian territories (Danylenko, 2005b: 153-154).

Of interest is Merkelis Petkevičius’ Calvinist Katekizmas (1598) with its relatively archaic grammar despite the fact that this record was hastily prepared and translated word-for-word from Polish with many loanwords, thus remaining conspicuously unpolished and rightly considered the first example of jargonistic language in written Lithuanian (Zinkevičius, 1988: 195-198). The text is characterized by an apparently West Aukštaitian tendency to use periphrastic constructions (more than 200x) to render passive meaning, while there is only one reflexive form, clearly modeled on the Polish equivalent (Jakulienė, 1968: 216ff.). A more accurate and literary translation of a Polish original is Mikolajus Daukša’s Postilé (1599). Alongside a few clichéd impersonal constructions used in both the Polish and Lithuanian texts, the Lithuanian text of the sermons demonstrates a clear tendency to use finite verbs in place of Polish impersonal constructions (Danylenko, 2005b: 154).

One should also mention here language program of Mikalojus Daukša. In the Polish-language “Preface unto the benevolent reader” to his Postilla Catholicella (1599), a translation of Jakub Wujek’s Postilla Catholicella Mnieysza, Daukša condemns the neglect and rejection of his own (Lithuanian) vernacular, caused by the domination of Polish. This is why he urges that Lithuanian be introduced into everyday life in the church, state and society, because “[j]ęzyk iest spolnym zwiąزkiem miłości, matką jedności, oycem społeczności, państhw strożem’ (“The language is a common bond of love, mother of unity, father of community, and a defender of the country”) (Daukša, Postilé: 42, 43, 45). His call for the defense of the native vernacular was aimed first of all at the bilingual Lithuanian élites who preferred Polish for personal
career advancement. Only this can explain why, despite the spread of the Reformation with the help of Polish, Daukša wrote the preface not in Lithuanian but in Polish, which, according to him, was not comprehensible to a great section of the population (ib.: 42). It is also clear why Mažvydas, who was concerned about the fate of Lithuanian in East Prussia, chose Latin to write a preface, entitled “Pastoribus et ministriis ecclesiarum in Lithuaniæ gratiam et pacem” (“Grace and peace to the Pastors and Ministers of Churches in Lithuania”), where he criticized, although in less severe expressions, the clergy for their disdain for the lingua vernacula “vernacular tongue”, viz., lingua Lithuanica nostra “our Lithuanian language” (Mažvydas, Katekizmas, 1547: 49, 53).

The afore-mentioned works demonstrate the subordinate position of Lithuanian in the system of relationships between the core languages in the GDL, first, in the functional opposition with Ruthenian and then with Polish which became a lingua franca in the late 16th-early 17th cc. Unlike Lithuanian, the rusškij jazyk of the administration and the prostaja mova of the literary genres lost less ground, declining under the cultural pressure of Polish in a later period. Generally, in view of the diachronically and functionally complex relationships among the core languages, one wonders whether it is possible to ascertain structural affinities allegedly acquired during a three hundred-year period of time.

3.1. Gente Ruthenus, natione Polonus

This motto becomes even more timeless if one applies it to early modern national identity in the PLC. To be sure, one cannot refute numerous manifestations of solidarity, extending across ethnic, religious, and probably linguistic boundaries, among the nobility élites in this state. Nevertheless, these horizontal links, according to Plokhy (2006: 167), were often broken, and vertical links between social estates developed in particular ethno-cultural communities. In light of the latest findings (2006: 166–202), the development of a strong Ruthenian identity among the nobility stratum challenges the view that a multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual Polish nation existed in the

14. However, for the Germanized society of the DP, one might have expected him to write the preface in German. As Mažvydas himself admitted in his letter of 1549 to Duke Albrecht, he was completely ignorant of the German language at that time (Mažvydas, Katekizmas, 1547: 653ff.; Danylenko, 2006c: 109). It may be the reason why direct German influence in his book is nil.
16th and 17th cc. Not surprisingly, the Ruthenian gentry were confined to a closed and very traditional space defined by local culture, Eastern Christian tradition, and, one should add, native language, epitomized by *Russice scriptae*.

The Ruthenian identity represented by the motto *gente ruthenus, natione polonus*, ascribed traditionally to Stanisław Orzechowski (1513-1566), appears too multifarious to fit into that formula (Frick 1994). More often than not he signed his writings “Stanislaus Orichovius Roxolanus”, viz., Ruthenian, sometimes in the context of more sophisticated identities within a Ruthenian framework: “Est mihi genitrix Polonia, procreatrix Ecclesia, altrix Roxolania, patria Peremiflia”,¹⁵ and then “[...] est mihi natale Rus”, that is, “Poland is my parent, the Church is my mother, Ruthenia is my nourisher, Peremyśl is my fatherland, [...] and Rus’ is my birthplace” (Chimaera: 6). Very instructive is Orzechowski’s letter to the papal nuncio in Poland, Giovanni Francesco Commendone, written on 10 December 1564 (Orzechowski, 1972: 620-641). There Orzechowski designates Rus’ (not Poland) as his fatherland, limiting its territory to the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains along the Dniester River and thereby giving the strong impression that his *patria* coincided with the borders of the Rus’ palatinate (Plokh, 2006: 171). Clearly, Rus’ identity was strong enough to cross ethnic, linguistic, and cultural bounds. But that identity stopped, as Plokh (2006: 173) argued, at the borders of the Kingdom of Poland: Orzechowski’s writings show that the Ruthenized Poles were unwilling or unable to make connection with Rus’ identity in the GDL.

Ethnic Lithuanian identity gradually became subordinate to Polish national identity, since the Lithuanian *boyars* were inclined to full participation in the Polish political privileges, expeditiously opting for Polish as a new state language (*Zinkevičius, 1988: 112-114*). In 1696, when the Commonwealth Diet adopted a resolution making the use of Polish obligatory in jurisprudence and administration, the nobility of the GDL submitted a proposal to the Diet to introduce Polish instead of Ruthenian as the language of the local courts. The proposal was one of a number of petitions intended to extend the rights possessed by the nobility of the Kingdom of Poland to their peers in the now subsumed GDL (see Plochy, 2006: 309). The equalization of noble rights went hand in hand with linguistic and cultural Polonization, a process which Dauksiša had complained about in his *Postila* where *inter alia* he called for the

¹⁵. It is noteworthy that the Latin name *Peremiflia* is most likely transliterated from the Ruthenian pleophonic form, not the Polish *Przemysł*; among other Middle Polish attestations are *Premislia, Premysl, Peremisl*, and *Przemisł* (SGKP: 148).
cultivation of Lithuanian as a state language on a level with Polish in the Kingdom of Poland (Daukša, Postilė: 44)

Kurzowa (2003: 34-35) argued that by the 18th c. the nobility of the entire Commonwealth had identified themselves as Poles, while the name Polska (Poland) was applied to refer to both parts of the Polish-Lithuanian state, and Lietuva (Lithuania) only to the GDL (see Bednarczuk, 1994: 112-113). Yet, despite the optimistic claim of Kurzowa (1991: 34) that the formation of a new political nation with the adoption of Polish provided a unique possibility for the Lithuanians to “draw on [Poland’s] culture and ideology of the Golden Century”, the status of Lithuanian continued to decline until its literary resurrection in the 18th c. (see Adomavičiūtė [Adomavičiūtė], 1981: 47ff.). Polish cultural pressure provoked a massive language shift found both in the milieu of the noblemen and in the Polish-Lithuanian jargoned language of religious books (bažnytinė koinė) for the townspeople and peasantry (Palionis, 1979: 106-108). An arresting example of extreme Polonization is a very popular book of that time, Broma atverta ing viečnastis, by Mykolas Ališauskas (1712-1779), who used a macaronic (Lithuanian-Polish) language with Polonisms and other Slavicisms making up 45% of the vocabulary in the book (Adomavičiūtė [Adomavičiūtė], 1981: 43-44). In the title the word broma is borrowed from MPol. brama “gate” (SSP, 1: 153) or perhaps MBel. brama / broma / brona (HDB, 2: 187, 221), and viečnastis from MUKr. / MBel. večnost “eternity”, but not MPol. wieczność (SSP, 10: 129), as suggested by Dini (1997: 341); by contrast, native Lithuanian varlas and amžiūrė are used in the language of Mažvydas’ Katėkizmas (1547), e.g., per taw ešme Šutverti tikra amžiūrė (Lat. per te sumus creati, vera aeternitas) (327: 16) (Mažvydas-Urbas: 17, 413).

4. The Search for Structural Affinities

Bednarczuk (1994: 118-119; see Reczek, 1987: 15-16) cited eight alleged phonological and morphosyntactic features which attest to the existence of a separate ethno-linguistic community in the GDL. The features, shared by the core and most peripheral ethnolocums, including the so-called “pogańskie gwary z Narewu” (“the pagan dialects of the Narew”) (Zinkevičius, 1985; Dini 1997: 214-217), are the following: (1) the expansion, under Polish influence, of palatalization in Belarusian (cf. dzeke and cekane) and in Lithuanian, especially in Dzūkian; this feature is “occasionally” found in Tatar, Karaita, and northwestern Yiddish; (2) unification of the vocalic structure as reflected in the expansion of a at the cost of o and e, e.g., the change of o into a and the front vocalization of ë in Baltic, the Belarusian akanne, and similar phenomena
in northeastern borderland Polish and “sporadically” in other ethnolects;\(^{16}\) (3) change of \(v\) into \(u\) in the environment before a consonant or at the end of the morpheme/word, especially in Lithuanian and Ruthenian (both Belarusian and Ukrainian); (4) the loss of the neuter gender, partly realized in East Baltic and under way in Belarusian, northeastern borderland Polish, and Yiddish; (5) the use of derivative formants, including numerous diminutive, personal, and agitative suffixes of the type -\(ek\), -\(ćuk\), -\(ko\), -\(ś-ko\) and the like in Baltic, Slavic, and peripheral oriental languages; (6) influence of the Slavic aspectual system on Lithuanian (e.g., prefixed perfectives like \(pa\)-\(daryt\) “to make”), as well as on Yiddish and Lithuanian Tatar; (7) the \(u\) + genitive possessive construction which is commonplace in East Baltic, northern East Slavic, and northeastern borderland Polish; (8) the use of the past active participles, in particular in the predicate.

The first impression is that, of the features just mentioned, practically none can reasonably be claimed as resulting from areal convergence in the GDL. Moreover, they seem to have been singled out randomly, presenting a rather fragmentary picture of possible structural affinities of the languages in contact.

4.1. Palatalization
To take phonological evidence first, correlation of palatalization as realized in Lithuanian does not look convincing in this respect. To begin with, the Dźukian change \(*tj, *dj > c, dz\) with a strong \(t, d\) palatalization phase and the subsequent assimilation of already palatalized \(t’\) and \(d’\), shows a different type of assimilation as compared with the Polish and Belarusian (Otrębski, 1968), and even the Lithuanian. Zinkevičius (1987: 248-249) argues that affricates appeared in the late 14th c. (in East High Lithuanian) or even in the early 15th c. (in the Žemaitian dialect region). If the phase of assimilation was a gradual process, which occurred between the 12th and 14th cc. until the pronunciation with a clear affrication became firmly established, this chronology seems to be in conflict with Bednarczuk’s line of reasoning about the spread of the correlation of palatalization within the ethno-linguistic area of the GDL.

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16. This feature is modeled on Vaillant’s (1950: 109ff.) hypothesis about the strong \(aka\) which purportedly might have emerged in Belarus’ alongside Baltic tribes and, chronologically, belongs to the prehistoric period (see Shevelov, 1953: 46). This chronology appears to be in conflict with Bednarczuk’s thesis about the formation of an ethno-linguistic community in the GDL.
The chronology and geography of the palatalization of \( t \) and \( d \) in Belarusian
do not resolve the above controversy. Belarusian loans in Baltic from the
period between the mid-16th c. and the late 17th c. do not reveal affrication of
the Belarusian stops, e.g., MLith. telętyna “veal” as a loan from MBel. teljatyna
(MoBel. cjaljacina), cf. MPol. ciełęcina (Skardžius, 1931: 221). Affricates in
Polish borrowings were rendered with the help of palatalized consonants as
reflected in \( d’jakjuči \) in the Psalter of 16th c.;\(^{17} \) according to Wexler (1977:
172), this may be because the Belarusian dialects contiguous to Lithuanian had
not yet acquired affrication. Moreover, Belarusian cekanne and dzekanne could
hardly be triggered by Polish assimilation, for these phenomena might have
developed independently in the north of Belarus’, between the 14th–16th cc.
after the disintegration of the Kyiv-Polissian dialect group and then spread to
South Belarusian, although too late to encompass North Ukrainian (Karski,
1908: 348; Shevelov, 1979: 739-740). Although assimilation in East High
Lithuanian, Yotvingian, Polish, and Belarusian makes up a uniform
phenomenon in a continuous area, it is not easy to determine the center of the
palatalization (Otrębski, 1968: 161), even if one tries to link it to the Baltic
substratum in Belarusian (Zinkevičius, 1987: 251; Wiemer, 2003: 123).\(^{18} \)

\(^{17} \) There is another possible explanation of the avoidance of affricates in Polish
borrowings and native Ruthenian writings in both russkij jazyk and prostaja mowa.
In terms of the normalization of these two languages, covering two time spans,
roughly from the late 14th to the early 16th cc., and from the 16th to the end of the
17th cc., it is also maintained (Pluşč, Aničenka, Žurauški, Pugh, Moser,
Rusanivs’kyj) that phonological and grammatical features as found in written records
of different genres are characteristic of both Middle Ukrainian and Belarusian, thus
not allowing either Ukrainian or Belarusian deviating dialect features to penetrate into
the common language standard. Among the most striking features of Belarusian phonetics which were not admitted into Early Middle texts, one can mention akanne,
cekanne and dzekanne (Stang, 1935, 74ff.; Žurauški, 1967: 270ff.); nor were such
Ukrainian peculiarities as u (\( \sim \) MoUkr. i) from o and e in the newly closed syllables
and the so-called new \( e \) admitted (Danylenko, 2006a: 100-106).

\(^{18} \) Bednarczuk’s hypothesis appears even weaker if one takes into consideration a
tendency to the depalatalization of some consonantal series in borderland Lithuanian
(Mikułieńienė, 1996/1997: 65-66). More interesting is the fact that the Dźükian
pronunciation of c and dz in South and East High Lithuanian has been gradually
disappearing. Today one hears a sort of split pronunciation of the underlying
affricates (ib.). The question arises as to what and when might have triggered this
process – before hypothetical borrowing of the strong \( t \), \( d \) palatalization phase from
Belarusian or Polish or after?
Finally, of interest are fluctuations in the distribution of Polish hard and palatalized s, z : š, ž, c : č and n : ň as found in northeastern borderland Polish in the late 17th-early 18th cc. Thus, in some texts the scribes did not sign palatalization at all, e.g., wiadomosc “news” (lit. wiadomość), dać “to give” (lit. dać), z kosioleom (instr. sg. m.) “with the Church” (Kurzowa, 1991: 45 ; see SSP, 2: 1 ; 3: 360 ; 10: 100) and similar spellings (pronunciation) dubbed in the Polish Crown as “lithuanism plebej” (Klemensiewicz, 1974: 296). Taken as a whole, this phenomenon is likely to mark a loss or reconfiguration of the correlation of palatalization in northeastern borderland Polish as a result of substratum interference of Belarusian and, perhaps, some northern Ukrainian dialects. Chronologically, this could occur beyond the time span posited by Bednarczuk for the ethno-linguistic community within the GDL.

4.2. Morphosyntactic features

In the morphosyntax, a tricky example is that of the possessive construction with u plus the genitive case which is attested in East Baltic, northern East Slavic, and northeastern borderland Polish. The situation in this area is more obscure than it may first appear (Danylenko, 2002). Lithuanian, a solid inflectional language, while marginally preserving a dative of possession, normally uses the verb turėti “to have” to express possession (Schmalstieg, 1987: 229). Latvian has retained the ancient dative of possession (Endzelin, 1922: 427), though the use of the verb turēt in the possessive meaning proper is also represented in its dialects (Mülenbachs, 4: 270), a phenomenon which in

19. Following Kurzowa (1993: 41-42, 55), I will treat this language as a local variety of Polish which began shaping up on the basis of Belarusian and Lithuanian substrata in the 16th c., though its inception traces back to the late 13th-early 14th cc. The oldest variety of borderland Polish in the times of the GDL experienced subsequently later influences provoked by different socio-cultural factors (colonization of new lands, changes in political borders, etc.). Thus, it may be sometimes extremely hard to distinguish between ancient convergences or borrowings in the borderland language of local élites, especially in urban centers, and newer contact-induced phenomena in the 19th to 20th cc., as first discussed by Turska (1995: XI.1-XI.2) for the rural vernacular. For the modern period, Turska pinpointed three main Polish-speaking regions in Lithuania: (1) the Vilnius region; (2) the region of Smealvos; and (3) the region north and north-east from Kaunas.
Latgalian could have been triggered by influences from Polish, Russian, and the Aukštaitian dialects of Lithuanian (Balode, Holvoet, 2001: 9, 19).20

However, Russian and, with certain reservations, Ukrainian along with Belarusian appear to be typologically heterogeneous with regard to possessive patterning. I tried to prove (Danylenko, 2002) that one can speak of a split linguistic system which dialectally and discourse-pragmatically has exhibited either be- or have-patterning, whence the bookish use of imēti in the history of literary East Slavic languages. Moreover, if the historical switching from be-patterning, represented by the older Lat. *mihi* (4-th) est “to me is” type predicate of possession, to have-patterning, realized fully in the verb “have” of possession, may be explained sociolinguistically, there is no basis for linking the underutilization of a verb “have” in North Slavic and East Baltic to Uralic influence (V. Kiparsky, Décsy, Veenker).21 Respectively, the activation of the non-agreeing construction with the “new Slavic accusative” of the direct object in Polish, Ukrainian, with some reservations in Belarusian and North-West Russian, e.g., Pol. *podano* (n. sg. PPP) *herbatę* (acc. sg. f.) “one has served tea”, provides no sign of any borrowing of the impersonal construction in North

20. Lithuanian dialects exhibit also constructions with the preposition *pās* followed by the accusative to refer to the possessor, similar to the Slavic possessive syntactic model of the type *u* “at” + genitive shared by most Slavic languages, including North Slavic. Fraenkel (1929: 84) seems to have been the first to view these constructions as a syntactic borrowing from Russian, cf. Lith. *pās kūpiu* (merchant-acc. sg. m.) *yrā* (is) *duktē* (daughter-nom. sg. f.) “the merchant has a daughter”. Elsewhere (Danylenko, 2002: 109, fn. 5; 2006d: 201) I argued that, even if these dialectal prepositional constructions were patterned on the corresponding Russian model, the Baltic data sheds little light, if any, on the distribution of possessive constructions in Slavic, and demonstrates rather an independent line of development.

21. This feature becomes even murkier in the light of alleged Uralic substratum influence. Timing and a source interference are serious problems in this case. If Décsy (1967: 150) is right in believing that the ancestors of the Russians came into contact with Uralic speakers about the end of the 6th c. A.D., then there could have been time for the possessive construction with a preposition to diffuse from one or more Finno-Baltic languages into North Russian, subsequently influencing the appearance of an analogous construction in some Lithuanian dialects (Danylenko, 2006d: 201; Thomason, Kaufman, 1988: 246). This prehistorical scenario would make us to posit the substratum influence first in Finno-Baltic and then in North Russian, thus leaving aside similar historical changes in Lithuanian, Belarusian, and Ukrainian as major players in the Polish-Lithuanian-Ruthenian linguistic area.
Slavic, thus prompting caution regarding the areal interpretation of seemingly identical phenomena in adjacent languages.

Morphosyntactic feature (8) appears no less dubious. True, the past active participle in *-us- used in the resultative meaning either with the auxiliary būti or without is attested in Baltic and Slavic, in particular in North-West Russian or even colloquially in standard Russian (Kuz’mina, 1993: 146). It has also been used in northeastern borderland Polish, presumably under Lithuanian or Belarusian influence (Kurzawa, 1993: 202). Yet, in view of the geographical distribution of this form in West Russian and Belarusian, thus covering the old Baltic dialect area, Ambrazas (1979: 177, 183-184ff.) posited a Baltic substratum as a driving force in its diffusion; he also argued (ib.) that, due to specific connotations in reliquary fossilized phrases, the predicative use of the past active participle in *-us- is an old common Baltic phenomenon. Clearly, this chronology is not in tune with that ascribed to the ethno-linguistic community in the GDL.

Bednarczuk’s feature (6) dealing with Lithuanian pa-prefixened perfectives is patterned on the old theory of Schleicher (1856: 138ff.). Synchronically, there is a great number of perfective – imperfective looking pairs of prefixed vs. unprefixed verbs in Lithuanian like daryti : padaryti “to make”; different prefixes always modify only the lexical meaning of the verb and are not a grammatical feature (see Ambrazas, 1997: 235). Most representative modification is found in the lengthened zero-grade -ā- root vowel of the type pa-lūk-ēti “to wait a little bit”. The pattern with the prefix pa-, the lengthened grade of the root, and present conjugation in -i (with an attenuative meaning) has been extended to other verbs, e.g., pa-beg-ēti “to run a little bit”, pa-čj-ēti “to walk a little bit”, pa-kyl-ēti “to rise a little bit”, pa-nēš-ēti “to carry a little bit” (Schmalstieg, 2000: 117 ; LKG, 1971, 2: 241). Again, the difference between the prefixed derivatives and their unprefixed counterparts is not in the Slavic sense aspectual, but lexical.

22. Having emphasized the stative (resultative) meaning of the forms in -(j)šy as used predicatively in modern Vilnius Polish and North Belarusian, Adomavičiūtė [Adomavičiutė], Čekmonas (1991: 91) proposed to call them “a new perfect”. This term is somewhat misleading, however, since a so-called “new perfect”, treated since Mathesiou as “possessive”, is attested in Czech, Slovak, Bulgarian, Macedonian, and, though mostly colloquially, in Lower and Upper Sorbian and Polish, cf. Cz. máme (have-l pl. pres.) zaseťo (sow-n. sg.PPP) “we have sown” (Danylenko, 2006d: 198-199 ; 239-249).

True, a similar intensification of action is observable in some *pa*-derivatives in East High Lithuanian which seems to be influenced by the corresponding Belarusian forms which are particularly numerous, including those with the doubled prefix *pa-pa*. As a result of plausible interference, some Lithuanian forms tend sporadically to have the doubled prefix *pa-pa-* with the (durative-)iterative meaning, e.g., *pa-pa-rūkštė* (= *surąkšti*) “to choose” and *pa-pa-mištė* (= *užmištė*) (Grinaveckienė, 1969: 221). The pattern with the (doubled) prefix *pa-pa-* and the lengthened (“iconic”) grade in Lithuanian supplies a twofold quantitative meaning of a particular action which may be conceived as distributive with a certain degree of intensity, divorced in fact from any qualitative (aspectual) interpretation of action in its completion (Danylenko, 2003: 216, 335-337).

23. In NWB (3: 394-398), I counted more than fifty lexemes with the doubled prefix *pa-pa-*, all denoting different degrees of the iterative action presented sometimes in an expressive manner, e.g., *pa-pa-haloxaccė* “to splash long” (NWB, 3: 394). Not less numerous are Ukrainian formations in Hrinčenko (2: 337-339). Belarusian and Ukrainian examples show that this derivational pattern is typical of colloquial and dialectal texts. This is why, perhaps, derivatives with the doubled prefix *pa-pa-* are not attested in HDB. There are only two Middle Ukrainian examples in Tymčenko-M (2: 171): *po-po-lokatsy* “to scare (many people)” (1564) and *po-po-ĭst’y* “to eat a little bit” (1720). Clearly, this derivational type could hardly be actively borrowed into Middle Lithuanian. It is not therefore surprising to find only one example with the doubled prefix in Mikalojus Daukša’s *Postile*, printed in Lithuania Major in 1599: *papazitė* (556.17) (m. pl. PPP) “rolled up” (Pol. *podkasani*) (Daukša-Index, 2: 43) with the distributive-iterative meaning.

24. Sawicki (2000: 141) reports a similar opinion according to which no compound (prefix) verb should be considered a perfective member of the aspectual opposition in Lithuanian. The prefixes in verbal derivatives play an important role in conveying
Support for the above hypothesis comes from certain Samogitian and High Lithuanian dialects (including those adjacent to Belarusian and Polish) in which intensity of any verbal action is marked by the suffix -tel- or -ter-, e.g., žiūpterėti “einfältig mit offenen Munde umhergaffen, maulaffen” (Nesselmann: 550; LKŽ, 20: 694), žvilgtėti “einen von der Seite forschend ansehen” (Nesselmann: 554; LKŽ, 20: 1118). According to Schmalstieg (2000: 124), the degree of intensity in such derivatives is in direct proportion to the length of the root vowel: the verbs with a short vowel denote a weaker, shorter action vs. those with the long vowel which denote a stronger, longer action: būkstertėti “to flash a little bit” vs. būkstertėti “to flash quite a bit” (LKŽ, 1: 916), riktelėti “to shout a little bit” vs. riktelėti “to shout strongly” (LKŽ, 11: 614), čiūpterėti “to grasp slightly; to grab, touch a little bit” vs. čiūpterėti “to grab on to tightly” (LKŽ, 2: 171). Such formations, sometimes denoting series of short actions, can be paired with the corresponding deverbal predicative particles to render single short constituent actions (LKŽ 1997, 2: 242, 734), inasmuch as the iconic nature of the root ablaut is retained in the short and long vowel contrast of Lithuanian interjections (Schmalstieg, 2000: 125), e.g., žvilgt next to žvilgtėti, and žvyilt next to žvyiltėti denoting “a more intensive looking around” (LKŽ, 20: 1117-1118). Thus, there are no solid grounds for positing borrowing of the Lithuanian formation with the prefix pa- coupled with the “iconic lengthening” which fits well into the Lithuanian patterning of canonical action, which elsewhere (Danylenko, 2003: 202-223) I identified as distributive-intensive.

Generally, the historical and inferential evidence indicates a long pre-history of the major structural affinities as discussed in sections 4-4.2. The earliest language contact in the territories of the GDL set the stage for possible structural convergence at a time too late for Polish, Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian to acquire common features sufficient for delineating a separate ethno-linguistic area. The major features in the theory of Bednarczuk are problematic in one way or another (though not all in the same way). In a case of this sort, a convincing argument will require proving that some promising

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various fine semantic distinctions, mostly of circumstantial and Aktionsart nature (cf. Stang, 1966: 309). An attempt to reconcile different approaches toward Lithuanian aspect was made by Keydana (1998) who posited the prefix pa- as a marker of the “complexive” and non-pa- as a marker of the “neutral” aspect in this language; incidentally, the author claimed that in East High Lithuanian, under Belarusian influence, other prefixes tend to take on the aspectual marking.
candidates, at least among minor (less systemic) affinities, could have arisen through a relatively short period of contact.

4.3. Minor features

Arguably, no convincing candidates are traceable in zones with active contacts between Polish and Belarusian (and partly Ukrainian dialects), and even more in northeastern borderland Polish. Among the phonological features caused by confrontation of the Polish and Belarusian subsystems, Kurzowa (1991: 49-50) cited the correlation of palatalization which, as has been mentioned, occurs inconsistently in the core languages.

A more viable candidate is likely to be exemplified by akanne. Kurzowa (1991: 47), however, was baffled to find in northeastern borderland Polish so few examples of akanne, including hypercorrect spellings, especially if one takes into consideration the extent of this phenomenon in the colloquial speech today. Only four akanne-forms were identified by Pihan (1992: 122) in the bulk of northeastern borderland Polish texts dating back to the 17th c. Generally, the lack of reliable examples of akanne in the Ruthenian texts authored by speakers of the core and peripheral ethnolects makes it impossible to date the beginning of this phenomenon with certainty. Even if one accepts the 14th-15th cc. as the terminus post quo in the diffusion of akanne to the south (Wexler, 1977: 148), this process does not seem to have encompassed the territories of the GDL. Otherwise, it would be difficult to explain why Slavic and (bilingual) Lithuanian literati were not inclined to reflect akanne in writing (cf. Shevelov 1953: 40).

There are other minor Belarusian features as realized in borderland Polish from the 17th c. onward (Kurzowa, 1993: 78-85, 104, 107, 114) : (1) the loss of nasals; (2) the dispalatalization of ň in the environment before hard consonants; (3) fluctuations of the type l ~ l, rz ~ r, v ~ u, g ~ h which are also represented in adjacent Ukrainian dialects; (4) examples of the Church Slavonic pronunciation of some Belarusian words, e.g., prach “remains”, naczalnik “chief, boss”, which, in our opinion, could have been transferred from the Meletian (Ukrainian) recension of Church Slavonic. Yet only two features, the fluctuations g ~ h and v ~ u are likely to be put in a wider context of contacts between the core languages in the GDL, though some reservations can be expressed about the chronology and geography of these fluctuations.

The fluctuation v ~ u, which is feature (3) in Bednarczuk’s list, is primarily attested today in the Vilnius and Smalvos regions and is traditionally linked to direct contact with Belarusian (Wiemer, 2003: 128). Otrebński (1958: 209-213), however, relegated this phenomenon to the common Baltic period, a suggestion
which is tentatively corroborated by Zinkevičius (1998: 209). Chronologically, 
Otrębski’s hypothesis becomes more obvious in view of a similar Slavic 
alternation which emerged after the loss of jers in the 12th c. possibly at the 
same time in Ukrainian and all other Slavic languages with a bilabial \( w = [\varepsilon] \). In 
addition to Belarusian and Ukrainian, this phenomenon is retained in South 
Russian, though is alien to Polish, East Slovak, and Bulgarian; nor is it applied 
by adjacent Romanian, Hungarian and Turkic (Shevelov, 1979: 300). All this 
seems to cast doubt on the postulated interference of Belarusian in Lithuanian 
in the GDL. In modern times a similar alternation, which is of relatively new 
provenance in Belarusian (Wexler, 1977: 141-142), could be independently 
maintained in the adjacent Lithuanian and Belarusian dialects.

4.3.1. The fluctuation \( g \sim h \)

A more convincing candidate is likely to be found in the fluctuation \( g \sim h \) as 
attested in the history of the core languages of the GDL. To begin with, 
Ukrainian and Belarusian have the laryngeal \( \gamma \) and the pharyngeal \( h \) 
correspondingly that arose presumably in the late 12th-early 13th cc. 
(Shevelov, 1979: 355; Wexler, 1977: 97-98); the appearance of a new 
phoneme \( g \) in these languages can be placed in the late 14th c. when a special 
digraph “kh” was invented in the ducal chanceries to denote an alien \( g \), 
including the Lithuanian, e.g., MLith. Švirigaila next to MUKr. Švytrykhajlo 
(1424) (Zinkevičius, 1987: 110; Danylenko, 2005a: 41). In Middle Lithuanian, 
the fricative spirant \( \gamma/h \) was denoted with the help of \( g \), a digraph \( gh \), \( h \), or 
simply a “zero letter”. According to Stang (1974), the preferable way of 
rendering the spirant \( \gamma/h \) depended on the geographical provenance of 
particular texts, albeit not necessarily on their dialect basis. Indeed, both \( gh \)- 
and \( h \)-spellings are concentrated in literary records written in the DP (Martyonas 
Mažvydas, Baltramiejus Vilentas, Jonas Bretkūnas). For instance, in 
Mažvydas’ writings, showing South Žemaitian features, one can encounter 
fluctuations of the type ghadnas ~ gadnas (Gerullis, 1923: 31, 29) from Ruth. 
hoden “able; inclined” (Skardžius, 1931: 74), ghreku ~ greku (Gerullis, 1923: 
103, 22) from Ruth. hrèt “sin” (Skardžius, 1931: 77-78). There are 
\( h \)-spellings like hadina “time, hour” (Skardžius, 1931: 73) in the evangelical 
Postile of Wolfenbüttel (1573), with a mixed dialectal basis (Zinkevičius, 1988: 
54ff.)

In other, primarily eastern Lithuanian attestations, the choice of \( g \) to render 
the alien \( \gamma/h \) was quite clear since there was no spirant of this type in 
Lithuanian. Moreover, in some cases, a weak pronunciation of the East Slavic 
spirant did not even require, to the Lithuanian ear, a separate character, whence 
uliot “to feast, carouse” from MBel./MUKr. huljat (Skardžius, 1931: 228).
Stang (1974: 233ff.) suggested therefore the gh- and h-spellings might reflect a particular appropriation of the spirant γ/h in Lithuanian as cultivated in the DP. Even more, he assumed that Mažvydas and the other “Prussian writers” had been accustomed to pronounce the corresponding sound in Slavic borrowings as a fricative spirant γ or h. In other words, the prestige of the русский язык in the GDL was so high that it was likely to have reached the local elites in the DP who were ready to borrow, not only separate loanwords, but fashionable sounds. The resulting situation with the peripheral phoneme h in Middle Lithuanian is reminiscent of the status of h in borderland Polish from where the voiced pronunciation of h was adopted, under Ukrainian influence, into literary Polish (Stieber, 1973: 145). To adduce several “vitiosissime” cases, there are harita instead of chartas “charity” or Chalitz instead of Halitz “Galicia” (Klemensiewicz, 1974: 296).

5. Conclusions

In light of the above prima facie evidence adduced for the existence of an ethno-linguistic community in the GDL and later the PLC, a question arises as to what extent one can speak about this region as representing a separate linguistic unit. It should be noted that intensive language contact involves factors of time and a level of bilingualism (Thomason, Kaufman, 1988: 47). In our case, the limited time span associated with the GDL is aggravated by extensive asymmetrical bilingualism which functionally tends to transform into a sort of diglossia: the native language is used in oral and the non-native language in written discourse. Moreover, the development of a linguistic area in the GDL postulated by Bednarczuk appears weakly rooted in linguistic material which sometimes attempts to substitute for cultural, historical, and demographic data. All in all, given the paucity of definite, generally agreed-upon and systemic common features, there is real room for doubt that the GDL may be viewed as a Sprachareal.

It is tempting instead to delimit several concentric micro-areas in the GDL, asymmetrical from the standpoint of chronology and containing linguistically intersecting “players” who failed, however, to generate Sprachbund-like structural similarities in all the core and peripheral languages taken as a whole. To take the better-known micro-areas, one can mention Lithuanian-Ruthenian, Lithuanian-Polish, Ukrainian-Belarusian, as reflected in the problem of delimitation of the middle Ukrainian and Belarusian texts (Danylenko, 2006a), Ukrainian-Polish, even Lithuanian-Belarusian-Ukrainian or Lithuanian-Polish-Belarusian, resulting in the emergence of northeastern borderland Polish in the 17th c., and others. Such concentric linguistic micro-areas might have
overlapped, experiencing not only convergent but divergent changes along two axes: the vertical, or dialect – standard axis; and the horizontal, or dialect – dialect axis (Wooohiser, 2005: 239, 261). All this tends to obscure original contact routes, as is the case of many Polish loanwords in Lithuanian, which in fact are borrowings from various other Slavic source languages. Overall, the level of our understanding of the multilingualism, including convergence and interference phenomena in the GDL, does not allow us to adhere to a theory about the emergence of a linguistic area in these lands.

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