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THE ROLE OF HISTORICAL LANGUAGE MATERIALS IN THE STUDYING OF THE BALTIC-SLAVIC BORDERLANDS

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The paper sets out the hypothesis that historical language materials have considerable potential for use in the study of the Baltic-Slavic borderlands. It briefly outlines preliminary results of research on language contacts in the Baltic-Slavic border area in the light of new historical sources. The investigation of dialects and their interferences in border areas with heterogeneous historical and contemporary sociolinguistic situation is a complex task. The author believes that the micro-area approach is the most productive in the study of border areas. It appears that the most appropriate approach to the study of border areas is a combination of traditional linguistic methodology with the findings of ethnographers, anthropologists and ethnohistorians.

Keywords: border studies, linguistic ethnography, linguistic anthropology, areal linguistics, contact linguistics, Belarus-Lithuanian borderland

Vloga zgodovinskih jezikovnih gradiv pri preučevanju baltsko-slovanskih mejnih območij

V prispevku je predstavljena hipoteza, da imajo zgodovinski jezikovni viri znaten potencial za uporabo pri raziskovanju baltsko-slovanskih obmejnih območij. Na kratko so predstavljeni predhodni rezultati raziskave o jezikovnih stikih na baltsko-slovanskem obmejnem območju v luči novih zgodovinskih virov. Raziskovanje narečij in njihovih medsebojnih vplivov na obmejnih območjih z raznoliko zgodovinsko in sodobno sociolingvistično situacijo je zahtevna naloga. Avtorica meni, da je pri raziskovanju obmejnih območij najbolj produktiven mikroobmočni pristop. Zdi se, da je najprimernejši pristop k raziskovanju obmejnih območij kombinacija tradicionalne jezikoslovne metodologije z ugotovitvami etnografov, antropologov in etnozgodovinarjev.

Ključne besede: obmejne študije, jezikovna etnografija, jezikovna antropologija, arealno jezikoslovje, kontaktno jezikoslovje, belorusko-litovsko obmejno območje

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1 INTRODUCTION

The contemporary Polish-Belarus-Lithuanian borderland is a zone not only of lateral (peripheral) Baltic-Slavic contacts, but also of active language processes both between several language groups (Polish, Belarusian, Russian, Lithuanian) and within them. Hypotheses about the process of Baltic-Slavic language contacts in lateral zones are a key argument in the study of the Circum-Baltic region (Koptjevskaja-Tamm – Wälchli 2001: 615–750; Shmrecsanyi 2014: 81–92) and the subject of active scholarly discussions (Wiemer et al. 2014: 15–42). A process of substrate interferences took place here in the context of bilingualism and sometimes trilingualism; consequently, substrate-adstratal relations demand an extremely cautious approach, and the definition and classification of dialects are considerably complex.

The establishment of political borders after World War II artificially divided what was once a unified space, complicating its investigation. The range of dialect interferences of individual languages reaches far beyond the artificial political and administrative boundaries established after World War II (see also Chlebda 2015: 43–77). The issue of the influence of boundaries on processes of language convergence and divergence and on language development on both sides of the border is highly relevant (Auer et al. 2005; Palander et al. 2018; Müller – Luděk 2023: 59–100).

The investigation of dialects and their interference in border areas with a heterogeneous historical and contemporary sociolinguistic situation is a complex task. I believe that the micro-area approach is the most productive. Micro-area studies allow us to identify local language features, trace the direction and depth of dialect interference, determine the processes of language innovations, and identify areas of monosemantism.

In my opinion, when studying micro-areas in the lateral zones of the Baltic-Slavic borderlands, the most productive approach is to combine traditional linguistic methodology with the findings of ethnographers, anthropologists, and ethnohistorians (cf. Wiemer 2003: 212–229; Shaw et al. 2015: 1–13; Costley – Reilly 2021: 1035–1047). The dialect landscape of the borderlands indirectly reflects the historical variability of political and cultural boundaries, therefore, isoglosses in border areas should be viewed as boundaries of the intensity of language and cultural contacts. The methods presented in this paper for the study of dialects in borderland micro-areas can be applied to investigate processes of language interference in the Baltic-Slavic border region (cf. Wiemer – Erker 2011: 184–216). These methods facilitate a comparative description of dialects in lateral zones (cf. Mikulėnienė 2015: 282–301) and can determine the influence of political factors on processes of language convergence and divergence. They can also help to derive new data on language contacts in sparsely studied lateral dialect areas and to describe the borderland regiolect.

An unconventional tool in the study of lateral dialect zones could be the use of historical material, which is significant for describing the area of mutual interpenetration of languages on the Baltic-Slavic borderlands. Such material includes, *inter alia*, data obtained by lay linguists. In my opinion, it constitutes an important source for contemporary areal linguistics for several reasons. Firstly, it contributes material from micro-areas often not covered by available dialect atlases and lexicographic sources. Secondly, it enables the incorporation of historical sociolinguistic analysis into research on historical multilingualism and contemporary language contacts in transitional areas. Thirdly, it provides new data on the dynamics of language contacts in the borderland area, helping to determine the degree of language interference and the resulting structural changes. The paper attempts to show methods for analyzing relevant materials based on sources not previously studied from a linguistic perspective. These materials were identified by me at the Seweryn Udziela Ethnographic Museum in Kraków (Muzeum Etnograficzne im. Seweryna Udzieli w Krakowie; MEK) and in the Lithuanian State Historical Archives (Lietuvos Valstybės Istorijos Archyvas; LVIA). These are documents by Vandalin Shukevich (Wandalin Szukiewicz) relating to the micro-area of the Baltic-Slavic borderlands, today's Belarus-Lithuanian border area, between Nacha (Nacza/Nočià) and Orany (Varėna).

The Baltic-Slavic community is united not only by language processes, but also by tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The value of Vandalin Shukevich's egodocuments is defined by the linguistic, archaeological, historical, and ethnographical data from a micro-area that has been little explored. These materials help fill a lacuna in Baltic-Slavic language contact research, rendering them a unique source material. In the present context, *egodocuments* are a wide spectrum of written documents, i.e. letters, diaries, memoirs, autographs etc. This term was coined in the mid-1950s by historian Jacques Presser (Presser 1958: 208–210). In international scientific research, egodocuments constitute an important basis for studies in the fields of linguistics (Brown 2019) and sociolinguistics (van der Wal et al. 2013: 1–17) and a metalinguistic source for research into the past (von Greyerz 2010: 273–282). By *lacunae* I mean semantic gaps in the language system. Studies of lexical lacunae have been the subject of research mainly in Russian (Bykova 2003) and German (Ejger – Panasiuk 2006: 112-118; Lakunen-Theorie 2006) linguistics.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Who was Vandalin Shukevich?

Vandalin Shukevich (1852–1919) bearing the coat of arms of Odrowąż (a family from Żmudź/Žemaitija) was born in Nacha near Lida² and spent most of his life there; today it is in the north-western Belarus-Lithuanian border region. He re-

² Biographical information from a letter from Vandalin Shukevich himself; LVIA, 1135/6/10: 35–35a.

ceived his education at home, as was customary with the nobility at that time, and later under the care of Joseph Jundzil (Józef Jundził), emeritus professor of botany at the University of Vilnius.

The difficult financial situation of the family prevented Vandalin from going abroad to study, so he decided to pursue higher education at Warsaw University. However, at that time it had been transformed into an Imperial University using Russian, a language V. Shukevich did not know. He remained in Warsaw, taking private lessons in Russian to be able to pass his exams. After a short time, the family situation forced him to return to Nacha, where he took over the farm. From then on, he systematically taught himself, learning about the achievements of world-famous scientists and taking a particular interest in archaeology. He was one of the founders of the Vilnius Society of the Friends of Science (Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauki; TPN) and an active member. In his place of residence, he engaged in educational work for the rural community, inter alia setting up a committee for the establishment of schools, the supply of textbooks, and the hiring of teachers. V. Shukevich donated the exhibits obtained during his research free of charge to institutions in Warsaw, Krakow, Vilnius and Lviv, where they often formed the basis of museum collections. Reports on his research activities were submitted to numerous scientific institutions, inter alia to the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences in Krakow and to the Archaeological Society in St. Petersburg. V. Shukevich rescued Trakai Castle from destruction by drawing the attention of the authorities to the disastrous condition of the monument and gaining financial support for its renovation. He also popularised science, actively contributing to the Polish Press on archaeological and ethnographic topics. His first publication appeared in 1885 in “Tygodnik Ilustrowany” (“Illustrated Weekly”). The most complete bibliography of V. Shukevich’s journalistic articles was prepared in the interwar period in the Wróblewski Library in Vilnius; it is now held in the library of the Wróblewski Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (Lietuvos mokslų akademijos Vrublevskių biblioteka; LMAVB).

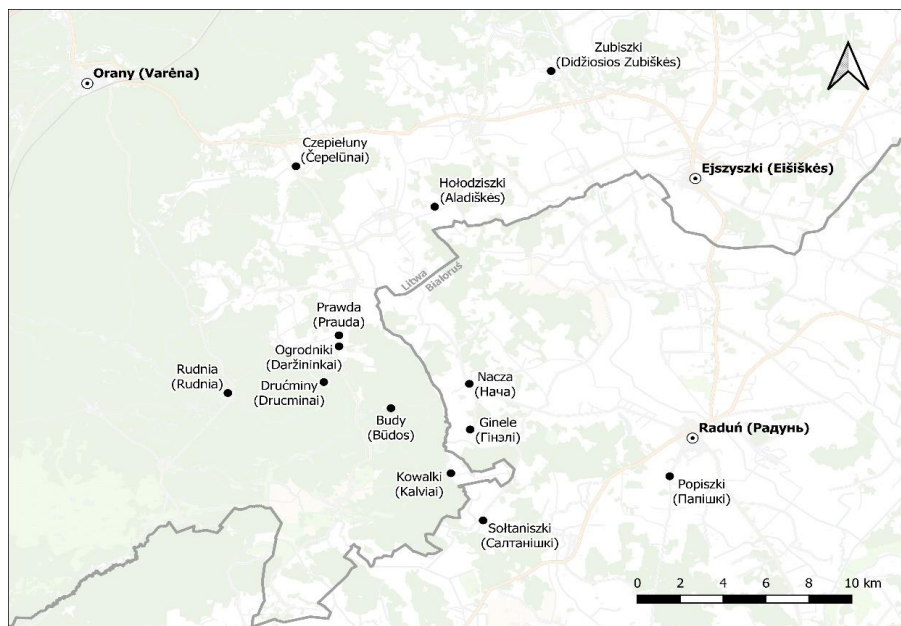
Information about him was published in 1914 in the “Kurier Litewski” (“Lithuanian Courier”) (Brensztejn 1914a: 2) and in an abridged version reprinted in the weekly publication “Ziemia” (“Earth”) (Brensztejn 1914b: 225–226). Mihal Brensztejn (Michał Brensztejn) published biographical information given to him by V. Shukevich, but some of it was incorrect; it was later amended by V. Shukevich. The study of V. Shukevich by Aleksander Snieżhka (Aleksander Śnieżko), editor of the pre-war periodical “Ziemia Lidzka” (“Lida Land”), best known as the first director of the Museum of Post and Telecommunications in Wrocław, remained only in manuscript form (and has not been published). Despite his substantial scientific legacy and social activity, V. Shukevich remains unknown not only to Polish, Lithuanian, and Belarusian society in general but also to scientists; the only summary of his life and achievements was published in the popular science series “Znani Lidzianie” (“Famous Residents of Lida”) (Blombergowa 2010).

2.2 Area researched by Vandalin Shukevich

My preliminary research has shown that the micro-area explored by V. Shukevich still remains poorly researched, and most of the localities he investigated are not included in linguistic atlases. This situation may be a result of the fact that the region including his birthplace of Nacha and the neighboring settlements are located in the difficult-to-access and sparsely populated area of the Nacha forest (Puszczza Nacka), which after World War II became the frontier between Belarus and Lithuania, making it practically impossible for scientists to conduct research there. The area is a post-Jatvingian Baltic-Slavic borderland with a complex history of settlement, characterised by expanses of forests and marshlands. During the 9th–11th centuries, the process of Slavisation was ongoing; however, it was arrested in the 12th century by Lithuanian expansion. In the 15th–16th centuries, there followed an influx of settlers including Mazovian *budnicy* ‘colliers, charcoal burners’, as well as petty nobility. All these factors resulted in an uneven and complex sociolinguistic situation, further complicated by subsequent historical and political processes.

V. Shukevich conducted his research in an area belonging at the time to the Koniava commune. Julian Talko-Hryncevich (Julian Talko-Hryncewicz), who visited V. Shukevich several times on his estate to conduct shared archaeological research, claimed that the area between Nacha and Koniava is the “age-old ethnographic Belarus-Lithuanian border between two cultures, often intertwined with Polish traditions” (Talko-Hryncewicz 1919: 81–83). Since 1569, the Koniava starosty were included in the Lida district of the Vilnius Voivodeship in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. During the interwar period, the Koniava commune was incorporated in the Lida district of the Navahrudak Voivodeship. At present, Nacha and its surroundings are in the Voranava District of the Grodno Region, near the city of Radun in Belarus, near the Lithuanian border, and part of the former Koniava commune is in the territory of Lithuania. In view of this, I classify this area as cross-border and I believe that it should be studied as a whole.

As a result of complex settlement processes in the Baltic-Slavic periphery contact zone, the language substrate was uneven (Zdaniukiewicz 1992: 171–176; Smoczyński 1989, 2003). My preliminary research has allowed me to determine a part of the micro-area explored by V. Shukevich, characterised by the occurrence of toponyms exhibiting Slavic etymology: *Budniki*, *Budy*, *Czepieluny*, *Kowale*, *Ogrodniki*, *Prawda*; Lithuanian: *Drućminy*, *Gineli*, *Nacza*; as well Slavic-Lithuanian: *Hołodziszki*, *Soltaniszki*. This demonstrates the mutual permeation of Baltic and Slavic ethnoses. *Lietuvių kalbos atlasas* (Grinaveckienė – Morkūnas 1977) takes note: Kaniava (p. 690), Nočià (VII Baltarusija), Rudnia (p. 698) i Dubičiai (p. 699), *Dyâlektalagìčny atlas belaruskaj movy* (Avanesaŭ et al. 1963) does not contain any relevant records.



Picture 1: Map of the micro-area which is the source of the lexical material from a manuscript of V. Shukevich

3 DATABASE

The correspondence between M. Brenshtejn and V. Shukevich's son Zygmunt which I have identified in the LVIA shows that the TPN received the latter's written declaration of transfer concerning all his father's materials; however, the continuation of this correspondence does not confirm that the transfer actually took place. The National Library of Poland (Biblioteka Narodowa, BN) contains a V. Shukevich archive (BN Rps III 2941–2947), which allows one to speculate that his descendants, in breach of the TPN contract, brought part of his materials to Poland. The BN also possesses other documents of his authorship, held in the archives of particular people with whom he corresponded. The Vilnius archives also require further investigation. The LVIA does not hold a separate V. Shukevich collection; his documents are dispersed among various categories in the catalogue. The LVIA's collection 1135 (with 24 sub-collections), including the TPN documents, has not been catalogued in its entirety. The sub-collection of documents stored in the TPN library and museum (no. 23), which according to my preliminary research is an important source, has only an uncatalogued card index. The results of my inquiry reveal that the authors of previous publications concerning the TPN used mainly printed materials, such as the Society's yearbooks. However, it is the hand-

written materials that provide new information on the TPN's scientific activities, enabling the pursuit of a different perspective on historical facts. My preliminary research has allowed me to conclude that V. Shukevich's documents can also be found: (1) in Kraków, at the library and archive of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences; (2) in Moscow, at the archive of the D. S. Likhachev Russian Research Institute for Cultural and Natural Heritage, successor to the Moscow Archaeological Society; (3) in Saint Petersburg, at the archive of the Institute of History of Material Culture, Russian Academy of Sciences, where the documents of the Imperial Russian Archaeological Society (collection 1) are held; (4) and probably in Lviv.

The search I have conducted within the framework of the National Science Centre project (2020/04/X/HS2/00306) in the LVIA and in the LMAVB has allowed me to identify previously unknown egodocuments of V. Shukevich,³ and to determine the significance of their research potential. Another important document for linguistic research is the manuscript of V. Shukevich which I identified in the MEK.

These documents are a new and unique source of materials for research into Baltic-Slavic contacts, and also for interdisciplinary research in the humanities, including the fields of comparative Slavic studies, historical multilingualism, and cultural anthropology. They allow historical sociolinguistic analysis to be incorporated into research on language heritage (Aalberse et al. 2019).

4 METHODOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS

V. Shukevich was not a professional linguist; his main interests were archaeology and ethnography.⁴ However, his scientific accuracy is also evidenced by his precise notation of lexemes. Preliminary analysis of the dialect material recorded by V. Shukevich has shown his reliability and indicated the use of a consistent methodology. This is especially evident in the meticulous nature of his work and his consistency in recording phonetic characteristics and accentuation of lexemes, ensuring the preservation of their dialect characteristics. These details are particularly important in the context of the analysis of Baltic-Slavic language contacts, since phonological innovations are one of the basic criteria for the determination of genetic relationships between languages. What is more, V. Shukevich recorded words he heard directly from rural inhabitants, i.e. spoken local dialect. The fact that V. Shukevich personally conducted research in the surrounding villages significantly enhances the value of his dialect material and broadens its geographical scope. His field notes contain information about the

³ Almost 700 pages, including letters, field research reports, reports on activities in the TPN and drafts of the journalistic texts.

⁴ Frida Gurevič was the first post-World War II author to describe his achievements in the context of archaeological research on the Neman area after World War II (Gurevič 1962).

name of the locality in which the lexemes were registered, which is very important. Thus, based on an analysis of the language material, the territorial coverage of particular dialect characteristics can be determined and mapped, which is particularly important in the case of a lateral dialect area. This information will make it possible to trace infiltration and interference processes, identify lexical innovations occurring within the micro-area and determine their periodisation, as well as describe language convergences and divergences, and their extent. The analysis will also form a basis for more precise determination of the process of the intensity, direction, and type of irradiation of language influence in an unresearched micro-area of the transitional zones of the Baltic-Slavic language borderlands.

The Belarusian dialects of the Nacha region belong to the north-western Belarusian dialect zone (Avanesau et al. 1969). Particular areas within it have experienced varying degrees of Baltic infiltration (Astrėjka 2010: 1–19; Jankowiak 2020: 139–166). The analysis of the geolect identified as a result of this study contributes new knowledge in the field of language contacts in a relatively unexplored peripheral area, determining the course of systemic changes, identifying new dialect characteristics, and verifying the validity of those already registered (Plygavka 2014: 228–237). Studies conducted in this way allow the comparison of data from research centres in different countries (Smułkowa 2002; Ęrker 2015; Mikulėnienė et al. 2023; Leskauskaitė 2025), and the results obtained fill a research gap in dialectology. The identification of dialect characteristics of geolects makes it possible to determine the language substrate of the area in question, establishing a basis upon which its historical linguistic situation can be reconstructed. It is worth noting that in areal research it is possible to identify loanwords both on a national and regional-dialectal level, and their presentation by means of cartography enables a reconstruction of the stages and processes of loaning. In view of the high degree of mutual infiltration of dialects of this zone, the determination of their mutual influence requires a search for appropriate methodological approaches. Quantitative analysis of individual dialect characteristics makes it possible to determine the degree of mutual interference. Linguogeographic interpretation of language facts makes it possible to determine the degree of infiltration processes and to track their progress. The analysis carried out in this way allows conclusions to be drawn about specific details of this lateral contact zone.

5 MATERIALS AND ANALYSIS (BRIEF OVERVIEW)

The manuscript of V. Shukevich which I have identified in the MEK contains unique lexical material (55 dialect lexemes) from micro-area on the Belarus-Lithuanian bor-

der not previously investigated, in the peripheral area of the Baltic-Slavic contact zone.

25 lexemes recorded in the manuscript have a pan-Belarusian scope. A smaller but significant group (15 lexemes) consists of lexemes characteristic of the dialects of the north-western borderland. Most lexemes from these two groups (49) have equivalents in the Polish literary language and Polish dialects.

Analysis of the excerpted lexemes (Konczewska 2020: 82–96) confirms Slavic expansion in this area. For example, *rohacz* was an old Slavic name for a ploughshare and was displaced by it, while *rohacz* was common in Polesie, northern Mazovia, and the western part of the dialect area between the Bug and Narev rivers.⁵

The dialect material analysed is notable for the absence of Lithuanianisms, except for two lexemes: *kousz* (*kaušas*) and *rezgini* (*rėžginės*), known in Belarusian since the 15th and 17th centuries respectively, and the consonant cluster *-rd* in the lexeme *skawardá*. This would seem surprising, especially since the areas explored by V. Shukevich are historically Lithuanian. This fact may perhaps be explained by the extent of the Nacha Forest lying north of Nacha, which naturally prevented Lithuanian settlement, unlike other present-day Belarusian border areas (e.g., Ostrowiec (Ostrowiec/Astravas), Ashmyana (Oszmiana/Ašmena). It should also be borne in mind that at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, a significant part of the ethnic Lithuanians of this area underwent a natural Belaruthenization process.

The absence of the *akanie*⁶ characteristic of Belarusian in the following lexemes is also puzzling: *cepilna*, *czepialá*, *czepiéc*, *czerpák*, *opołónik*, *podpiálka*, *trepálka*. ADJB (map 2, 3) does not record dialects with *akanie* in these areas where *akanie* is not attested in the syllable before the stressed syllable, only the absence of *akanie* in the final syllable. We can see this discrepancy in the example of one of the lexemes recorded in ADJB (map 251): *čapálá*, in the manuscript: *czepiola*. One could simply assume that V. Shukevich transmitted *akanie* inconsistently, but this seems doubtful, as *akanie* is attested in many lexemes: *abóry*, *baraná*, *barazná*, *kałýska*, *kapialús*, *karóbka*, *kastrýca*, etc. The *jakanie*⁷ recorded in ADJB (map 5) is also faithfully rendered: *wierbá*.

It can therefore be assumed that in the area around Nacha there was a perceptible influence of the Mazovian settlement from the west, which would be confirmed by the common lexemes documented above, as well as the phonetic features mentioned, and the peculiarities of accentuation.

Analysis of the material indicates certain lacunae in the available dialect materials. For example, ADJB does not record the lexemes *czerpák*, *prálnik*, *buláũka*

5 A detailed analysis of the vocabulary related to farming in the dialects of the eastern Białystok region against an East Slavic background was presented by Elżbieta Smułkowa (1968).

6 Pronouncing [o], [e] as [a] in first syllable before a stressed syllable.

7 Pronouncing [o], [e] as [a] after soft consonants, before a stressed syllable.

in this micro-area (no such name of the referent is shown in map 258), *úźwa* (no such lexeme in map 259), only *pryvázka/prývâzka*, *úźyk*, *hrywiénki* (map 261). The manuscript by V. Shukevich also reveals new meanings that have not been confirmed in any of the lexicographical sources analysed, for example, for the lexemes: *kóűsz*, *podpiálka*, *wiórek*.

In summary, it can be concluded that the dialect material from Shukevich's manuscript confirms the existence of a regional Belarusian dialect in the micro-area around Nacha at the beginning at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, whose characteristic feature was the presence of Polish influences on both the lexical and phonetic levels and the absence of Lithuanianisms.

6 DISCUSSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The brief analysis of the manuscript by V. Shukevich presented in this paper demonstrates that the materials contained in his legacy can serve as a basis for comparative analysis of the interpenetration of Polish and Belarusian dialects in transitional zones, for research on the geolect of the borderlands and on the peripheral areas of the Baltic-Slavic contact zones. Research to determine the direction of borrowings, their phonetic and morphological variants, as well as the methods of adaptation and the degree of interference, requires consideration of the similarity of dialect vocabulary resulting, among other factors, from the affinity of the Polish and Belarusian languages.⁸

The dialectal landscape of the borderlands indirectly reflects the historical variability of political and cultural boundaries. My field experience suggests that research on dialects in the transitional zones should be conducted with sociolinguistic, cultural, and anthropological considerations in mind, drawing on linguistic as well as historical and ethnocultural analysis, transcending research models of traditional linguistics and incorporating the research of ethnographers and ethnohistorians. Such investigations can be classified as linguistic anthropology and linguistic palaeontology. This approach facilitates more effective analysis of language contact processes and significantly expands existing research on the dialect landscape of the borderlands. The adoption of a diachronic approach, comparative methods, and language contact theory, as well as the comparison of Polish, Belarusian, and Lithuanian research perspectives, appears to be the most effective research tool in the transitional contact zones of the Baltic-Slavic borderlands. It should also be emphasised that the investigation of materials supplied by non-professional linguists studying borderland culture can be an effective research pro-

⁸ More lexical examples illustrating language contacts in the Polish-Belarus-Lithuanian borderland are provided in Konczewska 2024: 241–259.

cedure. It enables the tracing of such linguistic and cultural changes taking place in the borderlands as cannot be studied autonomously: “After all, culture, with its richness, diversity, and ethnographic variability, lives in the word. The word sanctions the manifestation of culture, stabilises its form and content” (Kaš 2021: 271).

I intend to expand the research on the sparsely explored micro-areas of the Baltic-Slavic borderlands, which constitute the current Belarus-Lithuanian border area, under my new project (NAWA, BJP/PON/2025/1/00002/DEC/1). The main goal of this project is to determine the development of Polish in the borderland in contact with the indigenous languages based on new source materials from Vilnius University Library, dating from 1887–1939. In the course of this project, I will focus on several research questions. The extent to which the languages of indigenous peoples have influenced the formation and development of the Polish language in the borderland will be determined. The investigation will examine the impact of the Belarusian and Lithuanian national movements on the development of the Polish language in the borderlands. It will examine how ethnographic materials can be studied from a linguistic perspective. The ways in which areal linguistics can be enriched by non-traditional data (from ethnographic materials and egodocuments) and methods, will be analysed.

It is hypothesised that the analysis of the dialect materials will enable the establishment of a novel database concerning the development of the regional Polish language and language contacts in the borderlands. The analysis will identify systemic changes and new dialect features and enable the verification of changes already recorded. This will facilitate the determination of the language substrate and will establish conditions for the reconstruction of the stages and processes of interference, as well as the historical sociolinguistic situation.

This will be important for the presentation of the entire dialectal continuum of the Baltic-Slavic language borderlands. It is anticipated that the results of the project will also provide new data on the dynamics of language contacts in the north-eastern borderland. This will identify the current status of regional dialects of Polish and their situation in contemporary Lithuania and Belarus, exploring how they are affected by interference from Belarusian and Lithuanian border dialects and will also identify and demonstrate the structural language changes that have taken place as a result of this interference.

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POVZETEK

Vloga zgodovinskih jezikovnih gradiv pri preučevanju baltsko-slovanskih mejnih območij

Prispevek preučuje raziskovalni potencial zgodovinskih jezikovnih virov za proučevanje baltsko-slovanskih obmejnih območij, s posebnim poudarkom na analizi mikroobmočij. Osredotoča se na doslej neizkoriščene vire Vandalina Šukeviča, amaterskega raziskovalca, ki je deloval na belorusko-litovskem obmejnem območju na prelomu 19. in 20. stoletja. Študija dokazuje, da takšni zgodovinski viri zagotavljajo dragocene dokaze o narečni interferenci, večjezičnosti in procesih jezikovnega stika. Kombinacija tradicionalne dialektologije z jezikovno etnografijo, antropologijo in etnozgodovino omogoča natančnejšo interpretacijo jezikovne dinamike obmejnih območij. Analiza leksikalnih in fonetičnih podatkov iz zgodovinskih jezikovnih gradiv razkriva vrzeli in neskladja v obstoječih slovanskih narečnih atlasih in leksikografskih virih. V prispevku je postavljena teza, da zgodovinska gradiva, ki so jih ustvarili neprofesionalni raziskovalci, predstavljajo dragocen vir za slovansko dialektologijo in pomembno prispevajo k rekonstrukciji zgodovinskih sociolingvističnih situacij v obrobni območjih jezikovnega stika.