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SPRACH- UND KULTURKONTAKTE
IN EUROPAS MITTE.
STUDIEN ZUR SLAWISTIK
UND GERMANISTIK 12

Ewa Golachowska

Conversations with God

Multilingualism among the Catholics
in Belarus in the Late Twentieth
and Early Twenty-First Centuries.
Sociolinguistic Study



PETER LANG

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The book discusses the sociolinguistic status and prestige of the Polish language and the changes in the national identity of Catholics in Belarus due to the switch from Polish to Belarusian in the Catholic Church. The research shows that the national identification of Catholics in Belarus is changing. The oldest generations most often self-identify as Polish. For those from the middle and youngest generations, the link between nationality and their religion is not obvious as being a Catholic does not exclude a Belarusian self-identity. Belonging to the Catholic Church results from being baptized in the Catholic rite, while national identity can be defined in many ways and re-defined by various life experiences. Catholicism has proven to be a less debated and more durable category than nationality.

The Author

Ewa Golachowska is a linguist and Professor at the Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences. Her research interests include sociolinguistics and the relations among religion, languages and identity. She is the author of numerous sociolinguistic articles.

Conversations with God

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Herausgegeben von
Andrzej Kątny und Stefan Michael Newerkla

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Translated by: Benjamin Koschalka



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In memory of my grandmother and grandfather – Feliksa Wygnańska and Jan Wygnański, whom fate led from Podole through Arkhangelsk to Warsaw. To me, they will always remain a paragon of fidelity to one's own traditions and respect for others in a complex multicultural world.

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Preface to the English Edition

The book “Conversations with God. Multilingualism among the Catholics in Belarus in the Late Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Centuries” is a description and interpretation of phenomena that accompanied the Roman Catholic Church in Belarus in its transition from Polish to the Belarusian language. This change was accompanied by a high amount of tension of a social and ethnic character. In addition, it may be assumed that for many young Catholics in Belarus the linguistic transformations in the sacred sphere have become a catalyst for change or a reason for verifying their own national identity. However, it is not just a description of the specific situation that is of significance here. By undertaking reflections on the relationships between religion, language and ethnicity, the book contributes to the discussion on this very issue in various Slavic countries and in Europe, particularly in the area of the former Soviet Union, where processes related to religiousness and national identity were latent for many years – it is only recently that they have come to be exceptionally dynamic. One may note that the transition of religion from the social to the private sphere is somewhat delayed here, while the significance of religion for national identity is gradually decreasing. These processes were hindered for many years as a result of atheisation, which in the 1990s was followed by the “release of faith”, as the residents of the former Soviet Union, that is my interlocutors, refer to the restoration of religious freedoms. Language as a so-called objective determinant of identity plays an important role in constructing both national and group identity.

In the case of the Polish minority in the former USSR, the Roman Catholic Church no longer serves to maintain national identity since these functions are now fulfilled by Polish organisations, Polish language schools and courses, Polish cultural associations and other forms of activity among the Polish diaspora that came into being after the 1990s. In this situation, the Roman Catholic Church has become multi-ethnic. Various examples illustrating this can be mentioned, such as the Catholics in Belarus using both Belarusian and Polish in church, the Catholics in Ukraine praying not only in Polish but also in Ukrainian and Russian, as well as those living in Wierszyna, a Polish village in Siberia, where Polish and Russian languages are used interchangeably in the sacred sphere.

As a result, the important universal issues described in this monograph include reflections on the relationships between religion and ethnicity, as well as on the significance of religion in contemporary processes of ethnic revival and the phenomenon of the interplay between religion and identity, which on the

one hand results in the sacralisation of ethnicity and its language, and, on the other, in the ethnicisation of religion.

Analysis of the complex relationships between religion and language can only be made using an interdisciplinary approach. For this reason, this book written by a linguist also takes on social problems and those related to religious studies. It discusses such universal topics as sacral language as opposed to colloquial language, the cultural functions of sacral language, reflections on the existence of the language of religion in cultural, religious and linguistic borderlands, as well as the issues of the identity or identities of someone from the borderlands.

Handing the book over to an English-speaking reader, I hope the monograph “Conversations with God? Multilingualism among the Catholics in Belarus in the Late Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Centuries” will allow readers to gain a better understanding of how religious language functions in various specific circumstances as well as in diverse social and cultural contexts, and that this will provide inspiration for further studies into this complex yet extremely interesting and important subject matter.

Acknowledgements

This book is the result of fieldwork. This means that it is the interviewees who are its most important element, while my role is confined to listening to and interpreting their words. I would thus like to express my gratitude to them for finding time for me, allowing me to get so close to their lives and sharing their very personal accounts. In Belarus, hospitality is not limited to just setting aside time and sharing one's story with the visitor. I thank my interlocutors for their unconditional and spontaneous kindness, and for their care for my comfort and safety.

My particular thanks go to my colleagues from Minsk, Dr Olga Gushcheva from the Belarusian State University and Dr Julia Gurskaya from the Minsk State Linguistic University, who helped to organise the research and were always ready to advise. I would like to thank the parish priest of St Nicholas Church in Svir, Father Bogusław Modrzejewski, whose organisational assistance and spiritual support were invaluable to me. I am also grateful to Dr Małgorzata Ostrówka for accompanying me on my travels in Eastern Belarus.

The inspiration for my research came from discussions with colleagues from the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Dr Anna Engelking and Dr hab. Anna Zielinska, as well as Dr hab. Zofia Sawaniewska-Mochowa. We are all students of Professor Elżbieta Smułkowa, who taught us to look not only at language, but also at its social and cultural contexts. My heartfelt thanks, therefore, to Professor Smułkowa, for her interest in my research and offering constructive advice.

I am grateful to the book's reviewers, Dr hab. Ewa Dzięgiel and Dr Anna Engelking, for their careful reading of it and detailed suggestions. The discussions I shared with them on various subjects were very inspiring.

I was fortunate to benefit from consultations in the field of Belarusian studies with Dr Anna Żebrowska, who has a unique capacity to combine the competences of a linguist and a user of *Kresy* Polish – the form characteristic of the Eastern Borderlands – as well as the Belarusian dialect, and I owe her my gratitude. I also thank Gabriela Augustyniak-Żmuda, MA, for her help in putting the recordings in order.

Finally, I wish to thank my family. They have all borne the consequences of my lengthy absences. Special thanks to my husband Krzysztof for all his support, and to my children Julia, Jan and Feliks for their patience.

**I Multilingualism among the Catholic
Population in Belarus in the Late Twentieth
and Early Twenty-First Centuries. Report on
Fieldwork from 2009 to 2012**

Introduction

Research Objective and Fieldwork Methods

Between 2009 and 2012, I conducted research among the Catholic population in Western and Eastern Belarus. My investigation in Western Belarus took place in the Grodno Region.¹ There, I spoke to residents of Grodno itself, Lida and Poreche, as well as of smaller settlements: Radunia, Advernik, Navahrudek, Chadziloni, Zablocha, Prevozhy, Korgovdy, Klaysh, Yeziorov, Putryshek, Verchelishek, Stryovky, Vavyorky and Hantseviche. I spent many weeks (six trips lasting between five days and two weeks) in Minsk. In the region surrounding the capital, I carried out research in Radashkovichy, Lukavets, Nyasvizh and Svir. In the Vitebsk region, I participated in a research trip together with Dr Olga Gushcheva from the Belarusian State University. We were accompanied by students from Minsk and several Polish academic institutions, and were therefore able to conduct a number of interviews with the area's Catholic population.² This took place in the villages and towns of Postavy, Lyntupy, Romanishky, Porozowo, Komaje, Tsaibuty and Ignacishky. I travelled to Eastern Belarus with Dr Małgorzata Ostrówka from the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences, visiting Mohilev and Babruisk, as well as Bezchynne, Chavusy, Fashchivka and Prodvino.

The main objective of my research was to answer the question of whether the increasingly widespread use of the Belarusian language in the liturgy of the Catholic Church is changing the status and range in which Polish functions in Catholic communities in Belarus, and if so, what impact this has on the national identification of Catholics living in the country.³ My motivation for tackling this

-
- 1 In Belarus, the boundaries of dioceses are usually the same as those of administrative regions (oblasts). The boundaries of the Grodno oblast are therefore congruent with those of the Diocese of Grodno, and the boundaries of the Vitebsk oblast with those of the Diocese of Vitebsk. However, the Diocese of Minsk-Mohilev encompasses the Minsk oblast and the Mohilev oblast, and similarly, the Diocese of Pinsk includes both the Brest and the Gomelsk oblasts.
 - 2 North-western Belarus is dominated by Catholics, whose neighbours are Old Believers. There are relatively few Orthodox churches.
 - 3 In the statutes of the synod of the Minsk-Mohilev, Vitebsk and Pinsk archdioceses, Polish and Belarusian are stated to be in operation in the liturgy, church services, publications and synod correspondence. At synod meetings, use of Russian is also

subject was also connected to the research carried out by ethnologists among Catholics in Belarus around two decades ago.⁴ This led to many studies and showed the relations between Catholicism and Polish identification, although this Polishness could be understood in many ways, and often indicated more an affiliation to the Catholic Church than national identification.

In the dynamic situation of the young Belarusian Church, almost twenty years is a very long period. It is therefore worth looking at the changes that have taken place during this time.

The interviews recorded during the research confirmed the validity of this topic, showing that the national identification of Catholics in Belarus has transformed, even on the western border, and that only the oldest generation of Catholics now identifies with Polishness. For people from the middle and younger generation, the link between nationality and confession is no longer obvious, since being a Catholic does not preclude Belarusian national identity.⁵ Affiliation to the Catholic Church is determined by baptism in the Catholic rite, while national identification can be defined in many ways and redefined on the basis of various life experiences. Catholicism turns out to be a less controversial and more constant category than nationality. In this book I use the term “Catholics” rather than Poles, as it is a broader category, encompassing both Catholics identifying with Polishness and those who speak only about Polish roots; those with dual identification – Polish and Belarusian, which frequently occurs in the younger generation – as well as people identifying unequivocally as Belarusian.

permitted. The text of the statutes itself is published in parallel versions: Belarusian and Polish.

- 4 Anna Engelking, “‘Jak katolik to Polak’. Co to znaczy? Wstępne wnioski z badań terenowych na Białorusi”, in: *Wschodnie pogranicze w perspektywie socjologicznej*, Andrzej Sadowski (ed.) (Białystok: Fundacja Ekonomistów Środowiska i Zasobów Naturalnych, 1995); Anna Engelking, “Nacje to znaczy grupy religijne. O wynikach etnograficznych badań terenowych na Grodzieńszczyźnie”, *Kultura i społeczeństwo*, 1996, Vol. 40; Iwona Kabzińska, *Wśród kościelnych Polaków* (Warszawa: Instytut Archeologii i Etnologii Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1999).
- 5 Ewa Golachowska, “Język modlitwy na współczesnej Grodzieńszczyźnie. Językowe i kulturowe dziedzictwo Wielkiego Księstwa Litewskiego”, in: *Księga jubileuszowa na 1000-lecie Litwy*, Zofia Sawaniewska-Mochowa, Jolanta Mędelska (eds) (Bydgoszcz: Uniwersytet Kazimierza Wielkiego w Bydgoszczy, 2010); Ewa Golachowska, “Po polsku czy białorusku? Narodowościowe i językowe wybory młodego pokolenia katolików na Grodzieńszczyźnie”, in: *Wokół religii i jej języka*, Ewa Golachowska, Anna Zielińska (eds) (Warszawa: Slawistyczny Ośrodek Wydawniczy, 2011).

The research was conducted using open and non-standard interviews. I tried to reach both the leaders of local Catholic communities and local priests as well as those from Poland, in addition to other believers. My conversations with the latter often confirmed, but sometimes verified the information obtained from activists. Each of these interviews was structured differently, adapted to the nature of the contact and the informer's expectations. Since my most important task was to obtain the interlocutor's trust and ensure comfort in the interaction with the researcher, I did not record all the conversations, because not all participants gave their consent. On many occasions, careful listening, observation and analysis of the contexts of their utterances had to suffice. This was a useful practice for slowly gaining an authentic insight into what I was studying.

An extremely important method for verifying the information given to me in the interviews and contained in my informers' declarations was participant observation, which meant entering their natural environment. Based on the conversations I shared in my hosts' homes but did not record, exchanges of jokes showing increasing familiarity, and the observation of how the participants spoke to their children and grandchildren or the language they used when speaking on the telephone or to a shop assistant, I was able to evaluate the actual functional distribution of the various languages in the Belarusian Catholic community.

During my stays in Belarus, I endeavoured to participate in all religious events and ceremonies. I attended Mass and other church services, as well as taking part in young people's religious meetings, the pilgrimage to the Gate of Dawn in Vilnius that passes through the Diocese of Grodno, and prayers in people's homes. Participation in the religious lives of Catholic communities entailed a number of methodological and ethical dilemmas. A certain contradiction came to the fore during my research. Owing to my extensive engagement in academic, religious and national issues, I was often very emotional in my response to my informers' statements. This engagement proved to be both a help and a trap. It aided me because I was able to identify with the point of view of my interviewees, especially those declaring a profound attachment to Polishness, but was also a hindrance since this empathy could make it difficult to treat the problems in question objectively. The dowry and burden that I brought to the research was my religiosity and my family's past, members of whom had spent many years in exile in the Soviet Union. The interviewee's biographical accounts often turned out to be remarkably similar to the family stories on which I was raised, and the melody of their language conjured up memories of my grandmother, who used the Polish dialect of the Eastern Borderlands to her dying day.

I introduced myself to my interlocutors as a researcher from the Polish Academy of Sciences interested in the transformation process of the language

of Catholics (which for many simply meant “the language of Poles”). This fact signified that many people identifying as Poles perceived me as a natural ally regarding the Polish language in the Church. My active participation in religious life built mutual trust and closeness. On the one hand, this was convenient for me, but – on the other – it raised doubts of an ethical nature. As Anna Wyka writes:

Questions of the researcher’s ethics assume precedence. Of course, it is on us that particular moral responsibility lies, since we are the ones that initiate the contact. One could say that the ethics of the researcher and the ethics of the procedure of his or her gathering of knowledge becomes an essential condition for the substantive success of the studies.⁶

What caused me the biggest problem was the instrumental treatment of my own piety. I am a religious person, but during the research my religiosity also functioned as a tool for building bonds with my interviewees, rather than as simply an autonomous value. In my value system, faith has a higher status than science, which was why a certain biblical quotation reverberated in my mind:

And when you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites: they love to say their prayers standing up in the synagogues and at the street corners for people to see them. In truth I tell you, they have had their reward. But when you pray, go to your private room, shut yourself in, and so pray to your Father who is in that secret place, and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.⁷

Yet the need to be credible and to forge contacts often led me into religious practices “at the street corners”.

I was also aided in constructing a good image and trust in conservative communities and among the clergy by my family situation – a long-term marriage and three children. This acted as a kind of “costume” that facilitated contacts. My interlocutors therefore accepted me quite quickly. My presence did not disrupt the normal functioning of the group, and I found it easy to establish a place for myself in the community. The interpretation of informers’ utterances and attitudes, however, does not always go hand in hand with their intentions. As a researcher, I draw my own conclusions, which are often very different from those that were being insinuated.

For a linguist studying language as an element of culture, inspiration by the method of participant observation is extremely important. This means of

6 Anna Wyka, *Badacz społeczny wobec doświadczenia* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Filozofii i Socjologii PAN, 1993), p. 26.

7 Mt 6, 5–6.

acquiring material is particularly important for sociolinguistics, for which observing all the extra-linguistic – social and cultural – factors that affect the shape of an utterance is fundamental (in multilingual communities, it allows us to assess the actual functional range of the various languages).

When tackling such an important, difficult, and also extremely emotional subject, it is important to remember that Catholics throughout Belarus find themselves in a cultural borderland. Although in my research I in fact do not refer to the concept of the Eastern Borderlands, the introduction is the appropriate place to define my own point of view, since this determines both my approach to the research and its results.⁸

The land covered by contemporary Belarus is commonly perceived as being that of the former Polish North-Eastern Borderlands. This perspective, assumed by many Polish researchers since 1989, suggests a focus on national issues, used as a lens for both linguistic and religious questions. Linguistic research has usually concentrated on the Eastern Borderlands Polish dialect, with other languages only acting as a supplement to the communicational situation in which forms of Polish operate.⁹

A consequence of my research approach is that I consider the linguistic processes taking place in the Catholic Church in Belarus as transformations that I describe and interpret without making value judgements. I do not write of “the loss of the Polish language” or “the elimination of Polish from churches”, since such expressions contain a judgement.

While conducting the research, I try to treat the informers and their problems with empathy and understanding, but at the analysis and interpretation stage, I approach the material with the necessary intellectual distance. I hope that this non-judgemental approach permits an accurate and honest description of the difficult subject of the relationship between language and religion in the contemporary Catholic Church in Belarus.

8 The phenomenon of the Eastern Borderlands and the understanding of the concept in Poland and the world is discussed by scholars from various branches of the humanities in the book *Kresy – pojęcie i rzeczywistość* (“The Eastern Borderlands – Concept and Reality”) edited by Kwiryna Handke (Warszawa: Sławistyczny Ośrodek Wydawniczy, 1996).

9 Justyna Straczuk, *Cmentarz i stół. Pogranicze prawosławno-katolickie w Polsce i na Białorusi* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2006), p. 35.

Linguistic Problems of the Catholic Church in Belarus in the Twentieth Century in Secondary Sources

In order to examine the multilingualism of the Catholic population in Belarus, a crucial consideration is the complicated relationship – especially in the past, but also still pertinent today – between national identification and identity on the one hand and religion and its language on the other. Many researchers highlight the inextricable link between nationality and language, but often more important, especially for the inhabitants of multilingual areas, are the connections between the language operating in the religious sphere and national identification. This language is not always the one used on a daily basis; it often functions only as the language of religious texts and ceremonies. At the root of this phenomenon lies the conviction held by believers that not all tongues are well suited to speaking with God.

In a multilingual area, the choice of the language of the sacral sphere can always be a source of conflict. This was the case in the lands of present-day Belarus in the interwar period. Although the liturgy was conducted in Latin, for sermons, catechesis, hymns and sacramental formulas, a so-called auxiliary language was used, i.e. Polish, or very seldom Belarusian or Lithuanian. In spite of numerous efforts by representatives of the Belarusian clergy, especially intensively in 1919–1922, the Belarusian language did not become a lasting fixture in the churches of the Vilnius and Minsk dioceses; its use remained sporadic.¹⁰ In the next decades, which coincided with the Second World War and Soviet rule, linguistic problems in the Church retained only secondary importance in comparison to the extensive repression and difficulties with pursuing religious practices.¹¹

The renaissance of the Catholic Church in Belarus took place in the late 1980s. On 25 July 1989, the Holy See named Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz as bishop, appointing him as the administrator of the apostolic Minsk Diocese for Catholics in Belarus. On 1 September 1990, Grodno's Major Seminary was opened. On 13 April 1991, the Holy See appointed Bishop Kazimierz Świątek as metropolitan of the newly formed Archdiocese of Minsk-Mohilev and apostolic administrator of the renewed Diocese of Pinsk, and Bishop Aleksander Kaszkiewicz as ordinary of the Diocese of Grodno. Since July 1992, a metropolitan commission

10 Maciej Mróz, *Katolicyzm na pograniczach* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2003), p. 156.

11 Larysa Mikhaliuk, *Kościół katolicki na Grodzieńszczyźnie 1939–1956* (Warszawa: Instytut Studiów Politycznych, Oficyna Wydawnicza Rytm, 2008).

for the translation of liturgical texts and religious literature into Belarusian has been operating in Minsk, thanks to which most of the liturgical texts have now been prepared for publication.¹² The social context is important in reference to this last piece of information. In the early 1990s, Belarusian authorities and Belarusian patriotic circles viewed the use of Polish in church as an instrument of Polonisation. For this reason, a proposal to limit use of the language in the Catholic Church found its way into the resolution of the pan-Republican conference of 15 May 1992 in Minsk. A witness to these events, Elżbieta Smułkowa, writes:

[...] voices demanding the linguistic Belarusianisation of the Church in Belarus were a constituent part of the campaign for the Belarusian language to play a genuine part in state and civic life, understandable taking into account the perspective of the authorities building Belarusian statehood and the position of patriotically disposed national researchers.

The author adds that this reasonable proposal was often made in an aggressive tone, resulting in a sense of threat to the Polish minority.¹³ The subject of introducing the Belarusian language into the liturgy of the Catholic Church in Belarus acquired importance for social reasons. Research conducted from the early 1990s onwards pointed to the subjective determinants of national identification as well as its connection to religion and its language. There were references to Catholics who, despite not knowing Polish well, always prayed in Polish and always declared themselves to be Polish.¹⁴

The reality of that period, which has been described and documented at length by ethnologists, is now becoming a thing of the past. This is why, at this moment of change, it is worth investigating the impact of the actions of the Church and generational transformations not only on linguistic behaviours, but also on Catholics' sense of national identity, as well as whether the link between religion and nationality identified by researchers is likely to be preserved or rather is subject to change. One question that arises addresses the contemporary relationship between the language(s) used within the religion and the sense of national belonging of the Catholic population in Belarus. A second, no less important problem is the differentiation of the Polish spoken by Catholics in

12 See catholic.by (19 June 2012).

13 Elżbieta Smułkowa, "Rozwój Kościoła katolickiego w republice Białorusi – problemy społeczno-polityczne i językowe", in: *Białoruś i pogranicza. Studia o języku i społeczeństwie* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2002), p. 506.

14 Kabzińska, *Wśród kościelnych Polaków*.

Belarus deriving from social diversity. These differences are mostly manifested in the spheres in which Polish is used – among the parts of the population with “noble” lineage, it is used in the religious context and in family life, whereas for those with a “peasant” background it is almost solely the preserve of the religious sphere. Qualitative differences also come into play – a greater influence of East Slavic languages on Polish and a greater idiolectal diversity in the “peasant” community.¹⁵

The sociolinguistic and ethnological studies conducted in the 1990s on the territory of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania demonstrated that religion was connected with the national identification of the members of the local communities. This conclusion was formed on the basis of the declarations of research subjects defining themselves as Polish-Catholic or Russian-Orthodox. This resulted from the local population calling Catholicism the *Polish faith* and Orthodox Christianity the *Russian faith*. It was religion that divided the Borderlands community into nations: *Polish-Catholic* and *Russian-Orthodox*. As Anna Engelking writes:

[...] as we know, there exist two main *nation-faiths*: *Catholic*, i.e. Polish, and *Orthodox*, i.e. Russian or Belarusian. The terms *Orthodox* and *Belarusian (Russian)* are used interchangeably – they are synonyms. The name of the various nations are derived from religious terms – which is why we speak of the *Orthodox nation* and the *Catholic nation*. And vice versa, *faith* tends to be *Polish* or *Russian (Belarusian)* [...] This coherent system of nations does not allow for the possibility of a combination of types: *Pole* but *Orthodox* or *Belarusian* but *Catholic*.¹⁶

According to Iwona Kabzińska, “the terms ‘Pole’ and ‘Russian’ function independently of individuals’ beliefs or actual religious engagement”¹⁷

Religion has become inextricably linked to language. As Justyna Straczk writes in her book, “The predetermined allocation of a language to a specific denomination means that it becomes the fundamental characteristic and distinguishing feature of a given faith”¹⁸

15 Smułkowa, “Sytuacja socjolingwistyczna i proces konwergencji języków na Braślowszczyźnie w świetle badań terenowych (1997–2007)”, in: *Braślowszczyzna. Pamięć i współczesność. Tom I: Historia regionu. Charakterystyka socjolingwistyczna. Świadectwo mieszkańców*, Elżbieta Smułkowa (ed.) (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2012), pp. 101–140.

16 Anna Engelking, “Nacje to znaczy grupy religijne”, p. 123.

17 Kabzińska, *Wśród kościelnych Polaków*, pp. 37–38.

18 Justyna Straczk, *Język a tożsamość człowieka w warunkach społecznej wielojęzyczności. Pogranicze polsko-litewsko-białoruskie* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1999), p. 42.

The question of the complicated relationship of language, religion, social group (previously estate/class) and national identity is described at length in the aforementioned texts by ethnologists. These show that the rural population themselves do not use and understand the concept of national identity popular among researchers, which categorises them in a straightforward and obvious manner, and the concept of “Pole” and “Russian” in this area define religion, rather than nationality. The categories which researchers intended to use to describe the reality they encountered in fact did not reflect the way it was perceived by the local population. As Straczuk puts it, “[...] for many inhabitants of Belarussian villages, only clearly defined denominational identification exists, and national consciousness in fact barely figures”.¹⁹

Linguistic studies conducted at the same time showed that the population declaring its Polishness did not always – meaning not in all situations – use Polish. Of course, the fact of using Russian (or more rarely Belarusian) in dealing with official situations in Belarus – in administration offices, schools or work – is not relevant here. Rather, it is private life – family situations, contacts with neighbours and the religious sphere – that counts. Subsequent research showed that the population of noble origin used Polish in both the familial and the religious sphere, while members of the peasant population communicated within the family and among neighbours using so-called plain language (Belarusian vernacular), while Polish was dominant only in religious practices.²⁰ A situation in which the various spheres of life are serviced by separate but constant languages (when this is a stable situation, maintained over several generations) is known as diglossia. In the cited texts by linguists from the recent past, the reality of the language situation was a classical diglossic case. Smułkowa writes that diglossia without bilingualism was also possible:

We observe diglossia without bilingualism in Belarus for example in the community of Belarusian-speaking Catholics, of course only those who know Polish solely as a language of prayer. A good illustration of this might be the groups of children I observed in the Polish-Belarusian-Lithuanian linguistic borderland, in both Belarus and Lithuania, speaking to each other and to me in local Russian, based on a Belarusian articulation base, who in church pray and sing hymns in Polish, writing the Polish words of hymns and prayers in the Russian alphabet (Grazhdanka). The fact that at least some

19 Justyna Straczuk, *Cmentarz i stół*, p. 37.

20 Zofia Sawaniewska-Mochowa, Anna Zielińska, *Dziedzictwo kultury szlacheckiej na byłych kresach północnowschodniej Rzeczypospolitej: ginąca część kultury europejskiej* (Warszawa: Slawistyczny Ośrodek Wydawniczy, 2007).

of the congregation do not know Polish writing is demonstrated by the Polish-language prayer books written in Grahdanka published in Belarus in recent years.²¹

In many rural Catholic communities defining themselves as Polish, communication in the familial and neighbourly sphere took place in plain language,²² while Polish was dominant only in the religious sphere. In the period in question, Polish was indeed present in this entire sphere. This was the language in which the liturgy was performed, sermons preached, hymns sung, announcements read out, and conversations held in the church cemetery (chats among neighbours after Mass or another service). Most importantly, however, Polish was the language of personal prayer, which children learnt at home from their parents or grandparents. Irrespective of the potential for the younger generation to later lose their Polish, it remained within their prayers as an immutable value. The linguistic situation described above refers to a significant area of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and has been studied at most length in the Grodno and Vilnius regions, whose rural populations use plain language on an everyday basis and Polish in church and personal prayer (usually Russian in the city, and Polish in the religious sphere).

In the informers' statements, the motif of Latin being replaced as the liturgical language – in fact a comparatively recent development – is absent, and the religious sphere therefore appears as a monolith in which Polish is absolutely dominant.

The distinction between low and high languages is characteristic of diglossia. The high language is heard in church, whereas the low one can be used at work in farming. “That’s why you say your prayers in Polish, and speak to a cow in plain language” – such have been the utterances heard by the field researchers numerous times in both the Grodno region and Poland, near Sokółka. These statements emphatically characterise the status of the languages functioning alongside one another. The older generation of Catholics in Belarus certainly still remember the high prestige of Polish as the official language of pre-war Poland, as well as, in many (mostly noble) families, the language of literature (particularly Adam Mickiewicz, Henryk Sienkiewicz and Eliza Orzeszkowa), read aloud among friends and family. We should add that use of Polish and plain language

21 Elżbieta Smułkowa, “Dwujęzyczność po białorusku: bilingwizm, dyglosja, czy coś innego” [in:] *Białoruś i pogranicza. Studia o języku i społeczeństwie* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2002), pp. 420–421.

22 The term “plain language” derives from the language of the population of the Polish-Belarusian borderland, and usually means a local variant of Belarusian.

in the different spheres is connected to a division consolidated by tradition, rather than by matters of communication, because both systems are well known in these communities, and owing to their resemblance the barrier of mutual incomprehension is small.

More recent sociolinguistic studies show that the strong position of Polish in the religious sphere is beginning to weaken as a result of the introduction of Belarusian.

In Western Belarus today, Belarusian fulfils the function of liturgical language alongside Polish. In the Catholic church in Ivyanets, Belarusian has also begun to be implemented in order to encourage young people and some of the adults who do not know Polish well to participate in religious life. The local clergy regard it as impossible to relay religious contents in Polish.²³

In complicated situations, when both the habits of the faithful should be respected, especially those of the older generation, and social multilingualism needs to be taken into account, various solutions are put into place.

Belarus is characterised by a lack of language barriers, and a number of dialects are comprehensible to its inhabitants. At Mass, therefore, one can often hear several languages being used. Mirosław Jankowiak describes a similar situation in Latvia, close to the Belarusian border:

In Piedruja, Indra and Indryca, Mass takes place in several languages: Latvian (or Latgalian), Russian, and Polish. The liturgy is generally conducted in Polish. One reading is usually given in Latvian (the priest himself noted that the congregation should get used to this language, since they live in Latvia), and the second in Russian. The gospel and sermon are read in the local Belarusian dialect.²⁴

Abandoning Polish as the liturgical language is not always a popular move among parishioners, especially older people. As they are used to Polish, they are reluctant to approve the changes and pray in the “low” language. They see this situation as an attack on their own identity, having spent years living in the Soviet Union with the Church representing a bastion of Polishness, often their only contact with the language. Attempts by priests (especially those from Poland) to introduce Belarusian to the liturgy are perceived as a betrayal of the Polish language, to which they remained loyal, in spite of adversity.

23 Koji Morita, *Przemiany socjolingwistyczne w polskich społecznościach na Litwie (rejon trocki) i Białorusi (rejon iwieniecki)* (Warszawa: Slawistyczny Ośrodek Wydawniczy, 2006), p. 66.

24 Mirosław Jankowiak, *Gwary białoruskie na Łotwie w rejonie krasławskim* (Warszawa: Slawistyczny Ośrodek Wydawniczy, 2009), p. 101.

M. Jankowiak presents the complicated language situation existing in the religious sphere in Latgalia, writing about the local community's language of prayer:

Most people, especially from the older generation, pray in Polish. They also have Polish-language prayer books that are often over 100 years old, such as the *Collection of Indulgence Prayers with the Addition of Ninety-four Litanies* (Zbiór modlitw odpustowych z dodaniem dziewięćdziesięciu czterech litanij Vilnius 1900). These are handed down from generation to generation. Part of the reason for this was that it was impossible to obtain new prayer books during the Soviet period. Elderly people also sometimes use Polish-language prayer books, but written phonetically in the Russian or Belarusian alphabet.²⁵

The changes taking place between religious denomination and national identification are confirmed by contemporary research. Iwona Kabzińska has highlighted them on many occasions. In her book published in 1999, we can read, "It is clear that the Church is changing. Particularly visible is the increasing diversity of the faithful in terms of nationality"²⁶ In 2003, she wrote:

It is not hard to foresee the effects of the linguistic changes that are already taking place as well as being called for in the lives of Catholic and Polish communities in the East. Church, prayer, liturgy and religious feasts taking place without Polish, which is something that is increasingly common, will serve to denationalise them, since they will lose the opportunity for public manifestation of their own religious culture and Polishness.²⁷

A year later, Kabzińska continued in a similar tone:

The process of the de-Polonisation of the Church going on in Belarus, manifested, among others, by the elimination of Polish from church services, might with time lead to a weakened role of Catholicism as the fundamental criterion of Polishness, and consequently to a change in the stereotype of the Pole-Catholic.²⁸

According to Roman Dzwonkowski, Oleg Gorbaniuk and Julia Gorbaniuk's 2004 book *Postawy katolików obrządku łacińskiego na Białorusi wobec języka polskiego* (*Attitudes to the Polish Language among Latin-Rite Catholics in Belarus*) (:

25 Jankowiak, *Gwary białoruskie na Łotwie*, p. 101.

26 Kabzińska, *Wśród kościelnych Polaków*, p. 75.

27 Iwona Kabzińska, "Znajomość dziedzictwa kulturowego jako jeden z warunków zachowania tożsamości narodowej (etnicznej)", in: *Problemy świadomości narodowej ludności polskiej na Białorusi* (Grodno: Związek Polaków na Białorusi, 2003), p. 31.

28 Iwona Kabzińska, "Czy zmierzch stereotypu Polak-katolik?", in: *Kultura i świadomość etniczna Polaków na Wschodzie*, Antoni Kuczyński, Małgorzata Michalska (eds) (Wrocław: Katedra Etnologii i Antropologii Kulturowej, 2004), p. 180.

To develop a sense of Polishness today, it is not enough, as it used to be, to be born into a Polish or Catholic family, learn to pray in Polish and go to church for Mass in Polish in order to become aware at least of one's otherness compared to the non-Polish milieu. In light of the retreat of the Polish language from religious life, religious upbringing in Belarusian in a church that is definitely favourable to the formation of a Belarusian national identity, the frequent weak involvement of the parents in the parish religious life, doubts among the younger generation as to their own roots, lack of use of Polish in everyday communication in the family home [...], it is extremely hard for the younger generation to be able to and want to choose Polish self-identification.²⁹

The results of my research presented in the next chapters aim to illustrate the self-identification of Catholics in Belarus who pray in Polish, Belarusian, and sometimes also Russian.

This book consists of two parts. Part 1 discusses the Multilingualism among the Catholics in Belarus in the Late Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Centuries *Report from Fieldwork 2009–2012*. Here, I describe and interpret the observations made during the fieldwork. Since the book was largely written on the basis of interviews, lengthy extracts are included in this section. The transcription of interviews is not consistent, as my main concern was to present them in such a way as would make it easier for all readers to understand them. The convention of the transcription of each utterance is adapted to the specifics of the language used. As a result, Belarusian texts are written in accordance with the spelling norms, as are the brief extracts in Russian. In the Polish utterances, I retained a semi-orthographic transcription, demonstrating the most characteristic features of the language. Only in interviews in which the Polish contained very many foreign components did I use elements of phonetic transcription.

Part 2, *Multilingualism of Catholics in Belarus in the Late Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Centuries. Accounts of Witnesses of History*, contains the most interesting, extensive passages from the texts recorded during the conducted research. I have included interviews with young people, but also representatives of the middle, older and oldest generations. My interlocutors use both Polish and Belarusian in its literary version (younger people) and dialectal form (older people). Since these texts may constitute material for various studies, including linguistic ones, their transcription is standardised.

29 Roman Dzwonkowski, Oleg Gorbaniuk, Julia Gorbaniuk, *Postawy katolików obrządku łacińskiego na Białorusi wobec języka polskiego* (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 2004), p. 133.

1 The Functioning of Polish in Catholic Communities in Belarus

The contemporary language situation in Belarus is characterised by complexity and non-uniformity. For a sociolinguist, it is extremely hard to describe. In the various areas of Belarus, we can find different communicational situations and different linguistic codes. In the countryside, Belarusian dialects and Russian coexist. In cities, Russian is dominant, and one can also sometimes hear the standard variant of Belarusian. In various communicational situations, Polish also plays a role, and is present mostly in the west of the country. The function of Polish in the countryside is entirely different from that in cities and towns. It also differs between the older generation and young people. Even today, we can still observe traces of differentiation according to class/estate: the descendants of the petty nobility use a different form of Polish from that spoken by the descendants of peasants. Older people who attended Polish schools in the interwar period in Belarus continue to use the standard variant of Polish, with few regional characteristics. Their children, even if Polish was used at home, have a much weaker command of Polish. We must therefore be aware of the diversity of variants of Polish, which stems from geographical, social and generational factors. It is impossible to describe the multitude of these variations in mutual relations using a coherent methodology. We can only describe the individual idiolects and the way in which Polish functions in Catholic communities in Belarus. The key concepts for describing the linguistic situation of Catholics in Belarus are *multilingualism*, *diglossia*, *language prestige* and the *sphere of usage* of the various languages.

Eastern Belarus

Research shows that the starkest division of Belarus as reflected in language continues to be the territorial split between the eastern and western parts of the country. Eastern Belarus has come to be regarded as the area that became part of the USSR after the Treaty of Riga. This dichotomous division of today's Belarus, despite not corresponding strictly to the administrative partition of the country (the pre-war border ran through the Vitebsk and Minsk regions), is reflected in the consciousness of its inhabitants, and thus also in the writings of historians and ethnologists. It is employed by such scholars as Iryda Grek-Pabisowa, Małgorzata Ostrówka and Beata Biesiadowska-Magdziarz – the authors of the pioneering

two-volume book *The Polish Language in Soviet Belarus in the Interwar Period* – the two parts of which are called *Spoken Polish* and *Written Polish*.³⁰

Kabzińska points to the differences between *Vostochniks* (“Easterners”) and *Zapadniks* (“Westerners”), writing that:

Crucial here is that its western regions remained under the influence of the Second Polish Republic and within this state’s borders, while the eastern part of the country functioned within the socialist Belarusian Soviet Republic. According to the interviewees, considerable cultural differences occur between *Zapadniks* and *Vostochniks*. These are especially visible in the sphere of religiosity and in knowledge of Polish, and the degree of Sovietisation of the two areas’ populations also differs.³¹

These comments are still accurate. The short two-decade period between the wars, in which the areas of Eastern and Western Belarus lay within the borders of two different countries, left an imprint on such aspects as the language and religiosity of the inhabitants of Belarus still visible today. The political factors that led to this are well known. On the one hand, there was the Soviet campaign against all religion, and particularly Catholicism, while – on the other – there was the abolition of autonomous regions, as well as that of the Polish schools, libraries and other cultural/educational institutions that had been opened after the revolution, and the anti-Polish terror that culminated in 1937–1939.

According to 1926 census data, Poles comprised 2 % of the population of Soviet Belarus. They were quite evenly distributed and scattered. This dispersal did not help with the preservation of the Polish language, especially with the decimation of Polish communities following the repressions, deportations and executions in 1937–1938.³² Contemporary field research clearly show that the pre-war Polish-Soviet border is even today the border of the occurrence of “old” Polish – the variant stemming from the social multilingualism that is the legacy of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania tradition. Of course, this applies to the rural

30 Iryda Grek-Pabisowa, Małgorzata Ostrówka, Beata Biesiadowska-Magdżiarz, *Polszczyzna na Białorusi Radzieckiej w okresie międzywojennym, cz. I polszczyzna mówiona* (Warszawa: Slawistyczny Ośrodek Wydawniczy, 2008); Iryda Grek-Pabisowa, Małgorzata Ostrówka, Beata Biesiadowska-Magdżiarz, *Polszczyzna na Białorusi Radzieckiej w okresie międzywojennym, cz. II Polszczyzna pisana* (Warszawa: Slawistyczny Ośrodek Wydawniczy, 2008).

31 Kabzińska, *Wśród kościelnych Polaków*, p. 130.

32 Mikołaj Iwanow, *Pierwszy naród ukarany: stalinizm wobec polskiej ludności kresowej (1921–1938)* (Warszawa: Omnipress, 1991); Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: European between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2012), pp. 89–109.

population. In cities and towns, the processes of loss and acquisition of linguistic competences look entirely differently.

Within a radius of 40–50 kilometres from Minsk, even today one can hear Polish spoken by older people, albeit only in pre-war border villages and small towns (Rubiazhevichi, Radashkovichy, Lukavets) previously lying on the Polish side of the border. In neighbouring settlements on the Soviet side, no Polish is spoken now, although in the interwar period it was used. It was near Minsk in 1932 that the Polish autonomous district with its centre in Dzyarzhynsk (or Koydanava) was established, only to be abolished in 1938.³³ This was connected to the closing of Polish educational and cultural institutions (schools, libraries) and resettlement of Poles from throughout Belarus to Siberia and Kazakhstan. The abolition of the Polish autonomous district did not bring an end to the repressions faced by the Polish population. Any manifestations of Polish patriotism were treated as nationalism, and could be punished by deportation or execution.³⁴ A small monument at the cemetery in Prodvín near Babruisk, dedicated to the victims of political repression shot in 1937, 1938 and 1940, is testimony to the scale of the phenomenon.

An elderly Minsk resident recalls these times as follows:

*You see what it is about. Before the war there was a Polish school, there was a Jewish school, and then around '36, '37, all the men with a [Polish] name like Stanisław, Władysław, or Edward, they were all sent off to Kurapaty [the site of a massacre]. (MinAP93/2010F)*³⁵

The authors of the aforementioned book *Spoken Polish*³⁶ write of the inhabitants of villages in the Mohilev, Minsk and Babruisk regions that after the revolution it was here that the smallest social changes took place. The group in question was not uniform. It comprised local Catholic peasants, petty nobility and peasants brought over to large land holdings from the end of the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries from various parts of the Polish crown, mostly Mazovia.³⁷ The areas covered in the research were under Russian administration from the end

33 Iwanow, *Pierwszy naród ukarany*, p. 150.

34 Iwanow, *Pierwszy naród ukarany*.

35 *Widzi, w czym rzecz. Była przed wojną polska szkoła, specjalnie polska, była żydowska szkoła, a potem gdzieś, sama rozumie, trzydziesty szósty, trzydziesty siódmy rok znaczy, tam wszystkich mężczyzn, co im było Stanisław, Władysław czy Edward, wszystkim im były Kuropaty.*

36 Grek-Pabisowa, Ostrówka, Biesiadowska-Magdziarz, *Polszczyzna na Białorusi Radzieckiej... Polszczyzna pisana*, p. 17.

37 Iwanow, *Pierwszy naród ukarany*, p. 125.

of the eighteenth century (partly in the first partition, and partly in the second), which had certain consequences, especially limited access to Polish schools and a sparse network of Roman Catholic parishes.

Transmission of Polish in the family (if it was the home language; in peasant Catholic families, this was most likely to be Belarusian) was halted deliberately in 1937–1939 in order to protect children from negative consequences. The tradition of Polishness was curtailed for the same reasons. The effects of the dramatic events from the interwar period are still visible today in the linguistic sphere, as it is very difficult to record “old” Polish. A teacher who arrived in Mohilev from Grodno in the 1950s responded to a question about the presence of Polish at the time as follows:

There was hardly any [Polish], because there were strong repressions here in the 1930s, they were closing the schools then – until the thirties there was a Polish school here too. They closed down the school, not only the Polish one, but the Jewish school too. They closed churches. At home people were afraid to admit they were Poles, they declared themselves as Belarusians or Russians, and at home of course spoke Russian or Belarusian. I worked in the village for eight years, and once it was a pure Polish village, with names like Niedźwiecki, Ciechański, Pogórzyński, Łącki, Niesiporowicz, those were my pupils. Only one family put themselves down as Poles, and the rest as Belarusians, they were Catholics. Nobody prayed, they didn't go anywhere, because there wasn't one [a church], there were two Orthodox churches working here, the one on our main street. [On] the Catholic church they destroyed the cross and set up a club there. (83-year-old woman, Mohilev)³⁸

The fear of the consequences of giving children a religious or Polish upbringing survived for a long time, and is visible today in the reactions of elderly people.

My grandmother prayed in Polish in her room, but my parents did not. The first time I heard my aunt speaking Polish, it was 1980, we went to the Black Sea, and at that moment, my dear, Polish lessons began. We lived in a cottage that was divided in two. In one half lived the family of a professor, the son-in-law was Polish. And at a certain moment I go into the street and hear my aunt saying, “We are proud that Polish blood flows in our

38 *Prawie nie [było polszczyzny], dlatego, bo tutaj były silne represje w trzydziestych latach, wtedy pozamykali szkoły, była tutaj i polska szkoła do trzydziestych lat. Zamknęli szkołę i nie tylko polską, ale i żydowską szkołę. Zamknęli kościoły. W domu bali się ludzie przyznawać do tego, że są Polakami, zapisywali siebie jako Białorusini albo Rosjanie, no i w domu naturalnie po rosyjsku czy białorusku. A ja pracowałam osiem lat we wsi i to była kiedyś czysto polska wieś, bo nazwiska takie były: Niedźwiecki, Ciechański, Pogórzyński, Łącki, Niesiporowicze, to moi uczniowie byli. To tylko jedna rodzina pisała się jako Polacy, a reszta jako Białorusini, raczej byli katolikami. Nikt się nie modlił, nigdzie nie chodził, bo nie było [kościoła], tutaj pracowały dwie prawosławne cerkwie, ci na głównej naszej ulicy cerkiew. [Na] kościele zbili krzyż i tam zrobili klub.*

veins". That was the first time I heard it. It was 1980, and we'd read all about it in the papers. (MohKM55/2011M)³⁹

According to my interlocutors' accounts, the "decline of Polishness" was seldom the result of indifference to Polish issues or people forgetting their roots after years spent living in another country. It was very often a dramatic choice presenting them with an internal dilemma: whether to pass on the Polish language and traditions to their children, or protect them at the cost of denationalisation.

An informer born near Minsk in Soviet Belarus had this to say about the use of Polish in her family:

My grandmother knew Polish, my parents too. Grandma taught me prayers in Polish, but we didn't speak Polish together, God forbid, in the morning and evening there were prayers in Polish, quietly. She taught us by memorising, she could read Polish, she died in 1944. (LukMN80/2011F)⁴⁰

In the east of the country, the range of Polish use is much smaller than in the west. The language functions mostly in the religious sphere among the older generation. Here too, though, there are significant changes, because the main language of the revived Catholic Church is Belarusian. Much depends on the individual parish priest, who can enforce his own "language policy". As a result, there is an emphasis on church services being held in Polish or Belarusian. In parishes in Eastern Belarus, as a rule only one Sunday Mass is held in Polish, sometimes in its entirety. It also may be the case that Polish is only the language of permanent liturgical texts, while readings, sermons, parish announcements and hymns are all performed in Belarusian. This is also the language of catechesis and of the meetings for young people.

Many people identifying as Poles speak Polish fluently, yet do not use it at home. This mostly applies to young or middle-aged people, who attend Polish classes. The very few elderly informers proficient in Polish are the descendants

39 *Moja babcia w swoim pokoiku się modliła po polsku, ale rodzice nie. Pierwszy raz usłyszałem od ciotki po polsku, to był osiemdziesiąty rok, myśmy pojechali nad Morze Czarne i w tym momencie rozpoczęła się, moja droga, nauka języka polskiego. Mieszkaliśmy w domku, który był podzielony na połowę. W jednym rodzina jednego profesora, zięć był Polakiem. No i tak w pewnym momencie wychodzę na ulicę i słyszę, jak ciotka mówi „szczyćmy się tym, że w naszych żyłach płynie polska krew”. Ja pierwszy raz słyszałem. Był osiemdziesiąty rok, a myśmy to wszystko czytali w gazetach.*

40 *Polski babula znata, a jakże i radzicieli toże, ana mnie i uczyła pacierej po polskiemu, po polsku, s saboj nie havaryli po polsku, brani Boh, rano i wieczer pacierze havaryli pa polsku pa cixońku. A na pamiać nas uczyła. Ana umiała pa polsku czytać, no pomierła u sorak czietviortym hadu.*

of the pre-war intelligentsia. The sociolinguistic situation in Eastern Belarus is therefore as follows: in towns and cities, the primary language – meaning the one children learn from their parents without the mediation of another language and which they use in family life, in conversations concerning everyday matters⁴¹ – is Russian with Belarusian elements. This language exhibits major idiolectal diversity. Polish is equally diverse in idiolectal terms. Its variants include the literary Northern Borderlands Polish represented by elderly women from Mohilev and Minsk, who began their education before the Second World War. Their speech is characterised by only a few features of the Borderlands dialect – the slight lengthening of *e*, the dental *ł*, the voiced *h*. No morphological or syntactical interferences are observed, with the exception of vocabulary concerning the realities of life in the Soviet Union or Belarus. Middle-aged people are unlikely to have gained knowledge of Polish at home, and were also unable to learn it in language courses. Despite this, many are proficient in the language, although interferences can be discerned at all levels. Their learning usually began with the language of Polish prayers. Later, speakers of the language tried to get hold of Polish books and magazines, and listened to Polish radio. They were largely self-taught.

I was interested in this Poland, I wanted to know it, wanted to read, I became interested from the sixth grade. I ordered a book by post, with this big black LP. I listened to the radio, although not grammar, but I can read. I learnt on my own, and sometimes I'd go to ask my father about a particular word. My brothers can't speak it at all. I watch television, read, have the Polonia and Kultura TV channels on satellite. But I don't read enough.
(MohWG55/2011M)⁴²

Nowadays, one can learn Polish in the larger cities of Eastern Belarus in numerous easily accessible courses. These are taught in parishes, in Minsk through the Polish Educational Society, and in schools. The young generation attending classes learn standard Polish, its form depending on the individual's level of mastering of the language. It is important to underline the lack of a social context for

41 Leon Zawadowski, "Fundamental Relations in Language Contact", in: *Biuletyn Polskiego Towarzystwa Językoznawczego XX* (Wrocław: Polskie Towarzystwo Językoznawcze, 1961), p. 14.

42 *Zainteresowanie miałem tej Polski, chciałem to znać, chciałem czytać, ja zacząłem się interesować jeszcze ze klasy szóstej. Zakazałem knię pocztą, z płytą taką dużą czarną. Słuchałem radio, choć gramatykę tak nie, ale czytać mogę. Uczyłem się samostojnie, tam kiedy niekiedy jakieś słówko chodziłem zapytać się u ojca. Bracia w ogóle nie umieją rozmawiać. Oglądam telewizję, czytam, mam satelitarą Polonią i Kultura. Za mało i czytam.*

Polish. No group uses it on an everyday basis. None of my informers currently speaks Polish at home. This function might have disappeared here forever.

Western Belarus

Western Belarus continues to be a multilingual region. In the past, Polish, the Belarusian dialect – known as plain language – and Lithuanian dialects used in villages in the northwest coexisted. Linguistic relations were determined by social systems, and use of various languages in different spheres of life was a permanent and diglossic fact.⁴³ For this area, and especially the Grodno region, a characteristic division was into peasant villages and noble districts. Between 1918 and 1939, all social groups used Polish in administration offices, schools and church. In homes, meanwhile, Polish operated only in the noble community. In peasant families – both Catholic, defining themselves as Poles, and Orthodox, defining themselves as Russians, plain language was used domestically. It also seems likely that plain language was dominant in all communities, including noble ones, in situations associated with economic work. Notably, Polish served “external” spheres associated with the state administration and religious sphere (apart from the liturgy, for which Latin was used at the time). Only in noble or intelligentsia families was Polish the domestic language.

We can reconstruct the linguistic relations dominating in Western Belarus in the interwar period on the basis of the accounts of people who remember those times. The below quoted accounts recorded in various regions of this part of the country are characteristic of the peasant community. For instance, close to the former Polish-Soviet border:

We knew Polish, but at home [spoke] Belarusian, the priest would come to the banya [bath house], to the priest we spoke Polish, when there was snow, when it was very cold he came on a horse with the organist, and in summer with a stick. (LukMS90/2011F)⁴⁴

The second account documenting usage of Belarusian at home was recorded in the north of Western Belarus.

43 Anna Engelking, Ewa Golachowska, Anna Zielińska (eds), *Język-Tożsamość-Rodzina. Z badań na pograniczu słowiańsko-bałtyckim* (Warszawa: Slawistyczny Ośrodek Wydawniczy: 2008); Smułkowska, *Dwujęzyczność po białorusku*; Straczuk, *Język a tożsamość*.

44 *Umieeli po polsku, ale w domu po białorusku, ksionc [do nas] przychodził do bani to po polsku, do bani ksionc po polsku, jak śnieg duże zimo, na koniu to z organistoj przyjajo, a latem laseczka.*

In school Polish, although at home Belarusian, though neither from Russian nor from Polish, and at school mathematics was in Polish too, it's not like now, now there's various, while then – Polish, mathematics, history and geography, just those and religion. Every week a nun would come to us, then they were at ours in Svir. (SviMJ87/2011F)⁴⁵

Although in the interwar period Polish did not become the everyday language in peasant homes, the accounts indicate that young people did attempt to introduce it to social and neighbourly life.

My parents didn't talk in Polish either, although my father was learning to be an organist, but then his father died, he had to work the land, he sang very nicely, even his books were in Latin, my sister and I spoke Polish, and the older ones didn't speak, they didn't speak, and if with her then in Polish, because he taught us, and my husband and I in Polish, he liked Polish, he was in the Polish army during the war, but with his family, mother, and sister, in Belarusian, so we switched to Belarusian. It was easier, and now it's hard in Polish. We liked Polish, but the young people, there used to be dances in the village, and the young people would only speak Polish, somewhere next to the church in Polish, and with their parents in Belarusian. (SviMJ87/2011F)⁴⁶

It is interesting to note in this utterance the high prestige of Polish. One might also assume that young people's usage of Polish on a daily basis was connected with aspirations for social advancement.

It is well documented that Polish was spoken in the noble milieu. This is referred to in studies on the language and culture of the nobility of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In a monograph on this subject, we can read, "Before the Second World War, Polish was spoken in most noble families. Polish distinguished and distinguishes the nobility from both Catholic and Orthodox

45 *W szkole po polsku, chociaż w domu po białorusku, choć ni z ruska ni z polska, a w szkole i matematyka była po polsku, nie masz jak teraz, a teraz różne tam, a wtedy polski, matematyka, historia i geografia, takie ot i religia. W każdy tydzień przyjeżdżała do nas siostra zakonna, wtedy byli u nas we Świrze.*

46 *I moi rodzice po polsku nie rozmawiali, choć mój ojciec uczył się na organistę, ale potym ojciec jego umar, musiał ziemie robić, ładnie śpiewał bardzo, nawet ksionszki byli jego po łacinie, my rozmawiali z siostrą po polsku, a dawniejsze nie rozmawiali, oni nie rozmawiali, a jeśli z nią to po polsku, bo on nas nauczył, a z mężem popolsku, on lubił po polsku, w polskim wojsku był, jak wojna była, ale z jego rodziną, matka, tam siostra, po białorusku i tak my przeszli na białoruski. Lżej było, a teraz już cienszko po polsku. To podobało się po polsku, ale młodzież, kiedyś zabawy byli w wiosce, tancy, to młodzież tylko rozmawiała pa polsku, koło kościoła gdzieś, to po polsku, a z rodzicami po białorusku.*

peasants”,⁴⁷ and further on, “In Bohatyrovicze and all districts lying on both banks of the Svislach, only Polish was spoken. A typical situation was that the nobility used Polish in the districts, but used the Belarusian dialect in contacts with the countryside”.⁴⁸

*We grew up in the colony only with Mum, with Grandma, with my uncles, we'd be there a little and cry. In that time we lived in the colony, our uncles taught us to read Polish, I remember, I read such big books, I quickly learnt to read and write. [...] At Grandma's only in Polish, there was a large family there, six flats. Sukont, Czaplja, Waszkiewicz, those were noble names. (LidIK87/2010F)*⁴⁹

After the Second World War, Russian dominated official contacts. Even today, Polish is used as a second or third language on an everyday basis by the older generation of petty nobility not only in the Grodno Region, but also the Braslav⁵⁰ and Navahrudek regions.⁵¹

The informers also noted that Polish dominated in the urban environment, even if this was a small town.

*Everyone spoke Polish, and until the tenth grade nobody spoke either Russian or Belarusian. I know that afterwards, when I talk to neighbours, they say that they didn't have that, but maybe we did, that Vasilishki, the small town, they were in favour of Polishness there. (LidMK87/2010F)*⁵²

47 Sawaniewska-Mochowa, Zielińska, *Dziedzictwo kultury szlacheckiej*, p. 53.

48 Sawaniewska-Mochowa, Zielińska, *Dziedzictwo kultury szlacheckiej*, p. 54.

49 *Wychowali się na kolonii tylko z mamą, z babcią z wujkami, tam trochę pobeńdziem i już płaczem. My za ten czas mieszkali na kolonii, wujki nas uczyli czytać po polsku, ja już pamiętam, jak ja czytała takie duże książeczki, szybko nauczyła się czytać i pisać. [...] U babci tylko po polsku, tam była duża rodzina, już tam sześć mieszkań była. Sukont, Czaplja, Waszkiewicz, to szlacheckie nazwiska byli.*

50 Elżbieta Smułkowa, “Uwagi o słownictwie dwujęzycznych mieszkańców Brasławszczyzny i sposobie jego prezentacji”, in: *Brasławszczyzna. Pamięć i współczesność. Tom II, Słownictwo*, Elżbieta Smułkowa (ed.) (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2009), p. XI.

51 Straczuk, *Cmentarz i stół*, p. 39,

52 *Wszyscy u nas rozmawiali po polsku i do dziesiętej klasy nikt nie mówił ani po rosyjsku, ani po białorusku. Ja wiem, że potem, jak ja ot rozmawiam z sąsiadami, to mówią, że u nich tego nie było, a u nas, może, że te Wasilishki, to miasteczko, to bardzo byli za polskością.*

The differences between the functional distribution of languages in noble and peasant communities are illustrated by the below tables.

Functional distribution of languages in the interwar period in noble families

	Polish	Plain language	Russian
Family	+	-	-
School	+	-	-
Neighbourhood	+	+	-
Prayer	+	-	-
Agricultural/farm work	+	+	-
Administration offices	+	-	-

Functional distribution of languages in the interwar period in Catholic peasant families

	Polish	Plain language	Russian
Family	-	+	-
School	+	-	-
Neighbourhood	+	+	-
Prayer	+	-	-
Agricultural/farm work	-	+	-
Administration offices	+	-	-

The changes in the language situation of these areas are linked to political processes, initiated when the Red Army marched into the eastern parts of Poland on 17 September 1939, subsequently annexing them to the Soviet Union. All inhabitants had Soviet citizenship imposed upon them. Polish lost its status as official language, Polish institutions were shut down, and Polish education and newspapers were restricted. Religious life began to be destroyed, Catholic and Orthodox churches were closed down. The Polish language disappeared from the spheres of social life in which it had been absolutely dominant. In administration offices, schools and workplaces, Russian (and in certain periods Belarusian) took over.⁵³ Only in the sphere of religion did Polish remain present in personal prayer, hymns and additional church services. The liturgical language was Latin,

53 Eugeniusz Mironowicz, *Białoruś* (Warszawa: Trio, 2007); Elżbieta Rudnicka-Fira, Aldona Skudrzykowa, "O języku Polaków na Białorusi" in: *Język polski poza*

which Polish began to replace only after the Second Vatican Council. It gained in significance as a liturgical language especially in the late 1980s, which brought a resurgence of religious life, often known by the local population as the “opening of the faith”.

The social and economic transformations after 1939 also had an indirect impact on the language used at home. As a result of the reconstruction of the social structure of Western Belarus, plain language began to overshadow Polish in families, since the intelligentsia and some descendants of the petty nobility left for Poland with the waves of repatriates in 1944–1947,⁵⁴ thus changing the proportions of users of Polish and plain language. Those who used Polish in the family sphere therefore ceased to form the local community of the Grodno region (which they had left), while the peasant community using plain language, owing to its large numbers, grew in significance. In Grodno, a city with more than 50,000 residents before the war, fewer than 10,000 remained after it. By the end of the 1980s, this figure had grown to 272,000. At the same time, the national makeup of the city’s inhabitants also changed. Before the war, several thousand Belarusians lived in Grodno; in the early 1990s, there were 150,000 of them. At the same time, there were some 55,000 Poles living in the city, although after the war almost all Poles had left.⁵⁵

The position of Russian, which had been barely present in this area between the wars, was strengthened.⁵⁶ For obvious reasons, Russian supplanted Polish in the administration offices and schools of Grodno, as well as, to a lesser extent, the surrounding area. It also became a universally used language in the city, even though the majority of Grodno’s residents were Poles and Belarusians. In Catholic families in this region, further linguistic changes occurred. These were usually enforced by moving from the countryside to the city. Plain language here was a stigma of rusticity. In the city, one had to speak Russian. Ackermann writes the following about this phenomenon:

granicami kraju, Stanisław Dubisz (ed.) (Opole: Uniwersytet Opolski, Instytut Filologii Polskiej, 1997).

54 Mironowicz, *Białoruś*, pp. 229–235.

55 Felix Ackermann, “Ze wsi do Grodna. Sowietyzacja Białorusi Zachodniej jako proces akulturacji migrantów wiejskich”, *Studia białorutenistyczne* 4 (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej: 2010), p. 49.

56 Interviews with Orthodox clergy and their families show that in the interwar period Russian was the domestic language in the milieu of Orthodox priests. It was also used to a limited extent in their churches.

What is decisive in this case is not linguistic nuances, but the strong connotation of Belarusian, this “plain” speech, with the countryside. Language was thus not so much an attribute of national categorisation, but a sign of social origin. [...] They came to a city that was first and foremost not Belarusian, but Soviet. And this Soviet city communicated publically in Russian. Naturally, the rural migrants tried to blend into the society of “moving sands”.⁵⁷

He also writes that, at first, usage of the rural dialect of Belarusian in the public sphere, even in means of public transport, met with derision and aversion.

Owing to this process of acculturation, after the war Russian became the domestic language of many Catholic families in Grodno and other cities in Western Belarus.

Even when people came from the countryside [like my family], when my other spoke Belarusian, they said she was speaking rustic and laughed [at her]. And gradually they simply destroyed the language. In schools too no one used it. My parents, for example, when I was born they were already speaking Russian. Perhaps [if] they came to the countryside, then conversations would be in Belarusian. I grew up in Russian, but still the mother tongue for me is Belarusian. (GrodJW35/2009M)⁵⁸

In this way, families from the countryside wanted to dissociate themselves from their rustic origins. Polish endured at this time in prayers, hymns and sermons. But the majority of Catholics of the Diocese of Grodno only had a passive knowledge of the language. The functional distribution of languages in the Catholic families with rural peasant origins living in the city was as follows:⁵⁹

57 Ackermann, “Ze wsi do Grodna”, pp. 61–62.

58 *Navat, kali ludzi pryjażdżali z wioski, (naprykład, maja) mama razmaŭlala, jak tady kazali, pa-viaskovamu, (z jaje) smiajalisia. I pastupova movu prosta zniszczali. U szkołach taksama jaje nidzie nie ŭzywali. Maje bački, naprykład, mianie naradzili i razmaŭlali ŭžo na toj momant pa-rusku. Moža (kali) na wiosku pryjażdżali, razmaŭlali ŭžo sa svaimi pa-prostu. Ja ros na ruskaj movie, no tym nie miensz matczyna slova dla mianie bielaruskaje.*

59 Tables illustrating the diglossic systems in the Polish-Belarusian-Lithuanian borderland can be found in Justyna Straczuk’s book *Language and Identity in Conditions of Social Multilingualism* (Straczuk, *Język a tożsamość*, p. 34).

Functional distribution of languages in the post-war period in families living in cities (of peasant origin)

	Polish	Plain language	Russian	Literary Belarusian
Family in the city	-	-	+	-
Family in the countryside	-	+	-	-
School	-	-	+	+
Prayer	+	-	-	-
Work	-	-	+	-
Administration offices	-	-	+	-

In noble circles, in which Polish was the primary language, the changes in functional distribution were the smallest. In general, Polish remained the language of the family sphere, in particular in the case of families living in the countryside, as confirmed by the contemporary accounts from Hantseviche near Lida. These suggest that in the 1970s Polish was still the domestic language of the petty nobility, with the transition to Russian occurring along with starting school. In this situation, for the younger generation retaining Polish involved making a particular effort, which only individuals were able to do.

Our children, until they went to school, all spoke Polish, only Polish, they went to school and forgot, but our Tonia, only her, she speaks Polish thanks to herself. And my daughter is in Grodno. I subscribe to the [Polish-language] newspaper [Głos] Znad Niemna and read it, my mum used to read it but she can't see now. Now I read it. (HanIB67/2010F)⁶⁰

One utterance, by an elderly lady with a noble background who attended Polish school in the interwar period, documents the gradual abandonment of Polish.

We used to speak Polish, now just I, in Russian, kind of mixed up, the language is mutilated. (HanAN92/2010F)⁶¹

60 *Nasze dzieci poki do szkoły poszli, wszystkie po polsku rozmawiali, po polsku tyko, poszli do szkoły zapomnieli, no Tonia nasza, to już ona sama, przez siebie ona sama rozmawia po polsku. I córka jest w Grodnie. Ja to gazety Znad Niemna [Głos znad Niemna] wypisuje i czytam, kiedyś mama czytała, teraz to nie widzi. Teraz ja już czytam.*

61 *Po polsku my rozmawiali, to teraz ja to po prostu, to po rusku, taka pomieszana, ta rozmowa jest skaleczona.*

Among the reasons for the decreased use of Polish in the city is the tendency for speakers to move there, marry people from other communities and spend time on a daily basis with Russian-speakers.

As a result of the aforementioned changes in the language of the liturgy, since the 1990s Polish has slowly subsided from the religious sphere of Catholics in Belarus. Although in the west, and especially in the Diocese of Grodno, it is still mostly Polish that can be heard in churches, here too Mass is conducted in Belarusian (once daily in Grodno Cathedral), while this is also the language in which catechesis of children and pastoral youth take place. Polish, until recently traditionally present in the religious sphere of Catholics in Belarus, is today giving way to Belarusian – often the language of the first prayers not only of children, but also of their parents, i.e. people in their thirties. The everyday language of communication in this group might be Belarusian, but it is also frequently Russian. Describing the functional distribution can be difficult, since the multilingualism at play here is unstable, and determined by numerous sociolinguistic variables. Within the same spheres, one might observe Polish/Belarusian – religion, Russian/Belarusian – education, Russian/Polish/Belarusian – family life. A particularly complicated language situation can be encountered in mixed families, whose numbers are growing. The rules for using the various languages in family life depend on various factors: specific family strategies; whether their children were christened in an Orthodox or Catholic church; which of the spouses is dominant and has a stronger influence on the children's upbringing; and sometimes also which of the languages seems more prestigious at a given moment, or which offers the better education or work prospects.

It is clear, though, that the functional range of Polish is becoming more and more limited. The simultaneous dynamic development of teaching of Polish can act as a counterbalance to this process, however. The increased interest in the language and the large number of people learning it provide food for thought about the current state of Polish in Belarus. Without any doubt, the Polish used by representatives of the older and oldest generations continues to function in spheres determined by tradition, mainly that of the sacrum. Doubts that arise regarding the status of the language concern that of the young and youngest generation of Catholics, who attend courses to learn Polish as a foreign language. Students from Grodno and Minsk are increasingly opting for degrees in Polish studies, or to take Polish as a second Slavonic language. In higher education institutions, Polish is offered as a foreign language, as a mandatory subject or in an expanded version that includes Polish history, culture and geography. Some universities also have exchange agreements with their counterparts in Poland, to which they send students to improve their language skills.

There are many reasons for the popularity of learning Polish, and the subject of studying the language is raised not only by Polish teachers and philologists. According to the September 2010 issue of the monthly *Magazyn Polskiego na Uchodźstwie* (“Polish Magazine in Exile”):

In Soviet times, Polish gave greater access to information. In Grodno almost everyone in my neighbourhood knew it. People who did not speak, or even worse did not understand Polish, were seen as uneducated: because how could you listen to Polish Radio or watch TVP? If you know Polish you could read specialist literature and world literature, because in the USSR many books were on the [banned] index.⁶²

Similar stories can be heard from representatives of the Minsk intelligentsia with no connection to Polishness.

The benefits resulting from knowing Polish today might be more measurable than in the Soviet era. Increasingly, economic considerations are a motive for learning the language. In Belarus, Polish is beginning to function as a language of business. Many people living in various parts of the country have business contacts with Poland – these are people working in businesses and tourist bureaux, for whom the road to Western Europe passes through Poland.

Knowledge of Polish is also one of the preconditions for receipt of the so-called Polish Card (*Karta Polaka*), which permits holders to obtain a long-term visa and undertake work in Poland. It also allows young people to apply for a scholarship from the Polish government and to study in Poland.

Secondary-school pupils and university students in Belarus declared in interviews that their most common reason for learning Polish is Polish origin, e.g.:

All my grandmothers, grandfathers, great-grandparents, ancestors are Polish [...] I mean in their certificates it says they're Polish. (RubIP22/2011F)⁶³

As well as outright pronouncements:

I am Polish. (GrodAK17/2010F)⁶⁴

I feel Polish. (SviAM20/2011M)⁶⁵

Because Polish is my mother tongue. (GrodKT43/2010F)⁶⁶

62 Irena Waluś, “Język polski szansą życiową”, *Magazyn Polski*, 2011, No. 9, p. 3.

63 *Moje wszystkie babcie, dziadki, pradziadki, przodkowie są Polakami [...] Tak no u nich tam w świadectwie napisane, że są Polakami.*

64 *Jestem Polką.*

65 *Czuję się Polakiem.*

66 *Bo polski to mój język ojczysty.*

Less frequently, young people also mention the presence of Polish in the family home:

At our house Polish television was always on, and my mum explained certain words to us and my father, and later, now my father understands everything, he can even talk like that. (GrodIC40/2010F)⁶⁷

Teachers of Polish have a somewhat different view of the situation.

Parents learn just to get a Polish Card. Nobody will speak Polish to their children at home. That's what I think. (GrodHM32/2010F)⁶⁸

It is worth drawing attention to the term “mother tongue” (the Polish version of which is literally “father tongue”), which occurred spontaneously in my informers’ statements. This expression was used by people who began learning Polish relatively late, treating it as a supplement to what they call their “imperfect” Polishness. For them, Polish is neither the first nor even the second language, and cannot have any communicational importance, but it has symbolic importance, expressing a connection to a subjective and imagined idea of Polishness.⁶⁹ In her analysis of the concept of “fatherland”, Wierzbicka⁷⁰ proposes viewing “father” (or in this case “mother”) as something precious to the community and its members; for Bartmiński, meanwhile, language is the most important component of community identity.⁷¹ Smułkowa writes that the language behaviours of the population in Belarus “demonstrate the lack of clarity, or even lack of a concept of a father (mother, primary) tongue” among Poles in Belarus.⁷² This term

67 *U nas cały czas telewizja polska i mama tłumaczyła nam i ojcu niektóre wyrazy, a już później, teraz ojciec wszystko rozumie, nawet tak rozmawia.*

68 *Nieco inaczej oceniają tę sytuację nauczyciele języka polskiego. Rodzice uczą się, aby tylko otrzymać kartę Polaka. Nikt w domu nie będzie z dziećmi rozmawiać po polsku. No ja tak myślę.*

69 It would make sense to use the phrase “ideological motherland” here, but I am certain that this term does not convey the nature of Polishness according to most of my interlocutors.

70 Anna Wierzbicka, *Słowa klucze: różne języki – różne kultury* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego: 2007), pp. 344–345.

71 Jerzy Bartmiński, Irina Sandomirskaja, Veronika Telija, “Ojczyzna w polskim i rosyjskim językowym obrazie świata”, in: Jerzy Bartmiński (ed.), *Etnolingwistyka: problemy języka i kultury* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 1999), p. 46.

72 Elżbieta Smułkowa, “O wieloznaczności pojęcia ‘polak’, ‘polski’ na Białorusi. (Z doświadczeń badacza i dyplomaty)” [in:] *Białoruś i pogranicza. Studia o języku i społeczeństwie* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2002), p. 559.

certainly does not function among the rural population, yet it is known and used by informers from cities, especially those learning Polish.

In Belarusian conditions, the concept of “mother tongue” can by no means be linked to the conceptual apparatus of sociolinguistics, as it belongs to a different range. It is, however, an administrative category present in censuses. Above all, though, “Родной язык является этнопсихолингвистической категорией, которая отражает эмоциональные отношения к языку, этни-ческую ориентацию человека”.⁷³ This definition accentuates the symbolic value of a mother tongue as important for self-identification, and not necessarily dependent on actual and practical language usage. It is interesting that definitions from Belarusian linguistics convey the reality of Polish in Belarus so well. Perhaps the key difference is that, in Belarus, the defining of a mother tongue or родно by people of both Polish and Belarusian identification always takes place in the context of multilingualism. It is a different case in the Polish tradition, where the mother tongue is the primary language.

It would be a simplification, of course, to assert that the young generation of Catholics in Belarus today has Polish national identity. This is too complex and important an issue to discuss in passing while examining sociolinguistic questions, and must be the subject of more detailed investigation. But we should emphasise here that the national identity of Catholics in Belarus is transforming. Apart from people with clear Polish or Belarusian national identity, many cannot be classified distinctly – they might have dual national identity, or awareness of their Polish roots but a Belarusian identity, while others still are indifferent to issues of nationality.⁷⁴ Regardless of the observed changes, however, a large group of Catholics continue to identify as Polish. Among school pupils, the majority are from families with Polish self-identification, and, owing to their young age, not all have begun to reflect on issues of their own national identity. For many, the Polishness declared by their parents, who signed them up for language classes, is the only point of reference. And they have no reason to doubt this variant of Polishness.

This group generally learns Polish at the Polish Educational Society. The activity of this institution is also important because the forms of teaching associated with school depend on the current political situation and the good will of the education authorities, which are responsible for forming Polish classes. The

73 Мікуліч 1996, p. 100.

74 Golachowska, *Język modlitwy na współczesnej Grodzieńszczyźnie; Golachowska, Po polsku czy białorusku?*.

Polish Educational Society tries to respond to the needs of everybody who wants to learn the language.

The number of people learning Polish has remained at a constant level for years. According to the research of Teresa Kryszyn, director of the Polish Educational Society in Grodno, in 2009–2010 some 13,085 people were taking classes.

School year	Polish as lecture language	Polish as a subject	Extracurricular lessons	Special schools	Total
2009–2010	546	653	8160	3726	13085
2008–2009	555	649	7164	2204	10572
2007–2008	557	2369	7348	1730	12004
2006–2007	569	3363	7939	1584	13057
2005–2006	589	3393	9550	1756	15306
2004–2005	585	1287	6424	1050	9345
2003–2004	708	3278	10742	2669	17402
2002–2003	935	3583	15937	—	20455

A common opinion among teachers of Polish is that for the majority of Poles living in Belarus, as a result of active processes of de-Polonisation, the language has acquired the status of a “foreign” tongue. Kryszyn concurs:

Knowledge of Polish is usually non-existent – everybody understands, they can speak a little, but they have no familiarity with Polish composers, musicians, painters, people of science and political activists, meaning that they don’t know Polish history and culture. Surveys show that our pupils take from their family homes a minimal baggage of knowledge about Poland, Polish traditions, and especially contemporary Poland. It is a regrettable fact that Polish as a means of communication within families is dying out. According to the 1999 census, among 294,000 Poles living in the Grodno region, 16,406 (i.e. less than 5.6 %) spoke Polish at home, and in 2009, from 230,810 Poles, the figure was just 12,114 (5.2 %). This is clearly a downward trend that will probably continue to decrease, since it has not been noted for a family, all of whose members speak Polish, to begin to use Polish in family communication.⁷⁵

The facts that Kryszyn describes are confirmed in my observations and my interviewees’ accounts. One of the reasons why Polish has not survived in families is the fact that few nationally and religiously homogeneous families exist:

75 Teresa Kryszyn, “Język polski na Białorusi”, *Słowo Ojczyzna*, 2011, No. 4, Grodno.

I for example speak it to mine, I'm able to [in Polish], and they understand, but it can vary in families. In families Russian is dominant, or even Belarusian, and maybe in a centre like this, Belarusian is barely used, you can hear Russian more often than Belarusian. [...] I guess it's better to learn Polish than Belarusian. [...] For example my [husband] is a Belarusian, his mother is a Pole, his father a Belarusian, but he was christened in an Orthodox church, and we got married in a Catholic one, and our children go to Catholic church too, it's a kind of mixed family. (GrodHM32/2010F)⁷⁶

Even when the mother uses literary Polish, and is a Polish teacher who studied in Poland, she finds it hard to teach her own children.

Do you speak Polish at home?

It varies, because my husband wasn't taught either, because it's from childhood, what language you were raised in. Mixed language. My daughter, once she started going to the Educational Society, she understands everything now but is shy about speaking. She's shy because she thinks she doesn't have enough vocabulary, children don't read books now. And when it's Russian and Polish, children can't articulate. As for my son, I speak Polish to him, I have a different approach towards him now. I speak Polish, and he answers in Russian. For now, how to say it in Polish and he has a go. (GrodIC40/2010F)⁷⁷

The reason for the difficulties with the sociolinguistic description of Polish in Belarus is the limited use of the language – solely in Polish lessons and contacts with visitors from Poland. The Polonophonism of young people in Belarus, despite their often very high competences, remains within the realm of individual skill, without transforming into a Polonophone community. Polish is very seldom used in the home, with the exception of conversation with the oldest family members (in homes with intelligentsia or noble traditions). Very seldom is it the primary language of the young generation. It is also neither the everyday language nor the language of the familial sphere of Belarus's Polish community.

76 *Ja na przykład do swoich mówię, mogę tak [po polsku], i rozumieją, a tak to różnie w rodzinach różnie bywa. W rodzinach dominuje rosyjski, białoruski to nawet, to może, że ja w takim ośrodku, ten białoruski prawie nie używa się, ten rosyjski można częściej usłyszeć niż ten język białoruski. [...] To polskiego chyba lepiej nauczyć się, niż tego białoruskiego. [...] Na przykład mój jest Białorusinem, jego matka jest Polką, ojciec Białorusinem, ale on był chrzczony w cerkwi, ale my braliśmy ślub w kościele i nasze dzieci chodzą do kościoła, no jest taka rodzina mieszana.*

77 *Różnie, no bo tak, mąż też nie był nauczony, bo to tak z dzieciństwa, w jakim języku było wychowanie. Mieszany język. Córka, jak zaczęła chodzić do Macierzy, to już wszystko rozumie, a wstydzi się rozmawiać. Ona wstydzi się, że ma za mały zasób słownictwa, no dzieci nie czytają teraz książek. I jak język rosyjski i polski dzieci nie potrafią się wysłowić. A z synem rozmawiam po polsku, do niego już inne mam podejście. Ja do niego po polsku, on mi odpowiada po rosyjsku. Na teraz po polsku jak to powiedzieć i on tam stara się.*

Not even in the Grodno region is it used in social and neighbourly contacts. The authors of a sociological work on Catholics in Belarus note with surprise that young people returning to Belarus after studying in Poland do not use Polish in their community.⁷⁸ Polish does not acquire the features that are characteristic of its Belarusian users. Means of expression characteristic for the local community do not form within the Polish language there. Its peculiarities (differences from standard Polish) entail Russian interferences, as well as Belarusian ones in the phonetics. These are often one-off interferences.

The Polish used can therefore be described as a set of idiolects – some more and some less isolated – whose form depends on an individual user's knowledge of Polish, based on the language spoken by a teacher or sometimes the general language heard on radio and television or encountered in Poland. An act of communication takes place between the resident of Belarus and a person speaking standard Polish (teacher, researcher, visitor). The fact that people only communicate with speakers of standard Polish can be to the advantage of the taught language, as it deters the development of regionalisms, but it also prevents the formation of a community of communicative Polish. Contemporary Polish in Belarus can be said to be developing in vertical connections. However, there is no network of horizontal links forming that might encourage the creation of a territorial or community variation.

The process of linguistic unification encompassing most of Poland also seems to affect the variant of Polish developing in Belarus. There is no regional norm here created by an active Polonophone intelligentsia. Since Polish operates there in this way, the characteristics of a sociolect of Polish communities in Belarus fail to form. It is true that Eastern Slavic interferences are similar to Borderlands Polish, but these are incidental and individual, and do not transform into systemic features. Given the lack of a set of common characteristics of the Polish spoken by the young generation of Catholics in Belarus, we cannot claim the existence of a sociolect of this generation. I use sociolinguistic methodology for describing today's Polish in Belarus because of the lack of a better alternative. On the basis of the interviews, I determine which language functions as the primary and which as the secondary one, even though my informers are not familiar with these concepts. The terms they use are from an entirely different sphere. They know the phrase "mother tongue" and used it. How can this be translated into sociolinguistic terminology? We might propose the term "prestigious ideological language", since the users associate it with the category of national ideology.

78 Dzwonkowski, Gorbaniuk, Gorbaniuk, *Postawy katolików*, p. 32.

These doubts notwithstanding, I believe that the root of the young generation's Polish lies in the social multilingualism of Belarusian Catholics. Not speaking Polish in families with Polish self-identification has a long tradition, and not speaking Polish does not exclude being a Pole.⁷⁹ The current situation of young people declaring their Polishness is a contemporary variant and consequence of phenomena described in the literature. I suspect that if Polish occurs at least in the religious sphere, learning the language can be linked to social multilingualism. But this issue also has another aspect. I mentioned that the observation of Catholic communities in Belarus reveals an intensive process of Belarusianisation of this group, connected mostly to the change in the language of the sacrum from Polish to Belarusian. If Catholics with Belarusian identity learn Polish, it represents for them only a language that is useful in life, but used neither in the family nor in everyday life, not in the liturgy or prayer. If we accept this interpretation, we must acknowledge that the sociolinguistic status of Polish among the young generation in Belarus today is connected to the broad and complex problem of the national identity of its users.

When describing the Polish used by young people, it is important to remember that the contrastive (as compared to standard Polish) characteristics that appear in it occur irregularly and depend on the individual's linguistic competence. There will be many more of them among children beginning to learn the language, and hardly any among young people preparing for studies in Poland. The same characteristics are described by researchers of Borderlands Polish, and especially of contemporary Polish used in Belarus.⁸⁰ They should not be treated as permanent distinguishing features of contemporary Polish in Belarus, but as one-off interferences. Their occurrence is not obligatory even within the same utterance, since speakers might know the correct version and initially try to use it (in a conversation with a teacher or visitor from Poland). As the conversation progresses, however, their control weakens, resulting in the increasing frequency of interferences from Russian or Belarusian, the languages in common use.

79 Engelking, "Nacje to znaczy grupy religijne"; Kabzińska, *Wśród kościelnych Polaków*; Straczuk, *Język a tożsamość człowieka*; Straczuk, *Cmentarz i stół*.

80 Edward Breza, "Polszczyzna Polaków współczesnej Grodzieńszczyzny", *Język Polski* LXXIII, issue 3, 1993; Halina Satkiewicz, "O polszczyźnie mieszkańców Grodna w okresie międzywojennym", *Acta Baltico-Slavica* 24, 1999; Iryda Grek-Pabisowa, *Współczesne gwary polskie na Litwie i Białorusi. Fonetyka* (Warszawa: Slawistyczny Ośrodek Wydawniczy, 2002); Irena Czerniak, "Współczesna polszczyzna kazań na terenie Grodzieńszczyzny", in: *Wokół religii i jej języka*, Ewa Golachowska, Anna Zielińska (eds) (Warszawa: Slawistyczny Ośrodek Wydawniczy, 2011).

Compared to the Polish spoken by the oldest generation, which developed without the influence of the models of standard Polish pronunciation spreading as a result of the mass media, the form of the language used by the young generation contains a decreasing number of phonetic characteristics pointing to Borderlands origins. The following features are characteristic of the Polish of young people who have been learning the language for many years. Speaking to them, one can sometimes forget that they live in Belarus. The phonetic characteristics that researchers mention as occurring even in the careful pronunciation of Grodno's pre-war intelligentsia,⁸¹ such as realisations of the dental *ł* or voiced *h*, are replaced by standard Polish pronunciation. Relatively seldom is prepalatal articulation of *ś*, *ź*, *ć* and *ʒ* observed. More frequently, the softness of *l'* is maintained in every position. Owing to their lesser clarity, and consequently also lesser self-control of the speakers, other characteristics are recorded more frequently. These include the hard realisation of *ń* before a consonant – *tančyc', panstvovy* – and a voiced *v* after voiceless consonants: *tvardy, stvožyc'.* In vocalism, denasalisation of nasal sounds occurs in word-final position – *muvò, robè,* while in the mid-word position – the asynchronic realisation of nasals before stop and fricative consonants – *odrembny, zv'onzek.* A deviation from the standard Polish norm involves the fluctuations of virile and nonvirile forms, a different distribution of the endings *-a* and *-u* in the genitive singular of nouns: *pojexala do m'ínsku, pošla do ogroda.* Analytical forms of the verb occur: *my słyšel'i, bratu ja dała.* The occurrence of the construction *dla* +genitive instead of synthetic non-prepositional constructions: *dajće dla mńe,* as well as the construction *u mńe jest* are characteristic in terms of syntax.

Functional distribution of languages among Catholics under 45 years old, Belarusian orientation, city

		Polish	Russian	Belarusian	Plain language
religion	Liturgy	+		+	
	Prayer	+		+	
family life			+	+	
social life			+	+	
work/school		+	+		
administration offices			+		
mass media		+	+	+	

81 Satkiewicz, "O polszczyźnie mieszkańców Grodna", p. 193.

The dynamic development of Polish learning can serve to counteract the decreasing range of usage of Polish in Belarus. One might expect young, well-educated people to form the foundations for the revival of a Polish-speaking intelligentsia. However, observations of the choices made by young people learning Polish do not leave any illusions as to their future fates. Most of the young people gaining high linguistic competence go to Poland to study and do not return to Belarus, and therefore have no influence on the language of their native community. One of my interviewees, a teacher of Polish from Grodno, had the following to say about this situation:

We don't keep a record as such, but sometimes we find that young people, having passed their exams and got into Poland, when they have some problems with their visa they come and ask us to sort something out. I really feel sorry for them, because I know some personally. And I see that they are really talented people and see them going away and am sure that they won't return. Which really pains me, because I went to university in Poland too, but I came back because of my child, and as it turned out there was a position, this job, young people have problems with finding a job. If someone is working, for example, because we have teachers here who work at schools, or pre-schools, and study psychology and pedagogy part-time at Białystok University, it can be treated as professional training, but they already have a guaranteed job. A couple of people have got in touch with me after doing Polish studies in Poland, about finding work, because at the Educational Society here they can't be employed.

Some people treat Poland as a trampoline to the West, it depends on their field of study and motivation, because some want to get away at all costs. Even if students come back here after their studies, they can try to get work as a Polish teacher, but they'll earn a very small amount. Because they won't have as many hours as a normal school teacher, because it's an optional subject, or second foreign language. (GrodIC40/2010F)⁸²

82 No ewidencji takiej nie prowadzimy, ale czasami bywa tak, że młodzież, która zdała egzaminy, dostała się do Polski, jak mają jakieś problemy z wizą, to przychodzą i proszą, żeby im coś załatwić. Naprawdę jest mi szkoda, bo niektórych znalazłam osobiście. I widzę, że to naprawdę są zdolni ludzie i widzę, jak oni wyjeżdżają i wiem na pewno, że nie wrócą. O to mnie naprawdę boli, bo ja też byłam na studiach w Polsce, ale wróciłam ze względu na dziecko i tak się złożyło, że tutaj było miejsce, ta praca, młodzież ma problem ze znalezieniem tej pracy. Jeżeli ktoś na przykład pracuje, bo mamy tu nauczycielek, które pracują w szkołach, czy przedszkolach i zaocznie studiują na uniwersytecie białostockim psychologię i pedagogikę, to jako doskonalenie zawodowe można traktować, ale mają już zapewnione miejsce pracy. Parę osób się do mnie zgłaszało po polonistycę w Polsce z prośbą o znalezienie pracy, no w Macierzy nie można ich tutaj zatrudnić. Niektórzy traktują Polskę jako trampolinę na Zachód, zależy od kierunku studiów i od motywacji, bo niektórzy chcą za wszelką cenę wyjechać. Jak nawet studenci po studiach wracają tutaj, to może iść na nauczyciela języka polskiego, ale będzie bardzo mało zarabiał tutaj.

This observation opens a discussion on questions related to the Polish intelligentsia in Belarus. This topic assumes particular significance given the fact that such an intelligentsia exists in neighbouring Lithuania. Of course, the fortunes of the Polish minority in the Lithuanian and Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republics were entirely different. During the period of repatriations (1944–1956), the majority of the families of the intelligentsia, officials and qualified workers left the areas occupied by the USSR.⁸³ The history of the two republics took a different course. Researchers point to the Soviet policy which aimed to bring Poles and Lithuanians in conflict in the Vilnius region.⁸⁴ In Lithuania, there were schools in which teaching was conducted in Polish, as well as mixed schools with Polish classes. In the 1980s, Polish-language pre-schools began to be formed, alongside general, vocational and technical secondary schools. Polish-language press also developed, and Polish studies departments were founded at the Pedagogical University (formerly the Pedagogical Institute) and the University of Vilnius.⁸⁵

In this respect, Belarus was in a worse situation than its neighbour. Following the Second World War, a certain number of Polish schools remained, but their number decreased year by year, before they vanished entirely in 1948. According to data from 1 January 1946, 728 schools were operation in the Grodno Oblast at the time, 40 of which were Polish. The total number of teachers was 1779, of whom 540 were Polish, and there were 3,912 pupils at Polish schools. Only

Bo nie będzie miał tyle godzin, ile normalny nauczyciel w szkole, bo to jest jednak jako fakultatyw, albo drugi język obcy.

- 83 Jan Szumski, *Sowietyzacja Zachodniej Białorusi: 1944–1953: propaganda i edukacja w służbie ideologii* (Kraków: Arcana, 2010), p. 126.
- 84 Aleksander Srebrakowski, “Tło historyczne i polityczne powstania Związku Polaków na Białorusi na tle polskiego odrodzenia narodowego na Litwie”, in: *Polska mniejszość narodowa na Białorusi*, Zdzisław Winnicki, Tadeusz Gawin (eds) (Białystok: Wyższa Szkoła Administracji Publicznej im. Stanisława Staszica, 2010), p. 43; Jolanta Mędelska, *Język “Prawdy Wileńskiej”: północnokresowa polszczyzna kulturalna w początkach sowietyzacji Wilna i Wileńszczyzny* (Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo Uczelniane WSP w Bydgoszczy: 1999).
- 85 Mirosław Dawlewicz, “Świadomość językowa młodzieży polskiego pochodzenia w Wilnie (na podstawie badań ankietowych)”, in: *Sytuacja językowa na Wileńszczyźnie. Materiały sympozjum “Socjo- i psycholingwistyczne uwarunkowania sytuacji językowej w Wilnie i na Wileńszczyźnie”*, Józef Porayski-Pomsta (ed.) (Warszawa: Elipsa, 1999), pp. 2–26.

20 Polish schools were left in the same district in the 1946–1947 school year. In the Baranavichy Oblast in 1945, there were six Polish schools out of a total of 870. Only two remained in the 1945–1946 school year. In the Brest Oblast, in 1945 the total number of schools was 581, of which just ten were Polish. In the Molodechno Oblast, where, for example, in the Oshmyanya raion the Polish population represented almost 80 % of the total, no single Polish school was opened.⁸⁶ When managerial administrative, party and economic positions were being filled, the authorities ignored the local population, instead promoting people from the east of the country.⁸⁷ “The majority of the Polish community in Belarus belongs to the so-called lower reaches of society and reflects both the anti-Polish policy that was followed in the pre-war period in Eastern Belarus and the policy pursued after 17 September 1939 in the lands taken from the Second Polish Republic”⁸⁸

Bearing these facts in mind helps to explain the situation that existed until the end of the 1980s. The revival of Polish education began with the introduction of the Polish language – a resolute initiative on the part of parents – in the 1987–1988 school year in state schools in Lasosna and Sonichy in the Grodno Oblast. In 1992 came the first two classes taught in Polish – at High School No. 3 and High School No. 22 in Grodno, followed the next year by additional Polish classes in Schools No. 17 and 25 in Grodno, in Volkovisk in School No. 2, in Minsk in School No. 1, in Brest in School No. 9, as well as in Navahrudok, Sopochniky, Lida, as well as Boltsishky and Pahkeviche in the Voronov raion. The authorities consented to invite teachers of early classes from Poland. In these years, a rapid development of other forms of Polish teaching could be observed. Together with the development of Polish instruction, Polish cultural and educational organisations also developed: in Lida, and then in Baranavichy, Grodno, Brest and Minsk.⁸⁹ University-level Polish studies were opened in Grodno and Minsk. Nevertheless, teaching of Polish encounters numerous difficulties today. According to Polish teachers, especially in Minsk and Eastern Belarus, the authorities treat teaching of the language as attempted Polonisation. In discussing issues of the Polish intelligentsia in Belarus, we cannot fail to mention

86 Iryna Anacka, *Język polski i jego nauczanie na Białorusi. Na przykładzie szkolnictwa w Mińsku* (manuscript of extracts from unfinished PhD dissertation, 2005), pp. 22–23.

87 Szumski, *Sowietyzacja Zachodniej Białorusi*, pp. 131–136.

88 Tadeusz Gawin, *Polskie odrodzenie na Białorusi 1988–2005* (Białystok: Wyższa Szkoła Administracji Publicznej im. Stanisława Staszica, 2010), p. 66.

89 Kryszyn, “Język polski na Białorusi”, p. 9.

the foundation of the Union of Poles in Belarus, a subject which returns both in the secondary literature and in the statements of interviewees asked about the prospects of the development of an opinion-forming Polish intelligentsia in Belarus. Gawin writes the following about the lack of engagement of the intelligentsia in the formation of the Union of Poles in Belarus:

The intelligentsia did not become a driving force in the act of renaissance of Polishness. The Polish intelligentsia, holding high positions in the structure of the state authorities, was largely opposed to union activity. This intelligentsia mostly stemmed from poorly educated Polish families. Parents, despite mostly acknowledging their Polishness and Catholic faith, have lost influence on their children. They have distanced themselves from their culture, faith and mother tongue, in exchange for the benefits stemming from being in the structures of power or state service. With poorly educated parents from the lower reaches of society, at all costs they wanted to prove to them and to the people around them that they could do better, and it was to this that they devoted their career and life.⁹⁰

A Polish teacher from Grodno, asked about the Polonophone intelligentsia and the possibility of its having an impact on the form of the Polish language in Grodno, has a slightly different interpretation:

There was the Adam Mickiewicz Association here, which later became the Union, and this was what brought the intelligentsia together, who focused on achieving one objective, and later everybody looked for their own benefits, and it's an organisation open to everyone. They form around the church, for example teachers' pastoral work. But I think it's the same. I went to one meeting. Poles have the trait of every man being for himself. These are individual contacts. Clubs at churches, usually ladies. I couldn't tell you about any intelligentsia groups, because I'm just active in the Educational Society. Some come and say that they'd like to meet, speak the language, or go away to Poland, meet up, but they say they haven't got anywhere to do it, no leader, because there always needs to be an organiser to lead them. Last year we opened a city branch of the Educational Society not registered by the authorities, but for now, as it's not registered, we're not advertising it, we have various trips around Belarus, now they're going to Lviv. There's nothing like that. In the church there is, you can meet there, coming out of church, not everyone speaks Polish, if that's what it's about. (GrodIC40/2010F)⁹¹

90 Gawin, *Polskie odrodzenie na Białorusi*, p. 167.

91 *Tutaj było Stowarzyszenie Adama Mickiewicza, później przerodziło się w Związek i on właśnie skupiał tę inteligencję i oni się zebrali wokół jednego celu, żeby zrobić, no później każdy szukał swoich korzyści i to jest organizacja otwarta dla wszystkich. Tworzą się gdzieś przy kościele, na przykład duszpasterstwo nauczycieli. Ale ja uważam, że to jest to samo. Ja byłam na takim jednym spotkaniu. To jest cechą Polaków, że każdy sobie rządkę skrobie. To są kontakty jednostkowe. Kółka w kościołach, najczęściej to są panie. O takich grupach inteligencji to ja nic nie mogę pani powiedzieć, bo ja kręcę się*

Irrespective of these critical comments, researchers dealing with the social situation of Poles in Belarus point to a renaissance of the Polish intelligentsia and the activities of numerous Polish organisations. Helena Giebień writes:

The formation of the Union of Poles in Belarus and the Polish Educational Society, as well as the increasing independence of associations that were initially associated with the UPB, show that the local Polish intellectual elite, which was practically entirely destroyed as a result of the Soviet extermination policy, is becoming more active. The activities of such associations as the Polish Doctors Society in Belarus, the Polish Scientific Society (a separate organisation from the UPB), the Polish Youth Society, the Association of Nurses and Midwives, the Association of Polish Historians, the Association of Polish Lawyers, the Polish Visual Artists Society, the Teachers Association gives a general idea of the areas in which Poles specialise. Undoubtedly, the humanities are dominant – there are many Polish teachers, historians, academic doctors, artists, and fewer graduates in technical subjects, military people, politicians, still too few lawyers and economists.⁹²

Alina Kiziukiewicz adds the fact of the existence of Polish-language press, radio and television programmes.⁹³ Iwona Kabińska also discusses the renaissance of the Polish intelligentsia over the last 20 years.⁹⁴ The list of distinguished Polish organisations and associations is a long one. There is also no doubt that the activists of these groups do much to serve the Polish minority in Belarus, putting in a great deal of work, dedication and courage.⁹⁵ However, linguistic observations – especially participant observation and conversations

tylko w Macierzy. Niektórzy przychodzą i mówią, że chcieliby się spotykać, rozmawiać w tym języku, czy wyjeżdżać do Polski, spotykać się, ale mówią, że nie mają gdzie, nie mają jakiegoś przywódcy, bo zawsze musi się znaleźć jakiś organizator, który za sobą poprowadzi. Otworzyliśmy w ubiegłym roku niezarejestrowany przez władze oddział miejski Macierzy, no, ale tak jakoś na razie z powodu, że nie jest zarejestrowany, nie afiszujemy się z tym, robimy różne wyjazdy po Białorusi, teraz jadą do Lwowa. Czegoś takiego nie ma. W kościele no owszem, można prawda tam się spotkać, wyjście z kościoła, nie wszyscy rozmawiają po polsku, jeśli i to chodzi.

- 92 Helena Giebień, “Polska inteligencja na Grodzieńszczyźnie po II wojnie światowej”, in: *Powojenne losy inteligencji kresowej*, Elżbieta Trela-Mazur (ed.) (Opole: Instytut Śląski, 2007), pp. 111–112.
- 93 Alina Kiziukiewicz, “Charakterystyka współczesnego funkcjonowania języka polskiego w Grodnie”, *Studia Slawistyczne*, 2003, 4, p. 83.
- 94 Kabzińska, *Znajomość dziedzictwa kulturowego*; Kabzińska, “Czy zmierzch stereotypu Polak-katolik?”.
- 95 I am not discussing here the problems of the Union of Poles in Belarus, as it is impossible to do so without reference to the Polish and Belarusian political contexts, and I would like this book to remain apolitical. At the same time, it is important to say that the complicated affairs of the UPB do not look the same from a Warsaw perspective

with the members of certain societies, show that the formal existence of Polish organisations is not connected to use of Polish by their members, who, if they know the language, use it in contacts with guests from Poland. If the situation were to change, and Polish to dominate conversations among the Polish intelligentsia in Belarus, one might then hope that Polish would indeed enter further spheres of life.

The Symbolic Importance of Belarusian

The Polish language in Belarus constitutes one of the elements of a complex language situation in a multilingual society. Belarus, Russian and Polish are in constant contact here, present in various guises in Catholic communities. The development of Polish does not depend solely on the current political situation and the will of the educational authorities, enabling or hindering the formation of Polish schools and classes. The functional range of Polish, its occurrence or withdrawal from certain roles, is also associated with the way in which the Belarusian language functions.

For sociolinguists interested in the general language situation in Belarus, the most important consideration will be the mutual connection between Belarusian and Russian – the two official state languages – and their competition in various spheres of life. The other important issues Belarusianists face are the definition and functioning of *trasianka*, the form of speech that mixes the two languages. Belarusian scholars are examining these questions today. As regards the issue of the language of Catholics in Belarus, however, the two aforementioned questions, although they of course also concern Catholics, are not especially relevant. Russian or *trasianka* fulfil a communicative function, and their role is not subject to significant change. In fact, it would appear that they are “transparent” for the majority of informers, as the emotions of the users are not associated with them. Russian is not perceived as a value, and has only a functional quality both in Catholic communities and (perhaps) also in some Orthodox ones. *Although Russian is spoken, whoever you ask, everyone understands that it’s not the mother tongue. Russian... because Russian schools, for contact, that’s how we communicate* (JZ, female, Orthodox, born 1989 in Soligorsk).⁹⁶

as they do in Belarus. One should avoid hasty judgments, since it is possible to harm many people working to promote Polish culture and language.

96 Olga Guszczeva, “Język a tożsamość kulturowa w warunkach bilingwizmu białoruskorosyjskiego”, in: *Konstrukcje i destrukcje tożsamości II. Tożsamość wobec wielojęzyczności*, Ewa Golachowska, Anna Zielińska (eds) (Warszawa: Slawistyczny Ośrodek Wydawniczy, 2012).

In one Catholic family in Grodno, I heard this sentence: “They want to destroy us here”.⁹⁷ This did not refer to the spread of Russian in various spheres of life, but to the liturgy in Belarusian. Paradoxically, the family in question belonged to a large group of Poles who, despite having a good command of Polish, use Russian on an everyday basis. These examples show the differences between the functional role of Russian, which does not have negative connotations for most of society, and the symbolic function of Polish and Belarusian. This is why the changes in the functioning and status of Belarusian that took place between 1990 and 1995 are so important in considerations of the functions and extent of Polish usage in Belarus.

Researchers have different approaches to dating the beginnings of the process of change in the status of Belarusian. The sociolinguist Nina Mechkovskaya wrote of the late 1980s and the beginning of “второе белорусское возрождение”.⁹⁸ Lidzija Sjameška points to the year 1990 and the passing of the law on the Belarusian language in the Belarusian SSR, which marked the beginning of the active renaissance of Belarusian.⁹⁹ For many of my interviewees, the advent of this renewed importance of Belarusian is connected to Belarus’s declaration of independence on 25 August 1991.¹⁰⁰ Whichever symbolic dates are mentioned, the start of this process can be dated to the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s. The Belarusianisation launched at this time commenced with the rebuilding of Belarusian education, which in 1993 encompassed 80 % of all children entering first grade (in 1986 the figure had been 25 %). New Belarusian-language history textbooks were produced for all school years. Belarusian was also introduced into the mass media.¹⁰¹ Thanks to the endeavours of the intelligentsia and activities of cultural and educational institutions, writers and

97 This example is additionally significant given the fact that, just as Belarusian is perceived as a threat to Polish, the Belarusian renaissance is regarded as a greater threat for Polishness than Lukashenko’s regime. Piotr Rudkouski expands upon this subject in his book *The Rise of Belarus (Powstawanie Białorusi)*, Wrocław: Kolegium Europy Wschodniej im. Jana Nowaka-Jeziorańskiego, 2009).

98 Nina Mechkovskaya, *Языковая ситуация в Беларуси: Этические коллизии двуязычия*, *Russian Linguistics*, 1994, Vol. 18/6, p. 299.

99 Сямешка Л., *Сацыялінгвістычныя аспекты функцыянавання беларускай мовы*, in: *Беларуская мова*, Лукашанец А., (eds), Opole: Uniwersytet Opolski, Instytut Filologii Polskiej, 1998), pp. 43–44.

100 Zachar Szybieka, *Historia Białorusi 1795–2000* (Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2002), p. 430.

101 Szybieka, *Historia Białorusi*, pp. 449–450.

artists, the role of Belarusian in social life increased markedly.¹⁰² Researchers note that in this period most users of Belarusian aged under 50 had not learned the language in childhood as their primary language, but usually in school, and on occasion also during special Belarusian courses for students, lecturers and workers held in 1990–1994. Sociolinguists' observations are confirmed by the following interviews:

When in the 1990s Belarus gained independence, people perked up, they started to advocate the revival. I was young then, I spoke Russian at school and I would laugh when they said, "Now you will speak Belarusian". I remember when the headmaster came and warned us, "Now everyone will teach in Belarusian, learn Belarusian". Anyway, the presidential elections took place and everything was over. At that time, I started my studies, I met many intellectuals, teachers, professors, who lectured on difficult topics in Belarusian, they paid additional money and they used Belarusian in their lives, so consistently did they try to speak Belarusian, I think it is their input into my being able to speak Belarusian. Time passed, now in Grodno we have the Belarusian School Association and other kinds of clubs. It is of course on a low level and few people participate, but the people who run it are very educated in their field, they have something to say to the Belarusians. Maybe if there are some steps taken forward by the authorities, an understanding will come that Belarusianness is necessary, it can be revived thanks to people. I think there are people who could do this. (GrodJW35/2009M)¹⁰³

102 Сямешка Л., Сацыялінгвістычныя аспекты функцыянавання беларускай мовы, in: Беларуская мова, Лукашанец А., (eds), Opole: Uniwersytet Opolski, Instytut Filologii Polskiej, 1998), pp. 44–45.

103 *Kali ў dzievianostych hadach niezaležnaść atrymała Bielaruś, znoŭ ludzi paczali za niezaležnaść, adradžennje vystupać. Mianie heta ŭ małym uzroście zastala, a u szkole ja na ruskaj movie razmaŭlaŭ i smiajaŭsia, kali kazali: "zaraz usio budzie pa-bielaruski". Ja pomniu jak nastaunik prychodziŭ i papiaredžvaŭ: "zaraz usio buduć vyklađać na bielaruskaj movie, vuczycie bielaruskuju movu". Nu voś adbylisia prezidenckija vybary i ŭsio prajszo. Na toj momant ja prastupiŭ va ŭniversitet, i bylo szmat intelihencyi, vykladczykau, prafiesaraŭ, jakija nie prosta lekcyi czytali na bielaruskaj movie, za jakija hroszy dadatkova daplačzvali, a jany vykarystoŭvali ŭ žyčci, i tak addana staralisia razmaŭlać na bielaruskaj movie, szto ja dumaju, heta ich układ u toje, szto ja razmaŭlaju pa-bielarusku. Prajszoŭ czas, i zaraz ŭ nas u Hrodna jość Tavarystva bielaruskaj szkoly, nu i ŭsialakija hurtki. Heta, kaniesznie, na takim uzroŭni, wielmi slabym, i ŭdzieł prymaje wielmi małaŭja kolkasć ludziej, ale voś ludzi, jakija heta ŭsio pravodziać, wielmi adukavanyja ŭ svajoj sprave, im jość szto skazać bielarusam, jość szto paviedamić. Moža, kali prosta ad ŭłady buduć jakija kroki nasuustracz, jana pacznie rozumieć, szto bielaruskaść nieabchodna, to dziakujuczy ludziam, jakija zastalisia, bielaruskaść moža adradzicca. Ja dumaju, jość kamu jaje adradžać.*

The Belarusianisation process was halted by the 1995 referendum and the introduction of two state languages: Belarusian and Russian. Around the late 1990s and more recently, scholars have emphasised the fact of a considerable Russification of the country¹⁰⁴ and the declining role of Belarusian in public life.¹⁰⁵ There is also talk of reduced numbers of pupils in Belarusian-language classes. Nevertheless, certain changes in the situation of Belarusian are proving to be permanent. Even educational issues can be considered in various contexts:

In comparison with 1993, when 76 % of all pupils went to Belarusophone first-grade classes, and even 1995, when this rate had dropped to 38 %, the 21 % figure from last year [2006] does not provide grounds for enthusiasm. However, Lukashenko's supporters have not succeeded in reverting the education system to its state from 1988, i.e. the Soviet period. At this time, there were mass exemptions from compulsory learning of Belarusian – a situation that is not repeated today. Belarusian was taught in Russophone schools from the third school year (age 9), whereas it is now taught from the first year (age 7). Only two subjects were taught in Belarusian – language and literature. Today, both history and geography are too.¹⁰⁶

We therefore see that the Belarusian language is used to a relatively great extent in school, although my informers revealed an array of difficulties and misunderstandings surrounding its use in daily life.

I personally use Belarusian, you could say that in Belarus perhaps fifty percent use this language. It depends on the situation: if the majority speak Russian, then I have to speak Russian. In some cases I stick with Belarusian, but I stress the fact that I speak Belarusian, because nowadays not many people speak it. So you use both languages. But in practice, most of the population use Russian. Firstly, our regional authorities, if we take Grodno into account, the majority of people. I've noticed that even now people use Russian words in the countryside. Previously, maybe ten years ago, they spoke Belarusian, Belarusian was

104 Radzik, “Język jako wyznacznik tożsamości Białorusinów”, in: *Język a tożsamość na pograniczu kultur* (Białystok: Katedra Kultury Białoruskiej Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 2000), p. 79.

105 Сямешка Л., 1998, Сацыялінгвстычныя аспекты функцыявання беларускай мовы, w: *Беларуская мова*, red. Лукашанец А., Сямешка Л., Opole: Uniwersytet Opolski. Instytut Filologii Polskiej, p. 45; Katarzyna Waszczyńska, “Język i kultura białoruska a proces kształtowania białoruskiej tożsamości narodowej. Analiza wypowiedzi mieszkańców Mińska i okolic”, *Studia Białorusnistyczne*, 2011, No. 5, 29–54.

106 Andrej Dyńko, “Język ulicy, język Placu. Ewolucja i status języka białoruskiego po 2000 r.”, in: *Nadzieje, złudzenia perspektywy. Społeczeństwo białoruskie*, Marta Pej (ed.) (Warszawa-Mińsk: East European Democratic Centre, 2007), p. 58.

used more often, perhaps not the literary form, but their own language, but today they use Russian words. (GrodJW35/2009M)¹⁰⁷

Interviews held in the last two years in Belarus suggest that the changes initiated in 1990–1994 are now resulting in the increased prestige of Belarusian in its literary variant, which some members of society perceive as the language of the intelligentsia and of the intellectual and artistic elite. Students describe this as follows:

When I came to Minsk, I met new people, and in my childhood I didn't really think about it at all, then came the revival of the Belarusian language, because in the countryside [where I'm from], they don't notice when I speak Belarusian, whereas here in Minsk, how can I put it, they regard you as intelligent if you speak Belarusian. (MinOS20/2011F)¹⁰⁸

Katarzyna Waszczyńska's research conducted in the late twentieth century confirms that the image of a person speaking Belarusian has changed radically.

Identifying educated people as being those using Belarusian reveals the change that has taken place in the perception of who its users are. In the times of the Belarusian SSR, an indicator of education was use of Russian. Today, though, an educated person can, and perhaps should use Belarusian.¹⁰⁹

An even more important issue highlighted by researchers of the Belarusian linguistic situation is the symbolic function of Belarusian, which is becoming more important than its communicative function. This is described in many socio-linguistic works.: „...у беларускага языка яго этнічная функцыя (быць нацыянальным сімвалам, кансолідаваць народ і адрозніваць яго ад другіх

107 *Asabista ja pasłuhujuś bolsz bielaruskim, ci pa praŭdzie pavidamić, to moža być pιάćdziesiat procentaŭ na pιάćdziesiat. Zależyć ad sytuacyi: kali bolszasć razmaŭlaje na ruskaj, to ja vymuszany pierachodzić na ruski. U niekatorych wypadkach ja zastajusia na bielaruskaj, ja padkreslivaju toje, szto ja kažu na bielaruskaj, tamu szto zaraz mała razmaŭlajuć na bielaruskaj movie. Tak szto karystajusia i toj, i toj. No praktyczna bolszaja czastka nasielnictva karystajecca zrazumiela ruskaj movaj. Pa pierszaje, heta ŭrad nasz ablasny, kali brać Hrodna, ludzi ũsiul. Navat ja zaŭvažyŭ, szto zaraz ludzi ũżywajuć ruskija slovy na wioscy. Raniej jaszczе, moža hadoŭ dziesiać tamu, jany kazali pa-bielarusku, bolsz padobna mova była na bielaruskuju, moža jana nie litaraturnaja, ale heta była svaja mova, a zaraz ũžo ũżywajuć ruskija slovy.*

108 *Jak przyjechałam do Mińsku, poznała nowych ludzi, a w dzieciństwie raczej nie myślałam wogle, jeszcze języka białoruskiego odrodzenie, dlatego że tam na wsi język białoruski, nie zwracają na to uwagi, kiedy mówię po białorusku, a tutaj w Mińsku jak to powiedzieć, to uznają cię za inteligentną, jak rozmawiasz po białorusku.*

109 Waszczyńska, “Język i kultura białoruska”, p. 43.

этнос(ов) первенствует над основной функцией языка (коммуникативной)” (...the ethnic function of Belarusian (it is a national symbol, it unites the nation and distinguishes it from other ethnic groups) dominates over the basic (communicative) function of a language.)¹¹⁰ Another researcher states this as follows: „Символическое значение белорусского языка, как и ирландского, больше, чем коммуникативное, а немалая часть населения, включая президента, не очень принимает белорусский язык даже в качестве символа” (“The symbolic significance of the Belarusian language, similarly as that of Irish, is larger than its communicative one, while a high amount of the population, including the president, does not even accept Belarusian as a symbol.”)¹¹¹ A young Russian scholar puts this as follows:

As a result, the “mother tongue” (in reference to Belarusian) has an independent status, without a direct link to human linguistic behaviour. It performs an important symbolic function and one’s link with Belarusian identity, with its territory and with the fact that he himself to a certain extent knows Belarusian, even though in reality he might not even use it.¹¹²

The paradox of the contemporary language situation in Belarus is therefore the fact that Belarusian, which became the symbol of the Belarusian national renaissance and which enjoys high prestige among young people and the intelligentsia, is not the language of everyday use. To employ linguistic terminology, we can say that its symbolic function is not linked to its communicative function, since in Belarusian society this has been assumed by Russian. For some groups, Belarusian has a symbolic function, for others – Polish, and for others still, Polish and Belarusian. An important subject which I will not develop here is the symbolic function of Russian, and especially *trasiianka*, for other strata of Belarusian society.

Belarusian – it’s no longer the rural language of the kolkhoz and the broadcasting centre. It’s the language of the youth, bohemians, the language of protest, of a pro-Western alignment, non-conformism, punk and challenges. It remains an important element in the life of the average Belarusian, and still evokes strong political emotions; one might say that as long as Belarusian is perceived as a language of protest, and not of national liberation, it is capable of attracting young people, and in this sense the situation of

110 Мечковская Н.Б., Языковая ситуация в Беларуси: Этические коллизии двуязычия, “Russian Linguistics”, Vol. 18./6 p. 308. 299–322.

111 Алпатов В. М., 150 языков и политика: 1917 – 1997. Социолнгвистические проблемы СССР и постсоветского пространства, p. 171–172.

112 Коряков Ю.Б., Языковая ситуация в Белоруссии и типология языковых ситуаций p. 67.

the Belarusian language today is much better than in the period of the decline of the Soviet Empire. The authorities' maniacal attempts to block communication between the Belarusian-speaking intelligentsia and society, the closing of Belarusozone education and press institutions, show that the authoritarian government sees Belarusian as a tool of politicisation, of transforming people into active citizens.¹¹³

The aforementioned sociolinguistic processes that have occurred in Belarus in the last two decades are significant for two reasons. Above all, they show how the communicative function of a language can be separated from the symbolic one, which also explains the current processes of change in the functioning of Polish. The model at play here is one of "we speak Russian, but Polish is our mother tongue", analogously to the Belarusian "we speak Russian, but Belarusian is our mother tongue". Of course, the similarity of these models is only partial, because the functional range of Polish even among Poles in the Grodno region is considerably smaller than that of Belarusian. Polish can be used only in a few spheres: religion, home, and social and neighbourly relations. Belarusian has more possibilities.

The subject of the next chapter will be the question of the encroachment of Belarusian into the sphere of religion. This occurrence is linked in both temporal and causal terms with the Belarusian renaissance (the Belarusian language was officially introduced in the Catholic Church in 1992). I will be seeking to answer the following question: does the dynamic development of religiosity in Belarusian result from the changes in the prestige of this language described above, or do this prestige and the fact that young Catholics are currently embracing this language in fact result from its introduction to the church?

113 Dyrko, "Język ulicy, język Placu", p. 63.

2 Multilingualism of the Sacred Sphere

Languages in the Sacred Sphere and Their Communicative Function

Finding a precise definition for the term “language of religion” is a task that interests theologians, linguists and people involved in religious life. According to Ryszard Pankiewicz, this term can denote the scientific variant of language, used by scholars of religious studies, philosophers, sociologists, psychologists of religion and theologians, as well as the language of biblical texts, sermons, liturgical texts, encyclicals, pastoral letters, catechisms, statements associated with worship and religious practice, the language of catechesis, private prayers, and religious fiction.¹¹⁴ Irena Bajerowa’s classic definition states that “religious language is a variant of general language that is a means of communication in religious life”.¹¹⁵ Małgorzata Nowak defines the language of religion as a means of communication in religious life concerning religious issues and encompassing language as part of religious activities, such as the liturgy or prayer, as well as the language of talking about God and the human approach to God, and therefore various testimonies, opinion journalism, poetry and religious prose. Nowak identifies three subtypes: sacred language, profane language and colloquial religious language.¹¹⁶ Many discussions of religious language emphasise the fact that what makes it unique is neither its function nor an appropriate vocabulary, but rather its belonging to the sacred sphere. This way of thinking resembles sociolinguistics, which traditionally highlights the religious sphere among other areas of language use. The different rules governing such language are also often stressed, since in this case it is used not only to communicate on matters of faith with other people, but also in an attempt to talk to God, demonstrate love and gratitude to Him, ask for help, and experience veneration and fear.

In multilingual communities, however, the language of the sacred sphere often does not coincide with the language of everyday communication, and it

114 Ryszard Pankiewicz, *Sztuka rozmawiania z Bogiem. Modlitwa a teoria komunikacji* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2009), p. 105.

115 Irena Bajerowa, “Szanse języka religijnego w świetle kultury masowej”, in: *Teologia – kultura – współczesność*, Zbigniew Adamek (ed.) (Tarnów: Wydawnictwo Diecezji Tarnowskiej Biblos, 1995), p. 102.

116 Małgorzata Nowak, *Świadectwo religijne. Gatunek–język–styl* (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 2005).

also need not be a code that a religious person masters in an active fashion. More important than complete comprehension is its high prestige; only in such a language may one speak to God. In Christianity, a discussion of the role of language in knowing the truth revealed by God was commenced by St Augustine, who wrote that understanding a language is not the most important thing in learning the truth: “But as for all those things we understand, it is not the outward sound of a speaker’s words that we consult, but the truth that presides over the mind itself within us”.¹¹⁷ Contemporary liturgists stress that understanding the language of the liturgy does not mean understanding the liturgy itself.¹¹⁸ The same applies to the language of prayer. The prayers passed on to children by their parents or grandparents are formalised texts unchanged for centuries, and their effectiveness does not depend on the degree of comprehension of the person saying them. A group’s communal prayer taking place in the same language or singing hymns together have the power to create a community and are a collective touching of the sacred that can create a group identity.

Alongside this conviction that it is not necessary to understand the texts of prayer in order to pray effectively, there is also a school of thought that insists on complete understanding of sacred texts. Its proponents cite the Gift of Tongues, which the Apostles received on the Pentecost. According to theologians, the description of the descent of the Holy Spirit also represents a description of the birth of the Church. One can therefore argue that at the basis of the Church lies the Word comprehensible to believers, and proclaiming the Good News takes place in languages understood by “every nation under heaven”. For centuries in the sacred sphere, the faithful of the Catholic Church used Latin as the liturgical language of Western Christianity. The language of the liturgy was always fundamental to the question of participation of believers. This is linked to a certain paradox. At the beginning of its existence, the Roman Church employed Greek – the language of Rome’s Jewish residents and the rest of the population among whom Christianity had spread. Latin only definitively became the language of the Roman liturgy in the late fourth century, although Greek was preserved in certain songs. The Roman Church abandoned Greek because its adherents now came from different backgrounds, and did not understand the language.¹¹⁹

117 St Augustine, *Augustine in His Own Words*, William Harmless, S. J. (ed.) (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 2010), p. 70.

118 Fr Bogusław Nadolski, *Liturgika: Liturgika fundamentalna*, vol. 1 (Poznań: Pallotinum, 1989), pp. 91–128.

119 Nadolski, *Liturgika*, pp. 166–167.

Reflections of the two differing positions presented above concerning sacred language can also be found today among Catholics in Belarus, grappling with the dilemma of how to speak to God.

Changes since the Second Vatican Council

Concerns over the faithfuls' ability to fully understand and participate in the liturgy motivated the creators of the reformed liturgy after the Second Vatican Council. According to the resolutions of the Council, the language of the liturgy should be that spoken by believers on a daily basis. Since it gave no specific solutions for reform, the details of the decisions on this matter fall at the level of local Churches, dioceses and parishes. In Belarus, implementing the resolutions of Vatican II is problematic, because the Catholic communities in the country differ in terms of the language used at home. As we saw in the chapter on the sociolinguistic situation, this differentiation is not only territorial in nature – the Polish/Belarusian-speaking west, the Belarusian/Russian-speaking east – but also a social phenomenon: within the same diocese or even parish, one can find Polonophone districts inhabited by descendants of the minor nobility, as well as peasant Catholic villages where the language of everyday communication is usually the Belarusian dialect. A further complication is the fact that the population of peasant villages, who do not use Polish on a daily basis, have Polish national identification. In Catholic villages where the first language of communication is the Belarusian dialect, Polish is the language of prayer, and for many years also that of the liturgy. This gives the latter a special place and high status in the hierarchy of languages used by the multilingual communities. In practice, different parishes employ various solutions. In places where Polish is spoken in daily life (the Grodno region), the liturgy is also usually held in the Polish language. There are also areas (the Mohilev region) in which priests are far more likely to use Belarusian. The gradual introduction of reform to the liturgy not only marks the response of the local Belarusian Church to the Vatican II proposals, but also indicates a desire to shed the image of the Catholic Church as a Church for Poles and establish a Catholic community above national dividing lines. Simultaneously to these transformations, a process of generational change is taking place. The representatives of the oldest generation, accustomed to the former linguistic and national model, are dying out. For the middle and younger generations, Polish is generally solely the language of religion, with Russian or Belarusian dominant in family and work ties.

Our further reflections should begin with an analysis of a quotation from the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, a document from the Second Vatican

Council. The objective of the liturgy is for “the faithful to be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy”.¹²⁰ Also deemed to be liturgical are the services of secular individuals – altar servers, readers and choir members. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* states that “since the use of the mother tongue, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or other parts of the liturgy, frequently may be of great advantage to the people, the limits of its employment may be extended. This will apply [...] to the readings and directives, and to some of the prayers and chants”.¹²¹

The above quotation points to two aspects. First, it is essential to understand liturgical texts in order to be able to actively and effectively participate in the liturgy, and it is such participation that a Christian is bound to; second, there is an obligation to introduce vernacular languages to the liturgy, not only so that liturgical texts are comprehensible, but in order to fully appreciate local tongues. What linguists call a language’s prestige is referred to here as its sacredness. In Poland, we observed competition in the liturgy between Latin (the language traditionally associated with the sacred) and Polish, which was not used in the liturgy of Holy Mass, but had a long history and tradition, boasted a rich and extensive literature, and above all was the language of prayers taught from childhood, religious songs and folk services. Although for centuries Latin remained the language of the liturgy, Polish also had a role as an auxiliary language in the Church.

The linguistic situation in Belarus is completely different. In the aftermath of the changes introduced by Vatican II, Polish has functioned here for many years. At present, Belarusian can also increasingly be heard in churches. There is an opposition between Polish, a high-prestige language, and Belarusian, whose prestige is ambivalent. A further complication is the fact that many of the country’s inhabitants do not use literary Belarusian – in the countryside, its local variant of “plain language” is used. Whereas the literary form might be afforded prestige, this is not possible in the case of the local dialect used in agricultural work. In any case, there are no attempts to hold Holy Mass in this vernacular, and it is also not used for prayers said in public, although it may be present in personal prayer.

120 Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Pope Paul VI, 4 December 1963. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html (17 July 2018).

121 http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html (17.07.2018)

Thus, in the Belarusian situation, in the approach to everyday language and its sacredness as defined in Church documents, this sacred aspect is more important than comprehensibility as Polish is understood as the language of the liturgy anyway (and even if this is a passive understanding resulting from low linguistic competence, its regular liturgical texts are clear).

Research on the language of informers from the older generation confirmed the lack of a language barrier even among individuals who do not use Polish actively, but only plain language. Despite this, there is opposition to use of Belarusian in church. The below statement (typical of the Grodno region) was made by an elderly woman who generally uses plain language, but spoke Polish here because she was talking to me.

Well, I don't like it. Best in Polish I must admit... our priest has been doing readings in Belarusian for young people for a long time, because my daughter reads too... and the elder one read those readings in Polish too, and when they started the reading in Belarusian, they said maybe it's easier, maybe people will understand better, but people have got used to it now. But at first they said "why's he bringing that in, Belarusian?" That we don't understand anything, that they'd got used to Polish and nobody wanted it. Here they want everything to be in Polish. I also find it better in Polish than Belarusian. (NovrMK72/2010F)¹²²

What does "understanding" a language mean here? I suspect that it is not about linguistic competence, but the ritualistic-linguistic competence that is essential in the sacred sphere. It was mentioned on a number of occasions in the interviews that for quite a long time the Belarusian responses in the priest's dialogue with the congregation were not known, which caused a sense of uncertainty and lack of competence in religious rituals.

Piotr Rudkouski points to the deeply rooted need for the existence of a sacred language, which for Catholics in Belarus had for years been Polish. The struggle to preserve it in the Church "is often nothing other than the struggle for the ritual orthodoxy of religious rituals, which is hugely significant for older people"¹²³

122 No... mnie to nie podoba sie. Najlepiej w polskim przyznam... a nasz też, nasz proboszcz czytania, już dawno w języku białoruskim czyta dla młodzieży, bo mnie córka też czyta i czytali... i starsza czytała... czytania te i po polsku i eta..., a jak zaczęli czytanie, że w języku bielaruskim, że mówi, że może łatwiej, może zrozumieją ludzie lepiej, ale ludzie to teraz już trochę przyzwyczaili się. Ale z początku to tak mówili: dlaczego on to wprowadza, ten bielaruski język? że my nic nie rozumiemy, że po polsku już przyzwyczaili sie i nikt nie chce. Wot u nas chcę, żeby wszystko było po polsku. Ja też liczę, że lepiej w polskim języku, czem bielaruskim.

123 Rudkouski, *Powstawanie*, p. 199.

By attaching the high status of sacred language to everyday vernacular, the Vatican II documents offset the importance of the diglossia, which seems to be firmly established in the culture of the inhabitants of Belarus, where plain language is associated with utilitarianism and pragmatism, and Polish with prestige and symbolic value. In the context of what we observed in the previous chapter about the changes in the function and prestige of the Belarusian language, we might ask whether in other regions of the country a similar oppositional pair as plain language and Polish in the Grodno region might be Russian in its communicational function and Belarusian in its symbolic function.

Polish and Belarusian in the Practice of the Catholic Church in Belarus in the Twenty-First Century

The above quotations from the post-conciliar documents mostly refer to the language of the liturgy, but the sphere of sacred language is not confined to liturgical language. By applying the sociolinguistic methodology of domains (areas of usage), we can identify narrower fields in which usage of particular languages depends on a number of factors. For the individual “microspheres”, the various functions of language are important. The communicative function competes with the symbolic one. For certain “microspheres”, it is this communicative function that is the most important, meaning the need for active or passive knowledge of a language, while for others, the symbolic function matters more. We can distinguish the “microspheres” as follows, taking into account the dominant communicative language functions:

1. Catechisation
2. Homiletics and readings
3. Personal prayer
4. Liturgy of Mass and additional services as well as hymns.

Studying the religion demands the greatest linguistic skill from one who is a believer, and it is in this sphere that the communicative function of language is most important. What is required here is not only comprehension of catechetical teaching, but also the ability to answer questions and participate in a discussion. In order to understand sermons and readings from the Bible, a passive grasp of the language in question suffices, while even less linguistic competence suffices for coping with the formalised texts of the liturgy, prayers and hymns, which often function as magical formulas.

The symbolic function and prestige of a language are most closely related to liturgical texts, sacramental formulas, hymns and prayers recited by a community.

This aspect is particularly important during special religious manifestations – processions and pilgrimages. In symbolic terms, a pilgrimage entering a sanctuary with a Polish or Belarusian hymn is hugely significant.

The second important element shaping the linguistic situation in the Catholic Church in Belarus is the possibility – or lack thereof – of choosing the language in which the believer speaks to God. The only field in which one can always choose is the language of personal prayer. In other situations, individuals' preferences may, but need not, be taken into account. The most obvious example of this is the language of the liturgy of Mass, sacraments and services held in a church. A believer can only decide on language when the clergy ensure that such a choice is possible, since it is the parish priest who makes the decision on the language in which services are held. These decisions usually reflect the parishioners' needs, and the clergy issue such declarations. At the same time, priests sometimes also misinterpret the needs of their flock in good faith, projecting their own convictions and linguistic needs on them. This applies both to the persistent promotion of Polishness and the Polish language and that of Belarusian. If several services take place on a given day in a parish, frequently some are in one language, and some in the other. And yet it is the clergy serving in a specific church that decide on the language, rather than the members of the congregation. The debates and doubts surrounding the contemporary changes in the language of religion in Belarus are mostly linked to this sphere. Here too it is important to remember that the situations in the Grodno region and Eastern Belarus differ markedly. Between 1944 and 1952, amid heightened repressions of the Church in Western Belarus, many churches were closed or did not operate owing to a lack of priests,¹²⁴ yet even then the situation was better there than in Eastern Belarus. During the hardest times, Catholics from the Grodno region went to Vilnius or towns on the Lithuanian side of the border – which only existed formally – to take part in religious practices.¹²⁵ There, people christened their children, married, confessed and took Communion. My informers' accounts also relate these practices:

We received our first holy communion in Lithuania, in Druskininkai. Everyone then would go to Lithuania, because there [...] Especially from Porechye we went to Druskininkai, because there were churches in Grodno. So, only Porechye, Lichache, Porechye, all those,

124 Mikhailik, *Kościół katolicki na Grodzieńszczyźnie*, pp. 257, 258.

125 Mikhailik, *Kościół katolicki na Grodzieńszczyźnie*, p. 251.

there are lots of these little villages here, and everyone went to Lithuania... the Church here only... in '89 I think the priests started to arrive. (NovrIM50/2010F)¹²⁶

In Eastern Belarus in the interwar period, churches were closed down, and only the oldest Catholics living in the region today were christened in the churches while they were still active. People born in the late 1930s were mostly baptised during the German occupation, when churches were opened in the occupied territories. After the withdrawal of the Germans, repressions towards Catholics heightened, with a turning point coming only in the 1990s.

Until wartime, the church was open. My late grandfather, Feliks, is buried here, they had the same [name] ... my mum said that when they were building the church, they brought the bricks from Mohilev by horse. Our grandfather participated [in the work].

When did you take first communion?

Only now do children take first communion, prepare for it. I'm telling you, we didn't take it. For example, during the war, I was christened, I remember that, but I didn't take communion, or go to confession, because there wasn't any. And when they christened me, I remember that was during the war. I must have been seven, so I remember it, and my mother was holding my younger sister.

The country was occupied at the time. The church in Bobruisk was open at the start of the war. The priest was definitely a German, so for me the first communion was when we got married. I went to confession then. I was happy. I asked my husband, I even cried, "Give me the chance to go". I got it from my mum, she was very religious. (ProdFZ75/2010F)¹²⁷

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- 126 *A do pierwszej komunii my byli na Litwie, w Druzgiennikach. Wszyscy jeździli tam do Litwy, bo tam [...] Zwłaszcza z Porzecza my jeździli do Druzgiennik, bo w Grodzie byli kościoły. A także, że tylko Porzecze tam, takie Lichaczy, Porzecze, takie wszystkie, u nas dużo takich wiosetek, takich malutkich obok jest i tam wszyscy jeździli do Litwy... no tam... Kościół nam dopiero... u nas już to... w '89 chyba zaczęli przyjeżdżać księża.*
- 127 *Da vajny kaścioł był. Jeszczo moj dzieduszka pakojnik, vot on ździeś pacharonien, Feliks, tak ani, eta samaje... eta samaje raskazywała mama... na koniach, s Mahilova vazili kirpicz kahda kaścioł strojili. Vot uczaśnik nasz dzieduszka był.*

Как вы принимали первую комунию?

Vot ciepier, dzietki prinimajut pierszu kamuńju, chodziať na padhatofku [...] Ja sz havaru, szto nie prinimali [], a ja, naprimier... eto było vo vremia vajny... mienia kreścili, ja pomniu eta vot, no ja nie prinimala pricziascja, ni k spoviedzi, patamu szto nie było, vot. A kagda krescili, ja pomniu, eta była va vrijeme vajny... mnie navierna była siem, szto ja pomniu i mieńszaja sestra u mamy na rukach była.

Eta va vrijeme akupaćji była. Kaścioł u nas v Babrujskie rabotał f piervaje vrijeme vajny i navierno niemiec był ksionc, tak szto u mienia piervaja kamuńja była kagda my pavieneczalis. Ja tagda da spoviedzi schadzila i, eta samaje, vot takoje była. No ja rada

Catholics from Eastern Belarus did not know the post-conciliar Polish liturgical texts until the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the first churches were finally reopened. Belarusian texts also soon became available. The inhabitants of the country's eastern regions who had come from the Grodno region and had previously had contact with Polish in church could now count on using the language there.

We therefore see that the complicated confluence of issues concerning the language of liturgy must be considered in its numerous historical, territorial, but also social and generational contexts. Sometimes it is also necessary to take into account the conflict between the arguments and intentions of the clergy and the needs and habits of the faithful.

Language of Catechesis

By examining linguistic behaviours during religious instruction, we observe the youngest generation of Belarusian Catholics, and are able to assess their language competences and preferences. It is equally important to observe the views of the catechists themselves, who are able to mould children's approach to a language and provide a model of both correct Polish and Belarusian. Apart from the most important groups mentioned above, we should also note the role of parents sending children to religion lessons, as well as parish priests, who often pursue their own linguistic policy within the parish, and expect it to be followed by the instructors working there.

The question of the language of catechesis is described by the authors of the book *Postawy katolików obrządku łacińskiego wobec języka polskiego* ("Roman Catholics' Attitudes to the Polish Language"). However, they average the survey results, without taking Belarus's regional diversification into account. According to the authors, 81 % of parents teach their children prayers in Polish, and only 11 % in Belarusian. The remaining group of parents (4 %) have never provided their children with a religious upbringing. The preferences of the language of religious instruction are similar, albeit in different proportions: 47 % of parents would choose Polish for their children, 31 % Belarusian, 4 % Russian, 11 % Polish and Belarusian, and 7 % do not have an opinion on the issue. However, the practices in place in the parishes researched are different. Catechesis usually takes place in Belarusian – 42 %, followed by Polish – 26 %. In 14 % of parishes it occurs in Polish and Belarusian, in 2 % in Polish and Russian, and in 16 %

i tam była. Ja prasiła muža i daże płakała [...] dajcie mnie darohu szto p ja mahła chadzić... nu astalisia maminy śledy, mama nasza ocheń vierila.

there is no such instruction, because there are not enough children to participate.¹²⁸ These results clearly show that Polish is used too seldom in comparison to expectations. Apart from the parents' wishes, this situation is also affected by children's linguistic preparation and readiness to learn about religion in Polish or Belarusian. The authors add that in parishes in Eastern Belarus, catechesis often does not take place, or is provided in Belarusian or Russian. This research applies to the situation from 10 years ago. My observations suggest that there are still differences in the language of catechesis in Eastern and Western Belarus, although they are gradually being eliminated.

My interlocutors' accounts concerning linguistic practices in catechesis vary considerably, depending on the format of the conversation and their level of trust in me. They often tended to be demonstrating an ideologised approach to language in church (Polish or Belarusian), rather than presenting the actual state of affairs. This applied to both priests and parents.

In general, catechisation in Belarus begins with preparing children for their First Holy Communion, which usually lasts two years and takes place in the third and fourth classes of primary school. The main preparations occur in the second year of teaching religion. My numerous discussions with clergy and churchgoers in Grodno and the surrounding area indicated that there is no one binding rule guiding catechists in their choice of the language of instruction. Individual parishes have their own language policy, with decisions being made by the parish priests, and thereafter tested in practice by the linguistic competences of the children in the early years of primary school. In the larger parishes in Western Belarus, it is possible for both Polish- and Belarusian-language groups to be formed. One priest spoke about working with such groups:

We prepare various groups – a larger one in Belarusian, a smaller one in Polish, we try to introduce them to the mystery of the faith in Polish. I have a Polish group, you can see a huge difference, either you see learning of Polish, or Polish is only in church. I explain to the parents that if they don't intend to teach their children Polish any more it makes no sense, because you can learn prayers, but it makes no sense. There are a lot of mixed Catholic-Orthodox marriages, but the Orthodox Christians often do not practise [their faith]. There's not much Polish at home then. Then there's mixing of groups, they drift apart. We get 200 children coming to communion, then after communion 100, 120 stay. (GrodWB38/2010M)¹²⁹

128 Dzwonkowski, Gorbaniuk, Gorbaniuk, *Postawy katolików*, pp. 89–92.

129 *Przygotowujemy różne grupy – liczniejsza w białoruskim, mniej liczna w polskim, staramy się wprowadzać w misterium wiary w języku polskim. Mam grupę polską, widać ogromną różnicę, albo widać naukę polskiego, albo polski jest tylko w kościele. Tłumaczę rodzicom, jeśli nie macie zamiaru uczyć dzieci dalej polskiego, to nie ma*

This quotation reveals concerns over respecting parents' desires, as well as the linguistic possibilities of their children. The following statement by one catechist indicates a similar practice:

I worked in a parish where religious instruction took place in three languages, to make it accessible to everyone. Each community had its language. Where Polish was needed, it was in Polish, where Russian was needed, in Russian, the priest there was someone who united everyone. (PorzUT35/2010F)¹³⁰

Many priests believe that catechisation can no longer take place responsibly in Polish. I heard such opinions both from priests born in Belarus and those who had come from Poland. The same conclusion was made on the basis of the research conducted several years ago in Ivyanets by Koji Morita, stating that "The local clergy now consider it impossible to convey religious contents in Polish."¹³¹

In the Grodno region, however, some priests insist on religious teaching taking place in Polish, explaining that the young learners quickly assimilate Polish. If catechisation only takes place in Polish at the lowest levels, it is sometimes the case that not all children participating in it are able to meet the language requirements. It is true that they have no problems learning Polish prayers, but understanding theological issues is beyond them. Catechisation of the youngest children is usually performed by nuns, and they know best what linguistic problems children struggle with. These instructors therefore face the dilemma of whether to use Polish, in accordance with the expectations of parents and orders of the parish priest, or to acknowledge that the overriding function of a language is communication, which Polish is not able to fulfil among children. Their statements testified to these quandaries.

In our parishes, it depends on the priest's approach. In some parishes, it's about the children understanding, and in others about it being in Polish, to preserve the language. It really depends. The priest is the head of the parish. What happens is that everything is in Polish if the priest is present, but there are things the children don't understand, because they don't speak Polish at home. All the prayers are in Polish, confession in Polish, catechism,

sensu, bo modlitw można się nauczyć, ale to nie ma sensu. Bardzo dużo małżeństw jest mieszanych katolicko-prawosławnych, ale prawosławni często nie praktykują. Tam trudno o polski w domu. Potem występuje wymieszanie grup, grupy się rozchodzą. Do komunii przychodzi dwieście dzieci, po komunii zostaje sto, sto dwadzieścia.

130 *Ja pracowała w parafii, gdzie była w trzech językach katecheza, żeby była dla wszystkich dostępna. Dla każdej wspólnoty był swój język. Dla kogo po polsku, to po polsku, dla kogo po rosyjsku, po rosyjsku, no taki był proboszcz, że łączył wszystkich.*

131 Morita, *Przemiany socjolingwistyczne w polskich społecznościach*, p. 66.

and everything that can be translated to them we say in Russian, the language they speak. Everything the children learn by heart is in Polish. (GroWT40/2010F)¹³²

And

Sometimes parents say to me, “the children can’t pronounce that, can’t get their tongue round it”, and I say, “go to the priest, I can’t use another language”. In catechesis I teach the faith, not language, if I were to teach the language, I don’t know if I’d teach the faith, because there’d be a division. It’s the parents who teach the language. I don’t have the right to in catechesis. The families children come from vary. (GroWT40/2010F)¹³³

The reason for the lack of language competences among the youngest children is the fact that Polish is seldom used at home. Children and teenagers learn it at school, during extracurricular lessons, at the Polish Educational Society, in courses, and very often have the opportunity to go to Poland. Knowledge of Polish therefore rises with the educational level. For this reason, priests working with older teenagers can easily teach religion lessons in Polish. At the same time, if children received a religious upbringing in Polish at home, they use Polish religious vocabulary even when they do not actively use Polish. As a result, young people aged 15–16 preparing for confirmation often listen to instruction in “mixed” language: the truth of the faith is proclaimed in Belarusian, and the religious terminology is given in Polish.

Parents signing their children up for catechesis may have clearly defined linguistic preferences depending on their own national identity. They very often expect their children to be learning in Polish. These attitudes manifest the inextricable links between Catholicism and Polishness. Particularly striking are the situations when parents emphasise their expectations towards the language of

132 *W naszych parafiach zależy od proboszcza, jak on jest nastawiony. W niektórych parafiach jest tak, żeby dzieci zrozumieli, w niektórych, żeby było w języku polskim, żeby zachować ten język. To bardzo zależy. Proboszcz jest głową parafii. Wychodzi tak, że wszystko przy proboszczu jest w języku polskim, ale są rzeczy, których dzieci nie rozumieją, no bo oni w domu nie rozmawiają po polsku. Trzeba podchodzić, żeby było i z proboszczem dobrze, i dzieci rozumiały. Wszystkie pacierze są w języku polskim, spowiedź w języku polskim, katechizm, a wszystko, co się da im przetłumaczyć, to się mówi po rosyjsku, w takim języku jak oni rozmawiają. Wszystko, co dzieci zapamiętują na pamięć, to jest w języku polskim.*

133 *Czasem rodzice mi mówią: „dzieci nie mogą tego wymówić, język łamią” ja na to: „proszę iść do proboszcza, ja nie mogę po innemu”. Ja na katechezie przekazuję wiarę, nie przekazuję języka, jeżeliby ja przekazywała język, to nie wiem, czy przekazywałabym wiarę, bo zacząłby się podział. To rodzice przekazują język. Ja na katechezie nie mam prawa tego robić. Dzieci przychodzą z różnych rodzin.*

instruction very strongly, refusing to agree to the introduction of Belarusian at all. Such approaches often entail a belief in the low prestige of Belarusian and lack of understanding of the motivations of the clergy who are convinced that it should be used. In the Grodno region, I did not encounter any priests or catechists whose justifications for using Belarusian were anything other than pragmatic.

Nevertheless, as a result of generational changes, this perception of the mutual relations between prestigious Polish and non-prestigious Belarusian is slowly changing in the consciousness of Grodno's Catholics. The parents currently sending their children to catechisation are a different generation, educated in the years when the Belarusian language was blooming. They therefore have a different attitude towards its usage. A smaller role in the religious education of the young generation is played by their grandparents, in whose age group (above 50) atheisation was very strong.

The results of a survey I conducted in the Catechetical Study Centre in Grodno give an insight into the future of the language of catechesis. The participants were aged between 20 and 51, but most were young people aged under 30. Only 5 of the 27 respondents rated their knowledge of Polish as very good, 10 as good, and the remainder professed to not knowing Polish well. None gave Polish as the most important language of everyday communication, and only 5 people mentioned it at all, but always after Russian or Belarusian. It is also telling that more than half of the survey participants declared participation in the Polish liturgy, but only three of them referred to the language as that of personal prayer. A frequent combination was Polish liturgy and personal prayer in Russian.

A number of factors affect the language of catechesis. In practice, it is not always possible for religious instruction to take place in the language which parents choose for their children, and they do not always take a sufficient knowledge of Polish from home. Moreover, they participate in lessons in groups in which the language spoken by the majority of the children in attendance is used. The language of the catechesis is also influenced by the arbitrary decisions of the parish priest.

In the case of older teenagers, we can refer to a connection between their identity and the language of catechesis. School students preparing for confirmation make the decision themselves about which language they wish to study in. Selection of Polish usually means not only a declaration of Polishness, but also high linguistic competence acquired in Polish courses.

The results of the Catechetical Study Centre survey indicate the possibility that soon not all catechists will know Polish well enough to teach religion in it, and practical concerns will result in its exclusion from this sphere. On the other

hand, the dynamic development of Polish courses in Grodno attended by children, teenagers and adults may change this situation.

In Belarus, Polish has survived particularly as the language of the Catholic religion, and largely thanks to it. It has not always been used in everyday communication, but has always been a language in which prayers have been taught and the truth of the faith passed on to younger generations. Almost in passing, children have also gained at least a fragmentary familiarity with Polish. Disturbing this order and abandoning Polish in the religious education of children must necessarily result in withdrawal of the language, and provides a gloomy outlook for its survival in the Catholic Church in Belarus.

Language of Sermons

According to the definitions of liturgists, the language of homilies,¹³⁴ like biblical texts, belongs to the language of the liturgy.¹³⁵ Yet its status and usage are entirely different. The text of sermons is usually spoken, and its form depends on the linguistic competences of the priest in question. The liturgy of services makes use of formalised texts approved by the Vatican. Issues concerning the language of sermons and language of the liturgy will therefore be discussed separately.

Language issues concerning sermons in the Catholic Church in Belarus mainly involve the linguistic competences of the clergy and their position regarding the use of Polish and Belarusian in church.¹³⁶ The faithful frequently have no say in the language in which a homily is read, since even choosing a Mass held in Polish does not guarantee that the sermon will take place in this language. The priest will often give a sermon in Belarusian or Polish with elements of Russian. Such practices, employed rather frequently in various regions of Belarus, are evaluated most harshly in the Grodno region. Informers from the older generation argue that since they choose a Polish-language Mass, they have the right to expect that all aspects of it will take place in Polish. They interpret the introduction of sermons in Belarusian as tacit and devious denationalisation. They also note that for decades Poles in Belarus learnt Polish in church, and believe that limiting

134 The distinction between the more general term “sermon” (teaching given by a priest during a service) and “homily” (teaching based on the liturgical readings of a given day) is irrelevant here, since it is the language itself, and not the topic of the statement, that we are interested in.

135 Fr Bogusław Nadolski, *Wprowadzenie do liturgii* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2004), p. 280.

136 Czerniak, “Współczesna polszczyzna kazań”.

the scope of its use might result in a decline in the linguistic competences of the Polish youth. Sermons in Belarusian, Russian or “mixed” language can often be heard during children’s services. Priests employ diverse methods to make their sermons comprehensible.

They tend to aim at a language that children can understand. That’s less often Russian, and sometimes Belarusian. Here, among the Franciscans, the priest tries to speak in simple language, even when he’s speaking Polish, it’s simple. Specific problems and uncomplicated content, but slowly moving into a language that’s kind of Belarusian, a little Russian. (GrodIC40/2010F)¹³⁷

The language of sermons given both in Polish and in Belarusian depends on priests’ linguistic competences. There are visible territorial and generational differences here. In Western Belarus, sermons are often given in Polish (although not as often as some churchgoers would like). Their Polish is described as follows by a researcher from Grodno:

The Polish of preaching in the Grodno region is a spoken variant of the cultural dialect of northern Borderlands Polish, the result of deliberate linguistic creativity representing careful Polish free of incidental traces, and the user’s – the priest’s – sense of a correct version of standard Polish. The Polish used by priests was formed in difficult socio-linguistic conditions: intensified isolation from Poland and the strong influence of Russian-language mass culture imposed by all mass media channels.¹³⁸

As we see, Czerniak is referring to the Polish of priests raised in Belarus. In the Grodno region, however, they also have colleagues from Poland speaking the standard variant of the language. Apart from Polish-language sermons in this region and other parts of Belarus, the most common language used is Belarusian. Priests educated in the 1990s and later speak literary Belarusian, and it is also generally this language that they preach in. Older priests may use Belarusian with interferences from Russian. It is often the case that the most important issues as far as the sermon’s composition is concerned are repeated in Russian so that attendees not fluent in Polish or Belarusian can understand them.

137 *Raczej dążą do języka zrozumiałego dla dzieci. Rzadziej jest język rosyjski, czasem białoruski. U nas we Franciszkanach proboszcz stara się mówić takim prostym językiem, nawet jak mówi po polsku, to jest proste. Zadania i niezagmatwana treść, ale powoli przechodzi na język taki białoruski, rosyjski trochę.*

138 Czerniak, “Współczesna polszczyzna kazań”, p. 224.

Language of the Liturgy

The definition of the language of the liturgy given by liturgical textbooks states that “liturgical language is understood as a specific system of symbols that permit communication, create a community and serve the expression of faith.”¹³⁹ I quote this definition, though it is more useful in theological reflections than linguistic ones and refers to a reality known only to believers, in order to show the high prestige and distinct status of the language of the liturgy. The liturgical textbook in question names various ways in which language functions in the liturgy:

- a. Addresses – proclamation – biblical texts, homilies.
- b. Words of prayer – communal songs and chants, prayers of the person leading the liturgy.
- c. Dialogical speech – greetings, wishes, blessings.
- d. Acclamatory speech – amen, anamnestic acclamations, and others.¹⁴⁰

I will focus on language understood as categories b, c and d. Each of these points encompasses fixed language formulas spoken communally, and for complete and deliberate participation in rituals a passive knowledge of the language is sufficient. Whereas use of Latin in the liturgy represented a communicational barrier for most people, in the multilingual communities of Catholics in Belarus, neither often heard texts in Polish nor in Belarusian are incomprehensible. The conflict results from the fact that Polish in Belarus has had the status of sacred language for many years. As Elżbieta Smułkowa writes:

To simplify the description of the problem, we can definitely state that in certain, by no means rare cases, Polish in the liturgy performs the former role of Latin and is only more comprehensible because of the fact that Polish is closer to Belarusian and Russian than Latin is. Sermons and sacraments, e.g. marriages, christenings and atonements, are held and given in Russian or Belarusian.¹⁴¹

The introduction of Belarusian to the liturgy was met by diverse comments, very many of them negative.

People were incensed, but here only at 3 in the parish church [is there a Mass in Belarusian]. And I'd say the Belarusian National Front were very keen for Belarusian speech and language to be heard in churches, whereas the people, the fact that the church survived, they credit, and it survived in Polish, and mostly at home, even in central Eastern Belarus, there too until recently prayers were in Polish. There people couldn't speak it at all, yet

139 Nadolski, *Wprowadzenie do liturgii*, p. 280.

140 Nadolski, *Wprowadzenie do liturgii*, p. 280.

141 Smułkowa, “Rozwój Kościoła katolickiego w republice Białorusi”, pp. 503–504.

prayers were in Polish. But now people always resist, I was once in Lida, and there they say that people always class themselves as Catholics and want to talk in Polish, although they can't speak it. (GrodME65/2010F)¹⁴²

This brief utterance contains several key issues at once. There is a negative appraisal of the use of Belarusian in church, identification of the Belarusian National Front as the initiator of change in the liturgy, a reminder of the inextricable link between Polish and the Catholic Church in Belarus, and emphasis that Polish owed its survival in Belarus to the fact that it was used in churches. In the last sentence, the informer refers to the extremely interesting subject of Catholics with Polish identity who wish to learn Polish, aware as they are of their own deficiencies.

One of the more common motifs in interviewees' statements was mention of the connection between Polish and Catholicism, as well as between Russian and Orthodox Christianity.

As soon as Belarusian was introduced to Mass, people said it was like an Orthodox church, and God forbid we should have such terminology as "gospad" rather than Lord, "Isus" [for Jesus], "amin" [for amen], it would be a disaster, it would be accepted even less, because you could say it all came easily with Belarusian in Mass, not so easily. There wouldn't be obstruction or anything, just a cautious approach. (MinKL54/2010F)

In the Grodno region, where Polish is best preserved, the appearance of Belarusian in churches was the most controversial. The below account was given years later, when emotions had cooled, and yet it clearly demonstrates opposition to the presence of Belarusian in churches.

Well, I don't like it. Best in Polish, I must admit... and our priest has been doing readings in Belarusian for young people for a long time, because my daughter reads too, and the elder one read those readings in Polish too, and when they started the reading in Belarusian, she said maybe it's easier, maybe people will understand better, but people have got used to it now. But at the start they said, "why's he bringing that in, Belarusian?" That we don't

142 *Bardzo negatywnie oburzali się ludzie, no ale u nas tylko o trzeciej w farnym. I to mówię zależało bardzo Białoruskiemu Frontowi Narodowemu, że białoruska mowa, białoruski język powinien brzmieć w kościołach, natomiast ludzie, że kościół przeżył zawdzieńczając i został i przeżył w języku polskim i przeważnie w domu tam nawet w centralnej Białorusi wschodniej, to tam też modlitwy do ostatniego czasu były po polsku. Tam wcale ludzie nie mogli rozmawiać, a pacierz był po polsku. No a teraz tak to jest, że ludzie zawsze stawio opór, ja byłam kiedyś w Lidzie, taka jest taka to wypowiedzi, że kwalifikują ludzi siebie katolikami i chcą mówić po polsku, chociaż nie umieją rozmawiać.*

understand anything, that they'd got used to Polish and nobody wanted it. Here they want everything to be in Polish. I also find it better in Polish than Belarusian.

So perhaps for you and older people yes, but maybe for younger ones...

Well, young ones maybe. Yes. Maybe better for younger ones, but for us, it's better in Polish. Because we've been used to it since childhood. Many of us were taken to Druskininkai and Vilnius every Sunday by our parents. (NovrIM50/2010F)¹⁴³

The above quotation suggests that the main argument for Polish, apart from habit, is the fact that the Belarusian used in the liturgy is not a comprehensible language. The same informer, however, upon being asked about the language used at home, says that her parents spoke plain language, and today she uses a mixture of Belarusian and Polish with her children. In this context, the idea of Belarusian being incomprehensible does not sound convincing, and what the problem essentially boils down to is that for my interlocutors Belarusian in the role of sacred language is unacceptable.

This is confirmed by the words of a student from a town lying on the pre-war Polish-Russian border.

In Rubiazhevichi, there's still a church and there were attempts to translate everything into Belarusian, for everything to be in Belarusian, but the grandmas were categorically opposed, saying that they couldn't learn it in Belarusian now, and now there's just one Mass on Sunday, because there aren't many people, but [it's] in Polish. (RubIP22/2010F)¹⁴⁴

In Eastern Belarus at present, Belarusian is dominant in church, but older people initially chose the Polish liturgy, despite not speaking Polish.

143 *No mnie to nie podoba sie. Najlepiej w polskim przyznam, a nasz też, nasz proboszcz, czytania, już dawno w języku białoruskim czyta dla młodzieży, bo mnie córka też czyta i czytali i starsza czytała czytania te i po polsku, i eta, a, jak zaczęli czytanie, że w języku bielaruskim, że mówi, że może łatwiej, może zrozumieją ludzie lepiej, ale ludzie to teraz już trochę przyzwyczaili się. Ale z początku to tak mówili: dlaczego on to wprowadza, ten bielaruski język? Że my nic nie rozumiemy, że po polsku już przyzwyczaili się i nikt nie chce. Wot u nas chco, żeby wszystko było po polsku. Ja też liczę, że lepiej w polskim języku, czem bielaruskim.*

Ale to może dla Pani i dla starszych tak, a może jednak młodym...

No, młodym może tak. No tak. Młodym może i lepiej, ale, jak nam już tam, to lepiej w polskim języku. Bo tak z dzieciństwa przyzwyczajone takie. No to jest, wiele często do Druziennik i Wilna co niedzieli rodzice nas wozili.

144 *Jeszcze u nas w Rubieżewiczach kościół i tam spróbowano było, żeby wszystko to przetłumaczyć na białoruski, żeby było po białorusku, lecz babcie kategorycznie się sprzeciwiły, powiedziały, że nie mogą teraz nauczyć się w języku białoruskim i u nas teraz jest msza jedna tylko w niedzielę, ponieważ no mało ludzi, ale po polsku.*

We have Mass in Belarusian. That's what they said, if you live in Belarus, of course it's our Belarusian language. We can praise God in Belarusian too. But elderly women certainly mostly sing hymns in Polish. At first I only went to Polish Mass. And then it was easier for us in the village, we come at that time, very early. To Belarusian Mass, that is. I used to know everything by heart too, not from the [service] book, when the priest spoke, I replied in Polish and got used to Polish. But then in Belarusian, and I started to get them all mixed up. (ProdF'Z75/2010F)¹⁴⁵

The interviews show that there are still circles in Belarus which have never accepted the presence of Belarusian in the liturgy, although it has been in place for two decades. We encounter the largest differences in opinions towards use of the language in church among the oldest, older and middle generations. Young people rarely categorically oppose the presence of Belarusian in the liturgy. We find the most opponents of Belarusian in the western part of the country, particularly around Grodno, and fewer in Minsk and the east, where it is usually people who had been raised in the Grodno region protesting this phenomenon. Poles who consider only Polish to be worthy of use in the sacred sphere give a particularly negative verdict on language mixing during Polish Mass, when the liturgy takes place in Polish, but sermons and hymns in Belarusian. Churchgoers see this as having even Mass, which should be in Polish, taken away from them, and as disregard for their right to choose the language used in church. Opponents of Belarusian usually include people of the older and middle generations, who defend the Polishness of the Church in Belarus and regard Belarusian as a low language not worthy of the role of a liturgical language.¹⁴⁶ This group includes people of various levels of education, yet many of them have completed higher education and are or have been involved in the Polish education of children and teenagers. They are frequently people associated with the community of descendants of the petty nobility or intelligentsia, for whom defending Polishness and the mother tongue are of very high priority.

145 *U nas msza pa biełarusku. Uže skazali tak, no szto kto żyviot v Bielarusi, kaniiesznie eta nasz jazyk biełaruskij. My možem prastavlać Boha i pa biełaruski. No na polskom tak bapki navierna piesni nie oczeń to mohut pieć. Ja piervaje vremia chadzila fsio na polskuju mszu, vot. A patom nam zrucznije v dzierievniu v eto vremia pryjeżżajem, a tam oczeń rano my prijedziem. No tak na biełaruskuju [msze]. Rańsze ja tože fsio naizuść znała. Nie pa ksionszkie, kak ksionc havarył atvieczala pa polski i fsio pryuczylasia k polskomu jazyku. No a patom uže pa białaruski i stała putać tuda siuda, tuda siuda.*

146 Charles A. Ferguson, "Diglossia", *Word*, 1959, no. 15, pp. 325–340.

It is also the case, however, that some fervent advocates of using Belarusian in church are people with noble roots from Western Belarus. For a researcher, it is interesting to note the extremely interesting tendencies they exhibit, uniting loyalty to Polishness and the Polish language with acceptance of Belarusian in church as well as of the entire Belarusian culture – both high and folk culture. In the statements of this group, it is not the rivalry between Polish and Belarusian as liturgical languages that is emphasised, but rather the shared Catholic tradition in Belarus.

[...] Polish family and I too admit to these Polish roots. But I work for Belarusian culture. I very much like this country, language, literature. You see, if this country, trampled, tired, having been through so much, right... one likes an exhausted country like this even more than one that has had it good. God chooses a birthplace for us, and it's up to people whether they accept it or not. I admit to Poland, I like Polish literature, what I have from my mum and what's entered me. But that doesn't prevent me from liking everything Belarusian too. You need to know the history to appreciate everything we have, because we had a history, and the language too. (MinKL54/2010F)¹⁴⁷

The informer went on to say the following:

Because language is a gift from the Holy Spirit, and if someone tells me that Belarusian isn't a nice language, then I say listen, you're sinning against the Holy Spirit. (MinKL54/2010F)¹⁴⁸

Views categorically opposed to use of Belarusian were not observed among younger people. The question that thus arises is what other factors result in this language being a worthy and beautiful language of prayer for some, yet unacceptable in this role for others. Analysing the relationship between my interviewees' age and their views, we can conclude that people whose education took place no earlier than 1990–1994 are more likely to accept Belarusian in church. Less significant is whether they were educated to a higher or secondary-school level. What matters is that at the time of the revival of the Belarusian

147 *[...] rodzina polska i ja też przyznaję się do tych polskich korzeni. Ale pracuję na tą kulturę białoruską. Bardzo lubię ten kraj, ten język, literaturę. No proszę pani, jeżeli ten kraj zdeptany, zmęczony, nie wiadomo co przeżył, prawda, lubi się taki kraj umęczony jeszcze więcej niż kraj, który miał bardzo dobrze. Pan Bóg wybiera dla nas miejsce urodzenia i od człowieka zależy, czy to akceptuje, czy nie. Ja przyznaję się do Polski, ja lubię polską literaturę, kulturę, to, co mam od mamy i co weszło we mnie. Ale to mi nie przeszkadza lubić wszystko białoruskie. Trzeba znać historię, żeby docenić to wszystko, co mamy, no, bo mieliśmy historię, i język ten.*

148 *[...] bo jenzyk jest darem Ducha Świętego i jak mi ktoś mówi, że jenzyk białoruski nie jest ładny, to ja mówię, słuchaj, grzeszysz przeciw Duchowi Świętemu.*

language and construction of its prestige, they were subjected to the influences of Belarusian culture and as school pupils or students became familiar with literary Belarusian, which was the language of the then political, cultural and academic elites. Depending on their views, they might use either Polish or Belarusian in their religious lives, but they do not express opinions indicating that they do not consider the Belarusian vernacular as appropriate for the liturgy or prayer. The shift towards Belarusian in church is not an emotional issue for young people studying in Minsk, even though their religious upbringing took place in Polish:

Lots of people learn [Polish] in Grodno, so they prefer to go to the Polish one [Mass]. There aren't many people left in Mińsk, and they try to attend a Polish one. My sister and I go more often, which is why we switched to Belarusian. (MinAS21/2010F)¹⁴⁹

However, the same student is well aware that such views would not be acceptable at home, especially to her grandmother, who was responsible for her religious upbringing.

Do you go to Mass in Belarusian at home?

No, there'd be a scandal. She [my grandmother] would say it's not right – Polish is the mother tongue. For her everything was in Polish, so she doesn't switch to Belarusian. (MinAS21/2010F)¹⁵⁰

Participant observation enables distinguishing one more problem. Although the presence of Polish or Belarusian in the liturgy continues to be an emotional subject for Catholics, for deeply religious people this is of secondary importance. They are interested inasmuch as participation in the liturgy must be “dignified”. One interviewee said that he had avoided Mass in Belarusian for a long time, because although he understood everything, he felt as if he were “mute”, since he did not know the responses to the priest’s words in Belarusian, which hampered his participation in Mass. I did not hear complaints from people heavily involved in religious life about being forcefully “Russified” or “Polonised” through the language of the liturgy. Their attitude confirms the truth they described that the dispute over the liturgical language in the Catholic Church in Belarus is not a

149 *Mnogie uczniacca v Grodna, paetamu ani pradałżajut na polskije chadzić. V Minskie astajocca mała ludziej, i to ani starajucca na polskij chadzić. My s siestroj cziaszczie chodzim, paetamu tak pałuczajecca, szto na biełaruskij pierieszli.*

150 *Niet, był by skandał. Ana [babcia] by skazała, szto tak nielzia, polskij - eta radnoj jazyk. U niejto fsio była na polskam, paetamu ana nie predstavljajet pa-biełaruski.*

religious question, but “...is embroiled [...] in a much broader political context, which makes it all the more the case that it requires restrained deductions.”¹⁵¹

Language of Prayer

For believers, prayer is a conversation with God. In personal praying, people use memorised standard texts – prayers, their own words, or sometimes simply remain silent in the presence of God.¹⁵² Whereas the choice of language of the liturgy is up to the clergy involved, and an individual may only decide not to participate in a service if he or she does not accept the language it is held in, the language of prayer is up to the person praying. However, interviews held among Catholics in Belarus have shown that this is true only in the case of the younger and middle generations. Among older people, other patterns are at work, because prayer for them almost always means formalised texts learnt in early or later childhood. Older people have a series of standard daily prayers including *The Lord's Prayer*, *Hail Mary*, *I Believe in God*, *The Ten Commandments*, *Angel of God*, the Rosary, Chaplets and Litanies, and they also sing the Little Hours. In this way, they express their piety and build their bond with God. This is what their communal and personal praying looks like. They may sometimes reduce the distance when calling out to God to request good health, for example, by using a diminutive (in Belarusian: *Bożeńka, daj mnie zdarouie* meaning “Dear God, grant me health”) and more frequently appeal fondly to the Virgin Mary (in Polish: *Matulu kochana* meaning “Mother dear”). They recite prayers based on formalised texts in the language in which they were assimilated in their childhood. In Eastern Belarus, even today, older people use Polish prayer books published at the turn of the twentieth century. Between the 1930s and 1990s, old missals, prayer books, song books, and old Polish editions of the Bible constituted the only source of texts for prayer and religious knowledge. These were passed on to younger people in families, thus supporting the intergenerational transfer of faith.

Here I have my dad's Bible still, I'll show you. My mum had very old books and we divided them amongst ourselves, and I ended up with the Bible, and my three sisters a prayer book each. I don't read much now, but when winter starts, I read a little [letters], but

151 Elżbieta Smułkowa, “Tożsamość a tolerancja na Białorusi” [in:] *Białoruś i pogranicza. Studia o języku i społeczeństwie* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2002), p. 508.

152 Jan Andrzej Kloczkowski, “Język, którym mówi człowiek religijny”, *Znak*, 1995, no. 12 (487), p. 185.

I can still see them. But the Bible's a keepsake, a souvenir from my mother, that's all.
(ProdFŻ75/2010F)¹⁵³

Old Polish religious publications had a major impact on the survival of Polish religious vocabulary among the population (born in the interwar period) which never used Polish. The same group does not have any expectations of the liturgy being in Polish in church, and yet holds the language in great esteem because they learnt their first prayers in Polish. Dorota Kołakowska describes this phenomenon:

The so-called record, the little service book (sometimes in the form of notebooks with hymns and prayers copied “from people”) – the basis of what is memorised – is therefore a kind of magical legitimisation of prayers. According to my interlocutors, it is not the content of beliefs and ritual practices that determines the content of the service book, but rather its presence constitutes an authorisation for prayer and ritual. We should therefore define the Catholicism of the Belarusian countryside as a “little book religion” – a phenomenon from the point where written and verbal culture meet.¹⁵⁴

As a sidenote to these considerations, it is worth mentioning that use of Polish is very often limited to the religious sphere, and appears only in individual words in a Belarusian or Russian text, as well as in common phrases. This is the case in Western Belarus in circles in which the primary language is Belarusian or Russian, as well as in Eastern Belarus. An example is the utterance from a resident of Prodvino near Bobruisk (Eastern Belarus) quoted above, where Polish lexemes are interwoven into a Russian text – “*staryje ksionżeczki I a trom siostram toże pa malitieńniku*”, as well as in another quotation from the same town: “*čep'er z'etki priim'ajut p'eršu kam'uńju. Kak pr'szłos'a, szto kšonc prijexał, niko nie idzot*”. The Polish names of church services also appear in utterances spoken in Russian or Belarusian, such as *gorzkie żale* (Lenten Lamentations), *różaniec* (the Rosary), *droga krzyżowa* (Way of the Cross), or the sacraments – *chrzest* (christening), *spowiedź* (confession), etc. Alongside these examples of specific linguistic behaviours, in church one also very often hears the greeting *Szczęść Boże*

153 *Vot u mienia papina biblija jeszczu astalaś, vam pakažu. U mamy byli staryje, staryje ksionżeczki, dak my razdzielili mieźdu saboj i mnie papała eta biblija, a trom siostram toże pa malitvienniku. I vot ja zimoj, cipier ja mała czytaju, a zimoj, kak naczynajecca dyk ja czytaju. [bukvy] maleńkije, no paka ja paka vižu, no paniatnaja, eta paniatnaja takaja biblija, mamina, fsio.*

154 Dorota Osiecka, “Niechaj rozbiera się Pan Bóg sam, czyli o języku sacrum na Grodzieńszczyźnie”, in: *Konstrukcje i destrukcje tożsamości. Wokół religii i jej języka*, eds Ewa Golachowska, Anna Zielińska (Warszawa: Sławistyczny Ośrodek Wydawniczy, 2011), p. 185.

(or “Godspeed”) and *Niech będzie pochwalony* (“Praise be”), *Z Bogiem* (“God be with you”) etc., before the conversation proceeds in Russian, or sometimes in Belarusian among the younger generation. A custom belonging to the sphere of linguistic politeness is speaking Polish (where capability permits) in church and the adjacent cemetery. This means, for example, that neighbours going to church together will speak in Russian or plain speech, before switching to Polish in church, *usiąść pani Bielenica* (“please sit, Mrs Bielenica”), *proszę podać książeczkę* (“hand me the book, please”) and then bidding each other farewell in the same language after leaving the building. Such customs are documented by the below statement:

When we adults meet next to the church, this used to be all people we knew from the family area, from various villages met and everyone spoke Polish. And in the countryside they spoke in different ways, the language wasn't Belarusian or anything else. (LidMK76/2010F)¹⁵⁵

The situations described above are at present characteristic only of the older generation, because young Catholics are proficient in Belarusian religious terminology.

Personal prayer is such an intimate matter that it is not always possible to persuade informers to talk about it. It seems, however, that regardless of whether they live in Eastern or Western Belarus, the older generation are accustomed to praying in Polish. The main reason for this is that transmission of religion in families took place in Polish. The below accounts are from Eastern Belarus, and refer to the interwar period:

Did your mum teach you to pray?
She did, we still pray.

In what language?
Polish, Polish. And I only just remembered, I started to learn to read, I wanted to in Polish and to pray... we had prayer books, I took one. I knew the Lord's Prayer, and then, to read letters, I learnt from the prayer book. That's how I learnt to read. I read a lot, maybe not with a correct accent, but I read, I read only the prayer book. I often don't understand handwriting, and I'd like to ask you, a prayer my mum taught us, but not all the words and it's not clear. (ProdFZ75/2010F)¹⁵⁶

155 *Jak my już dorośli spotkamy sie koło kościoła, to było kiedyś same znajomstwa tam z rodzinnych okolic, z innych miejscowości spotykali sie i wszyscy rozmawiali po polsku. A tak na wsi rozmaicie rozmawiali, taki język był ni to białaruski, ni to jaki.*

156 *A mama uczyła was malicca?*

Uczyła, uczyła, fsio vriemia my malimsia.

Na kakom jazykie?

Na polskam, na polskam. I vot ja toko ciepier zapomnila ja naczala tava uczyć czytać, pa polski chaciela, i s ecich malitf... ja... malitvienniki byli u nas, ja brala malitviennik.

Prayers were in Polish, but we spoke Belarusian at home and school was Belarusian. Four, then three, I completed seven years of school. My grandmother died. She definitely spoke Polish, I don't remember that, but she spoke Polish. My grandfather died even earlier, and grandmother spoke to her daughter. (LukAH80/2010F)¹⁵⁷

We can cite more similar stories told by people who do not speak Polish:

My mum spoke Polish and my father spoke Polish normally. The prayers stuck in the mind, and that was all from childhood.

What about your parents, what language did they speak to each other?

Polish, Belarusian, and Russian later on. I just remember conversations in Russian. My mum taught me the simplest prayers. (ChavGF66/2011M)¹⁵⁸

Exceptionally in Eastern Belarus, we come across accounts stating that teaching children prayers in the interwar period, when the informers' childhood took place, was perceived as a threat to security:

Which language did you pray in?

Belarusian.

And how did your mother teach you?

No, you know what, Mum didn't teach us anything. And I don't hold that against us. The poor thing was scared, she taught us absolutely nothing. She prayed, because she had a church service book in Lithuanian. She'd sit and read something to herself, but she couldn't read to the children or teach anything. I don't know if she was scared or something [else]. But if it had been the case, you know, of not being scared to talk about God, she would've taught us. But as it was, she sat and prayed quietly in secret, and nothing else. When the church here opened, I prayed, yes. And I told everyone that I was going and learning the

Ojczy nasz ja to znała, a patom szto by znać bukvy, ja pa malitvienniku uczyła. I tak ja vyuczyla czytać. Ja niemnoho czytaju, no možet i niepravilnaje udareńje, no czytaju toko pa malitvienniku. A rukoj szto pisano, ja nie fsio znaju... no... no ji ciepier u mienia, vot ja i chaciela i sprasić u vas, ta malitva katoraja mama nauczyła... no slava niepoňnyje niejasnyje i nieoravilnyje... vot.

157 *Malitvy byli u nas na polskom jazykie, apszczalisia na białaruskom i szkoła była [bielaruskaja] czetyrie a patom [tri], siem ja zakonczyła, siem [kłasof]. Babuszka ana umierła. Ana havaryła pa polski kaniesznie, no ja etaha nie pomniu, no ana razhavarywała pa polski, a dzieduszka vaapszczie rana umier, vot, a babuszka razhavarywała z etaj doczkaj svajej [...]*

158 *Mać pa polski havaryła i aciec narmalna razhavarywał pa-polski. Malitvy astalisia v pamiaci i fsio z dziectva.*

A raditieli drug s drugam kak razgavarivali?

I na polskom havaryli, na bielaukam i na ruskam pašlednieje vriemnia uže Ja pomniu tolko rasijskije razhavory i fsio. [Mać] uczyła samyj prastyje malitvy.

Lord's Prayer, but certainly for a month I couldn't remember anything, to tell the truth.
(FashchMN78/2011F)¹⁵⁹

Fortunately, young people can no longer recall such dramatic memories. Their reflections tend rather to apply to the communicative nature of prayer, and the fact that it is not about the beauty of the language, but its comprehensibility.

I think it should be a language that's not necessarily beautiful, but in which you can express your thoughts more easily. Polish is very beautiful, but it's better to pray in a language you know. It's easier in Belarusian, and it's more familiar. We hear it very often. Perhaps if I talked to someone in Polish, it wouldn't become secondary. (MinAS21/2010F)¹⁶⁰

It is sometimes the case that young people stick with prayers in Polish, despite using Belarusian in their daily lives.

And before I even went to school, I was living with my grandma and she taught me the prayers in Polish, before I could even read in Belarusian, that's why now I always go to Polish Mass, because I find it hard to translate it into Belarusian.

What about when you're praying on your own to God, what then: Polish or Belarusian? *Polish, if you're asking for something, you often ask... in Polish, then. If it's something you [ask] for, for example afterwards in church, they often say that you ask, then in Polish, even automatically, you ask.* (RubIP22/2011F)¹⁶¹

159 Na kakom jazykie vy maliliś?

Na bielaruskim.

A mama kak uczyła?

Niet, vy znajecie, mama nas vapszcze nie uczyła niczemu. I toże ni abidy nikakoj na mamu i niczevo. Ana bajalasia biedna, ana nas niczego nie uczyła, apsalutna niczevo. Sama ana malilasia, patamu szto u niej była i kniha litofskaja. Ana siadziat, czitajet tam szto-ta, nu szto by ana dzieciom szto-nibuć uczyła kavo-ta, niet. Nie znaju ili ana bajalasia, ili szto. A tada jeśli by szto było, kak etava, znajecie, tak szto p nie bajalasia Boha fspaminać, dak eta ana i szto-nibuć możet być i uczyła by nas. A tak ana sidziela svajim cichonieczka, malilasa da i nikakich bolsze. Ja uže, kada atkryłsa kaścioł u nas malilasa da, da i fsmen havaru, jak ja czadziła i uczyłasa uojcze nasz, navierna miesiac, nie mahła niczevo zapomnić, etava, czesna havaru vam.

160 Ja dumaju, szto eta dołžen być jazyk, na katoram lechczcie vyrazić svai mysli, nie abiazatielna krasivij. Polskij oczień krasivij jazyk, no jeśli ciazelo, luczszce (molitsia) na tom jazykie, katorij ty znajesz. Na bielaruskam lechczcie, i on fsio-taki bliže. My jevo cziaszczcie słyszim. Możet być, jeśli razgavarivała by s kiem-nibuć na polskam, to on ataszol by na ftaroj plan.

161 Bywa, że młodzi trwają przy modlitwach w języku polskim, chociaż na co dzień posługują się językiem białoruskim. No i jeszcze nie chodziłam do szkoły, mieszkałam u babci i ona nauczyła mnie tych pacierzy w języku polskim, kiedy jeszcze nie umiałam czytać po białorusku, dlatego teraz zawsze chodzę na polskie mszy, ponieważ ciężko mi jest na język białoruski to przetłumaczyć.

A different position is represented by a man several years older, whose religious upbringing was also provided by his grandmother, who taught him Polish prayers. This informer, however, stresses his multilingualism, present also in prayer:

I can choose. I change it, praying variously. For example I've got used to Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, I Believe in God in Polish, but I know them in three languages and it's good to be able to pray in three languages, it's like three prayers, for example we say the Rosary and it starts automatically, I switch off, and for a change, I say one mystery in Belarusian, one in Russian, one in Polish. It doesn't make any difference to God what your passport says.¹⁶² (GrodKL25/2010M)¹⁶³

Yet other accounts refer to changing from Polish to Belarusian in prayer, emphasising the fact that Polish is the language the speaker knows less well.

In fact, I recently switched to Belarusian in prayer, and I learnt quite fast, but my grandmother, grandfather, father and mother used typical prayers in Polish. I think the prayers are ninety-percent clear. Of course, some people don't understand, but they just treat it like people who used to pray in Latin. Because prayers are not simple words, and you can understand them variously. And a woman from Brest stressed it and agreed with me that it is much better to pray in Belarusian than in Latin. In my opinion, of course, it's a church matter. In Vitebsk and Minsk you can easily pray in Belarusian, and people speak Belarusian. I went to Minsk, and people also go to meetings there and participate in various communities. Not everyone, but they use Belarusian among themselves. (GrodJW35/2009M)¹⁶⁴

A kiedy modlisz się sama przed Panem Bogiem, to jak: po polsku czy białorusku? Po polsku, jeśli prosisz coś od siebie, często prosisz o to... to po polsku. Jeżeli coś od siebie na przykład potem w kościele, często mówią, że prosisz to, to po polsku i tak nawet automatycznie, że nu, prosi się.

- 162 The subject of the passport one holds, as a lasting indication of national affiliation, appears relatively frequently in the interviews.
- 163 *Mogę wybierać. Dla odmiany różnie się modłę. Na przykład przyzwyczaiłem się Ojczy nasz, Zdrowaś Mario, Chwała Ojcu, Wierzę w Boga po polsku, lecz znam to na trzech językach i to jest dobre, że można modlić się w trzech językach, to tak jakby trzy modlitwy, na przykład mówimy różaniec i to już się zaczyna tak automatycznie, wyłączam się, a żeby zmienić, mówię jedną tajemnicę po białorusku, jedną po rosyjsku, następną po polsku. Dla Pana Boga to żadna różnica wpis w paszporcie.*
- 164 *Ja tolki nie tak daŭno pierajszou na bielaruskija malitvy na bielaruskaj movie, pry czym vyuczuy (ich) davoli chutka, a zaŭsiody i bapcia maja, i dziadula, i mama, i tata vykarystouvajuc standartnyja typovyja malitvy na polskaj movie. Malitvy, ja dumaju, dzievianosta pracentau zrazumiela, to jeść viadoma, szto niekatoryja nie zrazumiela, ale ja prosta da hetaha staŭlusia tak, jak ludzi raniej malilisia na łacinskaj movie. Tamu szto malitva - heta nie prosta slova, nie prosta razumiennie, a moža trozski inaksz.*

It appears that in the 1990s the burden of religious education was transferred from parents to the Church, where religion lessons take place. Very occasionally, the first prayers are taught by a grandmother, and very rarely by the parents. Polish in the sphere of religion persisted for decades, because in spite of all the external difficulties with cultivating religious practices (or perhaps, paradoxically, thanks to them), prayers in Polish continued to be passed on within the family. In contemporary young families, this tradition is absent, for two main reasons. The first concerns the parents. The generation of today's forty-somethings is heavily atheised, while younger parents often themselves use Belarusian in prayer. The second reason is that since the early 1990s and the restoration of religious freedoms, when religious instruction commenced at churches, parents began to send their children for catechisation, which replaced religious education at home. As a result, children start learning prayers quite late, and if this happens in catechesis, there is a high likelihood that they learn them in Belarusian. These observations are corroborated by the words of a priest working in Western Belarus.

Ninety percent of children begin learning prayer in catechesis at the age of six or seven. The generation of grandmas who identify with the Polish-speaking Church is slowly disappearing. The parents of today's first years, as you have noticed, would often need adults' catechesis themselves. Children no longer have any contact with Polish. For some children, the Belarusian language is also a problem. (SviBM44/2012)¹⁶⁵

Paradoxically, the religious freedoms enjoyed by Catholics in Belarus after years of persecution of the Church may have contributed to the withdrawal of Polish from the sacred sphere in the younger generation. Parents unsure of their own religious knowledge entrusted the education of their children to catechists. A side effect of the interrupted religious transmission in the family is disruption in the transfer of the previous language of the sacred sphere – Polish.

Voš žanczyna z Bresta, i jana patkresliła, zhadzilasja sa mnoj, szto na biełaruskaj movie znacznja lepsz malitvy, czym na łacinskaj. Na moj pohlat, kaniesznie, heta sprawa kascioła. U Viciepsku, Minsku wielmi dobra molacca na biełaruskaj movie, i ludzi razmaŭlajuć na biełaruskaj movie. Voš ja byŭ u Minsku, akramia taho, szto jany molacca, jany chodzjać jaszczje va ŭsiakija hurtki, ŭ spulnoty, i pamisz saboj, nie ŭsie, ale vykarystouŭvajuć biełaruskuju movu.

165 *Dziewięćdziesiąt procent dzieci rozpoczynają naukę modlitwy na katechezie w wieku sześciu czy siedmiu lat. Powoli odchodzi pokolenie babć, które identyfikują się z polskojęzycznym Kościołem. Rodzice dzisiejszych pierwszoklasistów często sami jak Pani zauważyła, potrzebowałyby katechezy dorosłych. Dzieci już nie mają kontaktu z językiem polskim. Jest część dzieci, dla których problemem jest również język białoruski.*

The Function of Russian

It is impossible to describe the sociolinguistic situation of Belarus without mentioning the role of Russian in the multilingual society. Issues related to Russian did not appear in the chapter on the multilingual sacred sphere. Does this mean that this language is never heard in Catholic churches in Belarus?

It is true that Russian is not a language of the liturgy and not used for creating the texts of sacred hymns. It does often appear, however, as an auxiliary language in which parish announcements are made. It is also sometimes used in Polish- or Belarusian-language sermons, which might indicate the low linguistic competence of the priest, unable to cope fully with the language in question. The presence of Russian may be justified by the fact that the words are directed at children. One technique that I heard on a number of occasions was reinforcement of the most important points of a sermon through repetition in Russian. This is also often the language used in instructions to altar servers learning their role. All these examples illustrate that the strength of Russian is its communicativeness and widespread comprehensibility. Once everything is complete in the liturgy of Holy Mass, one can leave aside the liturgical Belarusian or Polish for a moment and read announcements out in Russian, before blessings are given in Polish or Belarusian a moment later.

The second sphere with the marked presence of Russian is the personal prayer of young people. Many of them pointed to Russian as the language of spontaneous prayer, improvised before God; prayer in which one talks about the most important things in the language they find easiest.

My fieldwork carried out in 2009–2012 provided insight into the complicated language situation in the Catholic Church in Belarus. Polish and Belarusian coexist alongside one another. Polish can be observed to be diminishing in the sacred sphere. In Western Belarus, this is a slow process, but observation of the linguistic preferences of the young generation leaves no doubt that the role of Polish in the Church will be marginalised further. In Eastern Belarus, the Belarusian language is now dominant in Catholic churches, although Polish may also sometimes be heard. The Catholic Church in multilingual Belarus faces the difficult task of allowing all its adherents to participate in a liturgy that will fully correspond to their expectations regarding language.

This chapter could end with a table showing the usage of the various languages in sacred “microspheres”. However, such a table would permanently link specific languages to spheres of usage, whereas my research has shown that

Catholics in Belarus can call upon the tradition of Polish Catholicism as well as a variant with a Belarusian linguistic countenance. Both when speaking to God in Polish and when they address Him in Belarusian, they draw from the extensive legacy of Catholicism that developed at a meeting point of cultures and languages.

3 The National Identity of Catholics in Belarus at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century

The question I asked myself at the beginning of the research was “Will the change in the language of the sacred sphere of Catholics in Belarus have an impact on their national identification?” The starting point was the situation described by anthropologists in the late twentieth century, whereby Catholics identified with Polishness because they always prayed in Polish and participated in the liturgy in this language. Catholicism functioned as the criterion of socio-cultural identification in a multilingual and multi-ethnic society, bearing not only religious content, but for many people also patriotic. Nevertheless, Polish was seldom the primary language for Catholics, and was often used only in the religious sphere. According to anthropologists, the words “Pole” and “Catholic” as well as the “Polish faith” and “Catholic faith” were frequently treated as synonyms. The concepts “Orthodox Christianity” – “Russian faith” and “Russian language” – “Orthodox language” operated in a similar symmetric synonymy. As an emphatic example showing that this type of thinking continues to prevail among the older generation, in one statement I recorded in 2011, an informer referred to the priest leading a church service in “the Orthodox language”. Younger people I interviewed between 2009 and 2012 also confirmed that they see religious divisions as continuing to overlap with national ones.

What decides if somebody is Polish today – language or religion?

Religion, religion, if someone is a Catholic, they're probably a Pole. For example, I was in charge of a school, and only one girl said she was Ukrainian. One Belarusian, Orthodox, but her mum would go to church, and so they go and learn the language, and everyone says they are of Polish origins.

And a Belarusian Catholic?

Well, that's kind of starting now, but still Belarusian rather means Orthodox.
(GrodNR30/2009F)¹⁶⁶

166 Co współcześnie decyduje o byciu Polakiem, język czy religia?

Religia, religia, jak ktoś jest katolikiem, to prawdopodobnie jest Polakiem. Na przykład prowadziłam szkołę i tylko jedna dziewczyna mówiła, że jest Ukrainką. Jeden Białorusin, prawosławny, ale mama chodziła do kościoła i tak chodzi i uczą się tego języka, a tak każdy mówi, że Polak z pochodzenia.

A katolik Białorusin?

No, trochę teraz zaczyna tak być, ale raczej jak Białorusin, to prawosławny.

In the context of such statements, one might ask how the term “Pole” should be understood in Belarus, and what factors might construct Polish identity. Elżbieta Smułkowa and Anna Engelking have both examined this subject at length.¹⁶⁷ In particular, they highlighted the different meaning of the word “Pole” among the Catholic population in Belarus and in the secondary literature on the subject. Writing about “Poles” and “Polishness” in the senses functioning in Poland has resulted in many disagreements; for the multitude of Catholics in Belarus, “Pole” has been (and still is) solely a description of religious identification. As Smułkowa notes, “in Belarus, calling Catholicism ‘the Polish faith’ and Orthodox Christianity ‘Russian’ has gone beyond popular consciousness. It is so deeply entrenched that, among educated people, it has grown into the well-known stereotype of the ‘Pole-Catholic’ and ‘Belarusian-Orthodox.’ Today’s religious situation confounds this stereotype”.¹⁶⁸ The author goes on to identify four groups about whom the term “Pole” is used in Belarus. The first is the rural Catholic population that uses Belarusian on an everyday basis and Polish in the sacred sphere. The second encompasses the residents of former noble districts with Polish national identity, regarded as Poles by the local population. On the whole, the nobility and their descendants (except Polesye, inhabited by Orthodox Christian nobility) are Catholics, and the home language of the older generation is very often Polish. The third group derive from the Polish settlers who arrived in the Lepiel District from central Poland during the Stolypin land reform. A separate group includes the people living in towns that belonged to the Byelorussian Soviet Social Republic before September 1939. They very often come from mixed families, or start their own such families, yet the memory of their Polish roots endures in their consciousness and acts as a basis for the construction of Polish identity. In the aforementioned article, Smułkowa emphasises that Catholicism is important as a component of identity for all the groups, yet “it is not always religious belief and practices that are important, but the inherited or chosen sense of belonging to a specific cultural group or community. The best examples of this might be President Alexander Lukashenko’s famous saying *ja prawosławnyj ateist* [‘I am an Orthodox atheist’], as well as the aforementioned identification

167 Engelking, “Jak katolik to Polak”; Engelking, “Nacje to znaczy grupy religijne”; Anna Engelking, “Etnograf wobec stereotypu ‘Polaka z Kresów’. Z przemyśleń w 10-lecie badań terenowych na Grodzieńszczyźnie”, in: Kuczyński, Michalska (eds), *Kultura i świadomość etniczna Polaków* (Wrocław: Uniwersytet Wrocławski, Katedra Etnologii i Antropologii Kulturowej, 2004), pp. 231–240; Smułkowa, “O wieloznaczności pojęcia ‘Polak’”, pp. 554–564.

168 Smułkowa, “O wieloznaczności pojęcia ‘Polak’”, p. 554.

of Catholicism with Polishness”.¹⁶⁹ In a recent book, Engelking notes a distinction in the “lower-case” usage of adjectives among residents of Belarusian villages; nationalities (which grammatically should be written in the upper case in Polish) are used interchangeably with religious identification (which would be written in lower case in Polish): “when they call someone *polish* or *russian* or *belarusian*, they are mostly referring to [...] synonyms of the terms *catholic* and *orthodox* [...] analogously with other names of adherents (confessionyms) from the interlocutors’ lexicon, such as *baptist*, *muslim*, or *jew*”.¹⁷⁰

My research from 2009 to 2012 encompassed Catholics with varying national identification, since my starting point was the participants’ religion, rather than their nationality. It was for this reason too that the majority were profoundly religious people with a very serious approach to matters of faith. Questions of the choice of language of the liturgy, prayer, and the dependence of these choices on national identity were the subject of the in-depth interviews. My interlocutors were often young people. These individuals deserve attention, as their statements have never been described at length, unlike the often analysed identity and language of the older generation of Catholics in Belarus. It is important to examine the identity of the younger generation because, owing to the entirely different social conditions in which they grew up and which shaped their attitudes, the identity of people born from the early 1970s onwards is constructed differently from that of older people. Statistics show an intensive process of Belarusianisation (the two most recent censuses have indicated that the number of Poles in Belarus has dropped by a quarter). As a result, it is worth considering what causes these changes and what it is that constructs Polish or Belarusian identity in the middle and younger generation of Catholics, what role the family, local community, and contacts with Poland play in maintaining this identity, and what are the contemporary transformations in the model of religiosity.

What my interviewees had in common was active engagement in the life of the Belarusian Church, as well as the fact that their childhood or early youth (or their education as a whole) occurred in the first half of the 1990s – a breakthrough period for the Catholic Church in Belarus as well as for the Belarusian language (although initiation to the faith – christening and the First Holy Communion – had taken place during the Soviet period).

169 Ibid., p. 558.

170 Anna Engelking, *Kołchoźnicy. Antropologiczne studium tożsamości wsi białoruskiej przełomu XX i XXI wieku. Monografie Fundacji na rzecz Nauki Polskiej* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo UMK, 2012), p. 34.

At this time, the following events took place in the Catholic Church in Belarus: in July 1989, the Holy See appointed Bishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz as the apostolic administrator of the diocese of Minsk for Catholics in Belarus; in September 1990, the Major Seminary in Grodno was opened; on 5 July 1992, the metropolitan commission for translation of liturgical texts and religious literature into Belarusian was founded, thanks to which a large number of liturgical texts and other materials were prepared for publication. Furthermore, the Conference of Catholic Bishops of Belarus was founded, meeting for the first time on 11 February 1990. Its first president was Cardinal Kazimierz Świątek.¹⁷¹ This list of events demonstrates the normalisation of the situation of the Church and the reconstruction of its structures in the country. At the same time, as we have seen, the beginning of the 1990s marked a brief period of revival of Belarusian as state language, and the high prestige it enjoyed as a result. It was in these conditions that my informers grew up.

The next characteristic they had in common was that they had each spent a considerable amount of time in Poland. There were various reasons for these stays. Some had studied in Poland, while others had gone there for work. They had spent between one and several years there, and often continue to divide their time between Belarus and Poland, working in the latter while providing care for their families in the former.

Yet my interviewees' most characteristic feature was their active faith and close relationship with the Belarusian Catholic Church. This was where the similarities ended, as each had his or her own path to the faith. Some were from peasant families (their parents' generation were raised in the countryside), where the Catholic religion often dictated Polish national identity. Others had grown up in mixed, often religiously indifferent families, and their own religiosity had been shaped by various factors in their early youth. I also met the descendants of noble families, in which ardent Catholicism and Polishness continue today to be passed on to children.

Analysis of the discussions on the subject of Catholics' identity in Belarus in the early twenty-first century should begin with a brief theoretical reflection on the definition of identity – such a common term in the contemporary humanities. Antonina Kłoskowska writes that “identity should be understood in procedural terms, like the personality or self according to Mead. For identity is a subjective, self-reflexive aspect of the personality”¹⁷²; “Human individuals are placed,

171 Smułkowa, “Rozwój Kościoła katolickiego w republice Białorusi”, pp. 501–508.

172 Antonina Kłoskowska, *Kultury narodowe u korzeni* (Warszawa: PWN, 1996), p. 104.

or locate themselves, within diverse relations, without completely exhausting any of them, and drawing certain elements of self-definition from each of them”.¹⁷³ In her article “Wokół poczucia tożsamości mieszkańców Białorusi” [The Problem of the Sense of Identity of the Inhabitants of Belarus], Elżbieta Smułkowa defines identity as a set of “factors that are important from the perspective of the total self-identification of an individual and group and their definition by others”.¹⁷⁴ Both Kłoskowska and Smułkowa emphasise the fact that the identity of an individual is a complex, multidimensional concept that may evolve.

Małgorzata Melchior draws attention to another aspect, taking the perspective of the researcher and the research subject into account, and proposing a terminological distinction into *identity* and *sense of identity*:

When we speak [...] of the identity of an individual (as well as group), we usually have in mind, as it were, the “objective”, “objectivised”, or “external” meaning, i.e.: a certain way of perceiving an individual (or group) by others, which constitutes an attempt to answer the question “who are they?” The term “the sense of identity of an individual” (but not group), meanwhile, is used to refer to the subjective way in which an individual perceives himself or herself when attempting to answer the question “who am I?” These two aspects of the issue may be expressed as an opposition, e.g. an individual’s internal and external identity, subjective and objective, assigned by the social environment and experienced (or constructed) by the individual him- or herself.¹⁷⁵

It is worth prefacing the statements of my interviewees with a quotation from an article by Anna Engelking:

[...] my interviewees’ sense of Polishness is an extremely complicated phenomenon, made up of diverse elements, dynamic, and subject to the effects of both traditional mental frameworks with feudal roots and the contemporary cultural and political conditions of a post-Soviet society and state. It is thus far removed from the popular stereotype of “Poles from the Eastern Borderlands”, which sees them as our separated compatriots, yearning for the homeland and finding solace in piously cultivated Polish culture and in a profound attachment to the Polish language and the Catholic faith. At the same time, it is a phenomenon that eludes syntheses and generalisations; it is most

173 Ibid., p. 103.

174 Elżbieta Smułkowa, “Wokół poczucia tożsamości mieszkańców Białorusi”, in: Smułkowa, *Białoruś i pogranicza*, p. 521.

175 Małgorzata Melchior, *Spoleczna tożsamość jednostki (w świetle wywiadów z Polakami pochodzenia żydowskiego urodzonymi w latach 1944–1955)* (Warszawa: Uniwersytet Warszawski, Instytut Stosowanych Nauk Społecznych, 1990), p. 24.

adequately spoken of in individual terms, from the perspective rather of specifics and details than a society-wide one with its statistical data and the results of questionnaires.¹⁷⁶

The statements quoted below display different understandings of Polishness: a traditional one – referencing the parents’ and grandparents’ Polish roots; and a more recent one – involving reflection on the complexity of one’s own situation. For the older generation, being Polish resulted from being born into a Catholic family, baptism in the Catholic Church, and the perpetuated custom of praying in Polish. Young people also fulfil all these criteria, but they themselves call their own Polishness into question. The interviews with younger people also contain references to the criterion of participation in Polish culture, familiarity with Polish history, and the clear motif of a strong connection with the region of Belarus in which they grew up, and which functions as their “small homeland”. Many statements referred to a two-tier identity – a sense of belonging to the local community, which they call Belarusian, and loyalty to Poland. Affiliation to their place of birth is marked very strongly in the quoted statements:

I’m local. I’m Polish and I’m from Belarus. (GrodKS38/2010M)¹⁷⁷

One young man said:

I counted myself as Polish, because everyone’s Polish on my dad’s side. (GrodAB26/2009M)¹⁷⁸

As I know the family of this interviewee well, I can add that it is a Catholic family of peasant roots that does not use Polish outside of the religious sphere. The grown-up children learned their Polish through active participation in the life of the Grodno Church as well as independent language learning.

Another has the following to say about his family:

I grew up in Grodno, my family wasn’t all Catholic, my father was a Catholic, with a Polish passport, my mother comes from an Orthodox family and isn’t a churchgoer. My grandmother had a big influence [on us]. We went to her place for the summer. She has a Polish passport and an entire Polish family, she’s a true believer. It was her doing that we had our First Communion and were christened. (GrodKJ26/2010M)¹⁷⁹

176 Anna Engelking, “Etnograf wobec stereotypu ‘Polaka z Kresów’. Z przemysłów w 10-lecie badań terenowych na Grodzieńszczyźnie”, in: Kuczyński, Michalska (eds), *Kultura i świadomość etniczna Polaków*, pp. 232–233.

177 *Jestem miejscowy. Jestem Polakiem i jestem z Białorusi.*

178 *Liczyłem się Polakiem, bo z taty korzenia wszyscy Polacy.*

179 *Wyrosłem w Grodnie, rodzina moja nie była cała katolicka, mój ojciec był katolikiem, w paszporcie Polak, matka pochodzi z rodziny prawosławnej, niepraktykująca. Duży wpływ miała moja babcia. Na lato byliśmy u babci. Ona w paszporcie ma Polka i cała*

The family home and the environment in which they grew up gave them a sense inherited from their parents and grandparents of being Poles and Catholics. However, their independent choices are usually associated with confrontation with the new setting they encounter during their studies or work. For many, such a confrontation took place in Poland, and for others in Minsk or another large city in Belarus. Without any suggestions from the interviewer, the answer to the question about their nationality often came in response to the situation they had encountered in Poland.

I felt Polish, I knew the Polish culture and language, but I didn't understand a lot of things. I'm supposedly Polish, but there are many things I don't understand, the spirit here was completely different. I didn't need a lot of time to get used to it, although you need a little time. I felt strange, and understood the language a bit, but I felt slightly depreciated. (GrodAB26/2009M)¹⁸⁰

For people speaking Polish at home and cultivating Polish traditions, going to Poland to study often entailed trauma and disappointment.

In the preparatory courses we were all together, and then in the first year at university I was alone, nobody in the group knew that I was from Grodno, only one girl was friendly with me, and later it came out during lessons, because the lecturer said "I understand that you might make mistakes, because you didn't go to Polish school, you're from there", and then half the group didn't say hello to me any more. And then I always had to prove I wasn't different or worse. That was 1991. But later too, when I was back in Grodno after university, a couple of students complained that one girl even in Warsaw said that Poles' attitude towards her was unbearable, because for them, for those who live there, citizens, students, we're Russkies, and no matter how you dress it up, you'll always be a Russki. (GrodIC40/2010F)¹⁸¹

rodzina polska, ona jest prawdziwy człowiek wierzący. Dzięki niej byliśmy u Komunii i byliśmy ochrzczeni.

- 180 *Czułem się Polakiem, znałem kulturę i język polski, ale wielu rzeczy nie rozumiałem. Niby jestem Polakiem, ale wielu spraw nie rozumiem, tutaj ten duch był zupełnie inny. Nie trzeba by mi było dużo czasu, żeby się przyzwyczaić, chociaż trochę czasu potrzeba. Dziwnie się czułem i trochę języka znałem, ale się czułem trochę pomniejszony.*
- 181 *Na zerówce to byliśmy wszyscy razem, a na studiach na pierwszym roku byłam sama, w grupie nikt nie wiedział, że jestem z Grodna i tylko jedna dziewczyna ze mną kolegowiała się i później wyjaśniło się to w trakcie zajęć, bo wykładowca powiedział, „ja rozumiem, że pani może popełnić jakieś błędy, bo nie kończyła szkoły polskiej, bo jest stamtąd”, to już połowa grupy się ze mną nie witała. I już zawsze trzeba było udowadniać, że nie jesteś jakaś inna czy gorsza. To był 1991 rok. Ale później też, jak już byłam tu w Grodnie po studiach, to parę studentów narzekało, jedna dziewczyna nawet w Warszawie mówiła, że jest nie do zniesienia stosunek do niej ze strony Polaków, bo dla nich, dla tych, co*

This quotation suggests that the author was not “outed” either by language or by her appearance or material situation, but rather by a lecturer’s direct comment. The disappointment at the situation in Poland is all the greater, the more resentments are associated with Polish origin in Belarus.

[...] I was at school, I felt, let’s say, a certain limitation because of being Polish, because I’m “Przeczką”,¹⁸² and kind of felt worse, and when I went to Poland, on the other hand, it turned out I was different there too. Here they treated me as an outsider, but in Poland I was an outsider too, and that hurt, but I realised that there are bad people, and people are different. And that doesn’t depend on the country. I’d like to live in Poland, and perhaps because I’m more self-aware now, maybe more confident, and I wouldn’t feel I had anything to prove to anyone. As a young person, after school, it was a shock, I couldn’t understand... and that’s why there’s such an attachment to the small homeland, the place of birth, because it’s your own, your backyard, a kind of refuge, family. It might be easier to say that you’re a Belarusian in Poland than proving I’m Polish the whole time. It’s a sort of conformism, maybe. (GrodIC40/2010F)¹⁸³

In the last sentences, the speaker makes the extremely important claim that a very common reason why individuals studying in Poland deliberately opt for the Belarusian national option is the student community’s rejection of people arriving from Belarus, who are not regarded as Poles. The lack of acceptance from the Polish community, coupled with the assertion of distinct cultural differences and longing for their closest environment, means that the Belarusian identification option prevails. This is confirmed by the following statements:

I tend to define myself as a Belarusian, because I don’t feel the same connections to Poland – they might be Slavic nations, but the people are different. While studying in Poland,

mieszkają, dla obywateli, tych studentów, to my jesteście Ruscy i tam choć byś ozłocił, to zawsze będziesz Ruski.

182 *Przek* or *Przeczką* are nicknames given to Poles in Belarus, alluding to the high frequency of *prz* consonant clusters in Polish.

183 *[...] jak byłam w szkole, to czułam powiedzmy jakieś ograniczenie, że jestem Polką, bo „Przeczką” i to tak jakbym czuła się gorzej, jak pojechałam do Polski, to okazało się, z innej strony, że ja jestem też inna. Tu mnie traktowali jako osobę obcą, a w Polsce też była obcą i to mnie bolało, ale zrozumiałam, że są ludzie źli i różni. I to nie zależy od państwa. Chciałabym mieszkać w Polsce i może, dlatego, że już jestem bardziej świadoma siebie, może pewniejsza i nie czułabym się tam, że muszę coś komuś udowadniać, a jak człowiek młody, po szkole to jednak było takim szokiem, ja nie mogłam zrozumieć... i dlatego jest takie przywiązanie do tej małej ojczyzny, miejsca urodzenia, bo tu jest swoje, swoje podwórko, taki azyl, rodzina. To może łatwiej powiedzieć, że się jest Białorusinem w Polsce niż cały czas udowadniać, że ja jestem Polakiem. To jest taki może konformizm.*

I became interested in history. I think that mostly my self-defining occurred in Poland, I felt a sense of belonging to this land (Belarus), to this region. (GrodkP32/2010M)¹⁸⁴

Another informer said:

It'd be hard to call myself Polish, I like Poland, but I love Belarus, I feel that I'm from here. The difference between Poland and Belarus gets smaller every year. You feel bigger differences in the countryside. (GrodfG24/2010M)¹⁸⁵

A young priest spoke movingly, and at greater length:

I was in Poland, I discovered my Polish origins and I'm discovering my incredible love for my homeland. You need to strike the right balance so as not to lose your Polish nationality and not lose your Belarusian uniqueness. We are needed by Belarus as a minority, because we form new values, a different Belarus. I wasn't taught [the rhyme] "Who are you? A little Pole". What I love is the Grodno Region. Because I don't feel attached to the Kashubs or Highlanders, although I have friends there. I have Soviet humour like the Ukrainians. Poles don't understand that. I'm different from a Pole. Poles couldn't accept Ukrainians because they remembered the Polish-Ukrainian battles, and yet I didn't even know about them. I can't fully identify with Poland. Faith has empowered me, because I'm needed just as I am. I can't tell Belarus that I'm not her son, and I can't tell Poland that I didn't leave her. I'm needed here for people like me. I'm a Belarusian of Polish origin, Russian-speaking. We're different from the Catholics of other dioceses of Belarus. We're very closely attached to Poland, but we're becoming more distant. (GrodaW35/2010M)¹⁸⁶

184 *Określam się raczej jako Białorusin, powiem dlaczego, bo nie odczuwam takich związków z Polską, niby słowiańskie narody, ale to są inni ludzie. W czasie studiów w Polsce zacząłem się interesować historią. Myślę, że w większości moje dookreślenie dokonywało się w Polsce, poczułem przywiązanie do tej ziemi (do Białorusi), do tego regionu.*

185 *Trudno mi jest powiedzieć, że jestem Polakiem, lubię Polskę, ale Kocham Białoruś, czuję, że jestem stąd. Różnica pomiędzy Polską a Białorusią jest z każdym rokiem coraz mniejsza. Na wsi czuje się większe różnice.*

186 *Jak byłem w Polsce, odkryłem swoje pochodzenie polskie i odkrywam niesamowitą miłość do Ojczyzny. Trzeba znaleźć złoty środek, żeby nie utracić swojej narodowości polskiej i nie utracić swej białoruskiej specyfiki. My jesteśmy potrzebni Białorusi, jako mniejszość, bo tworzymy nowe wartości, inną Białoruś. Mnie nie uczyli, „kim ty jesteś – Polak mały”. To, co Kocham, to Grodzieńszczyzna. Bo ja nie czuję się związany z Kaszubami, góralami, choć mam tam przyjaciół. Mam humor radziecki jak Ukraińcy. Polacy tego nie rozumieli. Różnię się od Polaka, Polacy nie mogli przyjąć Ukraińców, mając w pamięci walki polsko-ukraińskie, a ja nawet o nich nie wiedziałem. Nie mogę utożsamiać się w pełni z Polską. Wiara mi dodała skrzydeł, że potrzebny jestem tu właśnie taki, jaki jestem. Nie mogę powiedzieć Białorusi, że nie jestem jej synem, i nie mogę powiedzieć Polsce, że nie wyszedłem od niej. Jestem tu potrzebny dla takich ludzi jak ja. Jestem Białorusinem polskiego pochodzenia, rosyjskojęzycznym. Różnimy się od*

This informer can be said to be characterised by a multi-level cultural and national identity. He has a strong awareness of his “Polish roots” (a term which residents of Belarus perceive differently from Polish researchers), and understands that the contemporary transformations of the Catholic communities in Belarus, even in the Grodno Region, are moving towards Belarusianness. It is extremely interesting to note in this priest’s statement that he views this multi-level identity as an internal asset that helps him in his service of people with similar experiences. Engelking writes the following of such people: “Much more nuanced and careful description is needed [...] for cases of Belarussian patriots, declaring themselves as Poles (because they are Catholic), cultivating Belarussian literary language; young people who, as Poles from Belarus inheriting the local Catholic-Polish tradition of their parents and grandparents, went to Poland to study, and return as people rejected by the mythologised homeland, branded with the stigma ‘Russkies’, but also no longer identifying with local Polishness”.¹⁸⁷ Dzwonkowski, Gorbaniuk and Gorbaniuk come to similar conclusions: “[...] people during their stay in the country of their ancestors have experiences that contribute to the reevaluation of their previous identification and national belonging, to the detriment of identification with Polishness”.¹⁸⁸ These claims are largely correct, with the exception of the authors’ initial premise that Poland is the country of the ancestors of all students arriving there from the former USSR.

The fact that national identification often depends on the social context and external circumstances is demonstrated by the below statement:

Maybe talking to people shows they sometimes feel Polish, sometimes Belarussian, it’s usually the older generation, because for example my grandma said “how are you a Belarussian if I’m a Pole?” I always kind of was, and some grandmas speak Polish in the area where I live, because here in Minsk I’m not sure what exactly the situation is. Where Grodno is, my brother for example, who’s been living there three years or so, he feels Polish already. And he speaks a little Polish. Because he lived near Naroch too, and they don’t speak Polish at all, but after three years he speaks a little. He lives with the family, so the identity might look different depending on the situation. (MinOS20/2011F)¹⁸⁹

katolików innych diecezji Białorusi. Jesteśmy bardzo silnie związani z Polską, ale się od niej oddalamy.

187 Engelking, “Etnograf wobec stereotypu ‘Polaka z Kresów’”, p. 238.

188 Dzwonkowski, Gorbaniuk, Gorbaniuk, *Postawy katolików obrządku łacińskiego*, p. 138.

189 *Białorusinką, skoro ja jestem Polką, zawsze byłam jakoś tak, i niektóre babcie tak rozmawiają po polsku mianowicie w tej dzielnicy (w okolicy) gdzie ja mieszkam, bo tutaj w Mińsku jeszcze nie wiem tak dokładnie sytuacji. Bo tam gdzie jest Grodno, mój brat na przykład, jaki tam mieszka chyba trzy lata, już się czuje za Polaka. I trochę*

This statement comes from a female student from Pastavy. Her family, who live in an area where Catholicism is dominant, identify as Polish and use this language in the sacred sphere. After moving to Minsk for university, she became active in academic religious organisations. Student meetings take place in Belarusian. By changing the language of the sacred sphere, the informer also changed national option, taking the side of Belarusianness. Her brother, who found himself in a Polish-speaking environment, chose the Polish national option and the Polish language of the sacred sphere.

This story might serve as a model illustration. But this is not always the model that is followed. Many interviews revealed much more complicated and multifaceted patterns. It is extremely interesting to analyse the statements of two female students who grew up in Polish-leaning Catholic families, who made entirely different decisions during their studies in Minsk and confrontation with Belarusianness. The first switches to using Belarusian in prayer and the liturgy, although her grandmother was in charge of her religious upbringing, which took place in Polish. The consistent shift to Belarusian in the sacred sphere (while our interview took place in Russian) does not change her Polish identity.

I think it starts in childhood. My grandma was Polish, and would often talk about life at the time [the interwar period – she was born in 1925], and everyone in our family saw themselves as Poles. I always say I'm Polish if they ask. My patronymic – my dad's name is Wojtek [a typical Polish name]. At university they ask: Catholic? Pole? Or they might say, "from the Grodno Region?" (MinAS21/2010F)¹⁹⁰

In this person's case, the order of language and national identity follow separate paths. The conviction about the Polishness of one's family taken from home was not verified in adult life. The language of everyday communication does not change – in Minsk, it remains Russian, with plain speech used at home. What does change, though, is the language of the sacred sphere, although this does not affect national identification. It is important to add here that the interviewee had never been to Poland nor did she have the opportunity for confrontation with a different form of Polish, despite having the Polish Card.

rozmawia w języku polskim. A też mieszkał niedaleko Narocz i po polsku nie rozmawiał wogle, a po trzech latach już trochę mówi. Z rodziną mieszka to znaczy, że w zależności od sytuacji może się ta tożsamość różnie klarować.

190 *Ja dumaju, szto eta idziot iz dziestva. Babuszka była polka, ana raskazywała mnoga, kak żyła f cie vriemiena (ana była 1935 goda razdzienija), i fsie u nas f siemje palaki sczitajuca. Ja fsieгда gavariu, szto polka (kagda spraszivajut). U mienia otcziestva - papu zavut Wojciek. V univiersitietie spraszivajut "kataliczka?", "palaczka?", ili mogut skazać: "naviernaje, iz Grodnienskaj oblasci".*

When asked which identification was the fundamental and most important one to her (which could not be changed), she replied:

First of all, I'm a Catholic, then a Pole, then other things. It's definitely hardest to change religion. I think it's completely impossible. As for nationality, you don't think about it. A Pole's a Pole. (MinAS21/2010F)¹⁹¹

The second student makes entirely different choices. The town she comes from, although not far from Minsk, was within Poland's borders in the interwar period. Like the previous interviewee, she comes from a family with Polish traditions, and learnt her first prayers in Polish from her grandmother. We could say that the starting point for both interviewees – their family situation and place of birth – is comparable. However, the second student declares herself to be Belarusian, and uses the Belarusian language on an everyday basis within student circles.

*I was born in Belarus, so I feel more, well... my homeland is Belarus.*¹⁹²

The Polishness of her family – parents and grandparents – is not placed in doubt, and in fact, she speaks unequivocally about her Polish roots:

Do your parents regard themselves as Poles?

Yes, their certificates say they are Polish. Because my father's parents are from Białystok, he was born here. Although they can't say anything in Polish, they understand, still they're Polish. (RubIP22/2011F)¹⁹³

During our long interview, we attempted to identify what factors made my informer feel Polish, and what made her Belarusian:

Well, Belarusianness here for example in the language, because we speak Belarusian, not Russian, lots of people speak it here. Even my grandma speaks Belarusian, but with Polish words, but if we say it's a mixed language, then it's rather mixed between Belarusian and Polish, not Russian and Belarusian.

And then, what else, the fact we were born in Belarus, and Polish, if there was no Polish at school, we might not even be able to speak it, we'd still recite prayers, sometimes even not understanding what they meant.

191 *Na piervaje miesta pastaviła by, szto ja kataliczka, patom polka, patom drugije vieszczy. Naviernaje, f piervuju oczierieć, budziet trudna s rieligijej, ciażeleje ejo pomieniać. Dumaju, vaapszczie nievazmożna. A a nacialnasci nie zadumyvajeszsia. Polka i polka.*

192 *Urodziłam się na Białorusi, dlatego tu czuję się bardziej, no... ojczyzna jest Białoruś.*

193 *Twoi rodzice uważają się za Polaków?*

Tak, no u nich tam w świadectwie napisane, że są Polakami. Ponieważ rodzice ojca z Białegostoku, no on już urodził się tutaj. Chociaż po polsku nie umią nic powiedzieć, no rozumią, mimo to są Polakami.

If you say you're Belarusian, you identify with the territory?

Yes.

If you say you're Polish?

The fact that all my grandmas, grandads, great-grandparents, ancestors are Polish.

What about your religiosity, where would you put yourself – on the Belarusian side or the Polish one?

Polish. (RubIP22/2011F)¹⁹⁴

As the above interview demonstrates, just as one can use several languages in life, serving various distinct fields permanently and separately (a state that sociolinguistics call diglossia), the various spheres of life can also be divided, with some being identified with Polishness, and others with Belarusianness. For one of my interviewees identifying as a Pole, Belarusianness was associated with the language of the sacred sphere, while for the other, who identified as Belarusian, the entire sphere of religion together with the language was part of her Polish heritage.¹⁹⁵ The interview with the student culminated with a question about her hypothetical choices concerning the not too distant future:

And when you teach prayers to your children, will you teach them in Polish or in Belarusian?

My situation is that if I have children, and my husband speaks Russian to them and I Belarusian, I'd like the children to learn both languages, and I will speak to them in Belarusian, but of course I'll teach the prayers. I'll see which church, what language Mass will be held in, if it's in Belarusian in the town or village I'm living in, if Mass is in

194 *No, białoruskość u nas na przykład w języku, ponieważ my rozmawiamy po białoruski, nie po rosyjsku, wiele osób tutaj rozmawia. Nawet babcia, nu, po białoruski, lecz ze słowami polskimi, ale to tak bardziej, jeżeli to mówić, że to język mieszany, to on mieszany pomiędzy białoruskim i polskim, nie pomiędzy rosyjskim i białoruskim. Potem, no, co jeszcze, że my urodziliśmy na Białorusi i polski, jeżeliby w szkole nie było języka polskiego, to nawet mogliby i nie rozmawiać, no tak pacierze by odmawiali, ale tak nawet bez zrozumienia, o co chodzi.*

Jeśli mówisz, że jesteś Białorusinką, to się identyfikujesz z terytorium?

Tak.

Jeżeli mówisz, że jesteś Polką?

Że moje wszystkie babcie, dziadki, pradziadki, przodki są Polakami.

A jeżeli chodzi o twoją religijność, gdzie byś ją umieściła – po białoruskiej stronie czy po polskiej?

Po polskiej.

195 Justyna Straczuk wrote about the applicability of sociolinguistic theories to anthropological research in her book *Cmentarz i stół* ("Cemetery and Table") (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2006).

Belarusian there, I'll have to teach them their prayers in Belarusian, but I'd really like them to know Polish too. (RubIP22/2010F)¹⁹⁶

What is most interesting in this passage is the pragmatism with which the informer approaches linguistic issues. Belarusian is important, but Polish should also play a role in her children's education. The most important thing, however, is the language in which services in the church they attend will be held.

Analysis of the interviews reveals that the informers' identity is not uniform, but comprises many levels, or rather currents running parallel to each other. According to Anna Engelking, in the Polish-Belarusian Borderlands it is constructed "[...] from such elements as religious, local, state and national identity, which form often very complex interdependencies".¹⁹⁷

My interviewees do not see Belarusian elements as antagonistic with Polish ones. One might have a Polish family past and yet choose a Belarusian present. One can pray in Polish and sympathise with the Belarusian opposition. If we add to this the ubiquitous presence of Russian culture and language, we see that it is possible to listen to Russian youth music and read Russian literature, attend Polish Mass and declare oneself as a Belarusian. Just as in polyphony the theme first appears in the first voice, before resounding in the second voice or bass, Polishness can also be connected to religion or nationality or family heritage. In literature on multilingualism and identity, this kind of polyphonic identity is known, following Joshua Fishman, as di-ethnia.¹⁹⁸ Smułkowa uses this term to

196 A jak będziesz uczyła swoje dzieci pacierza, to będziesz je uczyła po polsku czy po białorusku?

Mam taką sytuację, że jeśli będę miała dzieci, a mąż rozmawia w języku rosyjskim, ja rozmawiam po białorusku, to chciałabym, żeby dzieci uczyli się i tego, i tego języka, lecz będę z nimi rozmawiała po białorusku, ale oczywiście, że będę uczyć pacierzy. No jeszcze będę patrzeć jaki kościół, w jakim tam języku będą msze, no jeżeli tam msze po białorusku w tym mieście, gdzie będę mieszkała, czy tam we wsi, jeżeli msze tam będą po białorusku, muszę uczyć po białorusku pacierza, lecz bardzo będę chciała, żeby język polski też znali.

197 Engelking, A., Kim jest „człowiek pogranicza”? Uwagi o tożsamości z perspektywy badacza i z perspektywy podmiotu – przykład białoruski. In Anna Engelking, Ewa Golachowska, Anna Zielińska (eds), *Tożsamość – Język – Rodzina. Z badań na pograniczu słowiańsko-bałtyckim*. Warszawa: Sławistyczny Ośrodek Wydawniczy. p. 264.

198 Joshua Fishman, “Bilingualism and Biculturalism as Individual and as Societal Phenomena”, in: *The Rise and the Fall of Ethnic Revival*, eds Fishman et al. (Berlin–New York: Walter de Gruyter), pp. 47–48.

describe the situation in Belarus with the Belarusian and Russian elements in its contemporary culture, and also finds references to the symbiosis of cultures at the time of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.¹⁹⁹ Straczuk, meanwhile, in her anthropological description of the Borderlands, cites Ferguson's sociolinguistic concept of diglossia,²⁰⁰ revealing the mechanism of social multilingualism among the residents of the Borderlands complementary to their multiculturalism.²⁰¹ The legacy of this multiculturalism is not only the interviewees' complex identity, but also the originality of the Catholic Church in Belarus, with its unique blend of Belarusian and Polish elements. One of the informers puts this as follows:

You can't talk about the Belarusian Church or Polish Church, there's the Catholic Church in Belarus or Italy, or in Poland. And that's correct. There's the Catholic Church in Belarus and it has Polish traditions in its history too, and that's very beautiful. (MinKL54/2010F)²⁰²

Research on the links between nationality and religion confirm the existence of a process of departure from nationality being defined through religion. Piotr Rudkouski outlines why this is a good situation for Catholicism in Belarus, stating that "at first glance it might seem paradoxical, but I am an advocate of both Polonisation and Belarusianisation. [...] Both Polonisation and Belarusianisation (of course other national projects might also come into play here) are desirable phenomena, and extremely important for forming a civil society in Belarus and the emergence of a space for intercultural dialogue".²⁰³

My research on the language of the Catholic population in Belarus conducted in 2009–2012 resulted in similar conclusions. The respondents of Polish nationality and belonging to the Roman Catholic faith consider it possible to undertake a conversion in terms of their nationality while remaining within the same denomination. The political transformations that occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s brought about a change in the situation of the Church in Belarus. At the same time, the model of religiosity was reconstructed, gradually moving away from issues of national identification. Religious practices are becoming a personal matter, depending less and less on pressure from the local or family community. Nationality choices are also a question of individual choices. The

199 Smułkowa, "Dwujęzyczność po białorusku", p. 421.

200 Ferguson, "Diglossia".

201 Straczuk, *Cmentarz i stół*, p. 13.

202 *Nie wolno mówić Kościół białoruski czy Kościół polski, jest Kościół katolicki na Białorusi czy w Italii, czy w Polsce. I tak jest prawidłowo. Jest Kościół katolicki na Białorusi i on ma w swojej historii tradycje polskie też i to bardzo piękne.*

203 Rudkouski, *Powstawanie Białorusi*, Wrocław 209, p. 204.

representatives of the middle and younger generation have greater contact with different models of behaviours and values offered by school, university, youth subcultures, work, the mass media, and the internet. Language issues, such an emotive subject in the older generation, are not as significant for young people, who no longer perceive Belarusian literary language as a low language unsuited to serving the sacred sphere. Meanwhile, multilingual communication in Polish, Belarusian or Russian has become an everyday practice.

Conclusions

The observations I made during the research in 2009–2012 confirm the process, identified by scholars, of the “de-Polonisation” of the Catholic Church in Belarus. Yet this phenomenon is considerably more complex than many studies devoted to these issues suggest, and I would argue that examining it solely in terms of Catholics’ loss of “Polishness” is insufficient. It is also connected with transformations in both the model of religiosity and understanding of young people’s (choice of their) own religious and national identification. Religion is becoming a deliberate choice, rather than the consequence of originating in a Catholic family. This applies both to believers who come from a Catholic environment and those from mixed or religiously indifferent families. The Church shaping the young generation of Catholics is a different one from that which defended Polishness throughout the most difficult years.²⁰⁴ Young people no longer see it as a carrier of religious and national models, but only as conveying religious ones. It has room for both Poles and for Belarusians. My informers’ statements clearly showed that Polishness and Belarusianness do not cancel each other out, but rather complement and enrich one another, in the same way as praying alternately in Polish and Belarusian. Analysis of the statements I collected suggests that for young people there is no antagonism between the Polish and Belarusian languages or Polish and Belarusian nationalities, and it is possible to draw from both traditions to consciously construct one’s own identity at various levels.

The linguistic issues which support or hinder changes in national identity among Catholics in Belarus turn out not to be as important as one might expect. Firstly, it is possible to have a situation in which the sacred sphere is served by Belarusian, while maintaining individuals’ Polish identification and national identity. Secondly, the Belarusian language has entrenched itself in the Church for good, not as an isolated fact, but as one of many other transformations initiated

204 It is extremely significant that in the 2012/2013 academic year nine seminarians began their studies in Pinsk, while there were five at the seminary in Grodno. Admittedly, Pinsk serves all dioceses except for Grodno, but it is in the Grodno Region that half of all Belarusian Catholics live. Moreover, this region never experienced the same degree of atheisation as was observed in Eastern Belarus. For many years, the Grodno had more seminarians. The changing number of appointments to the priesthood shows a real revival of the Church in Belarus.

in the 1990s. After three years of intensive research, I cannot state unequivocally that the fact that Belarusian has entered the liturgy has increased its prestige. I could equally well write that the language entered the Church because the Belarusian renaissance of the 1990s gave it prestige, ending the belief in its low status. Regardless of the very difficult current political situation in Belarus, the long-lasting endeavours of activists to encourage the revival of Belarusian language and culture are now bearing fruit, as the generation born in the 1980s have grown up. This is very clearly visible in the Catholic community.

Young people quickly switch to Belarusian at church, partly because the intergenerational transferral of religion and the Polish language is dying out. Entrusting religious education to nuns, catechists and priests often means that it takes place without Polish being used.

For many years in Soviet Belarus, the Catholic Church was a bastion of Polishness and the Polish language. As a result, the fact that Polish today is retreating from this sphere (or being abandoned) is interpreted in an emotional way, engendering a sense of harm and an instinct of rebellion among Catholics with Polish national identification. It is important to emphasize that Poles in Belarus should have the opportunity to participate in Polish-language church services, listen to Polish sermons, sing Polish hymns, and receive sacraments in Polish. But the presence of the language in the Church cannot replace learning Polish, and especially cannot replace its presence at home. The possibility of language education for children, teenagers and adults in Belarus exists above all because of the activity of the Polish Educational Society as well as other, often spontaneously organised courses.

Every era brings different strategies for preserving Polishness, as well as different models and mechanisms for constructing it. Protection of Polishness through the Church and conserving its “people’s” model was the strategy of the toughest Soviet times. Today, although times for Poles in Belarus are still not easy, it seems that different actions are needed. It is necessary to develop Polish-language education, educate the Polish intelligentsia and support a genuinely open, universal Catholic Church, bringing Poles and Belarusians together.

II Multilingualism among the Catholic Population in Belarus in the Accounts of Witnesses of History

Texts

There are various reasons for attaching transcriptions of interviews to a synthetic description of transformations in language and identity. Above all, they are a living record of the language of various generations of Catholics living in Belarus today. Included here are Polish texts transcribed in Mohilev, Minsk and Grodno, as well as Belarusian texts produced by Catholics from Eastern Belarus. This selection of material shows that the language of Catholics in Belarus is not only the Polish or literary Belarusian of the intelligentsia, but also the form of Belarusian spoken by the people of rural Eastern Belarus, with numerous Russian influences. The second reason for including selected texts is the fact that they document extremely important, often dramatic events from the history of the Catholic Church in Belarus and the fortunes of its followers. The third reason is the need to document a language that is becoming a thing of the past, as are its users.

Out of concern for data protection laws as well as my interviewees' trust, I do not give their data, but rather I use abbreviations. These contain the first syllable of the place where the interview took place, the informer's initials, their age at the time of the interview, the year when the interview was conducted and their gender.

Polish Texts

Researchers describing the Polish spoken in the North-Eastern Borderlands have always highlighted its stratification. Three variants of Polish functioning in the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania are usually distinguished. The authors of *Brasławszczyzna* write of standard Polish, represented by people with pre-war links to the Polish education system; the Vilnius dialect of the language, preserved among the older generation of the local nobility; and mixed Polish, which lacks standard Polish norms, and whose text is formed from linguistic components of various origins – Polish, Belarusian or Russian, influencing its individual character.²⁰⁵ Describing the sociolinguistic situation of the Kovno region, Anna Zielińska identifies three variants of Polish: high, noble, and peasant. She writes that the high variant is defined as being very close to literary Polish, with little internal differentiation. The noble variant is characterised by a number of Lithuanian interferences resulting from active bilingualism, as well as by internal differentiation. The peasant variant is very close to the noble one, but with an even larger number of interferences. The authors of both divisions emphasise the links between linguistic diversity and the former social differences of the inhabitants of present-day Lithuania and Belarus. In their research on the entire region of the North-Eastern Borderland, Grek-Pabisowa and Maryniakowa divide the Polish in use there into the cultural variant and the speech of the peasant class (dialect),²⁰⁶ pointing to its areal diversity.²⁰⁷

The research cited above documents the state of the Polish spoken in the North-Eastern Borderlands from around two decades ago. Before the end of the twentieth century, texts were transcribed from people born before the First World War, who were young in the interwar period. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it was possible to talk to people born in the interwar period, who received Polish education before the Second World War.

I encountered few such people during my research carried out in 2009–2012. For almost all the informers, Polish is not their everyday language. Even those

205 *Brasławszczyzna. Pamięć i współczesność. Tom II, Słownictwo*, Elżbieta Smułkowa (ed.) (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2009), p. 172.

206 Iryda Grek-Pabisowa, Irena Maryniakowa, *Współczesne gwary polskie na dawnych Kresach północno-wschodnich* (Warszawa: Slawistyczny Ośrodek Wydawniczy, 1999), p. 15.

207 Grek-Pabisowa, Maryniakowa, *Współczesne gwary polskie*, p. 46.

who gained their knowledge of Polish at home, and for whom this was their primary language, today as a result of various life circumstances use Russian or Belarusian (literary or dialectal). It is hard to describe the Polish used by Catholics in today's Belarus in any way other than outlining the individual idiolects. In the language of the oldest interviewees whose statements were selected for analysis, there are visible references to the social diversity of Polish described at the beginning.

Minsk

The interview presented here was conducted with an informer whose primary language was the Eastern Borderlands high variant of Polish. The informer's phonetics bear a number of Belarusian features, the most characteristic of which are the semi-palatal realisation of the soft ś, ź, and ć, as s', z', and c'. The Polish in use today retains some of the grammatical features of high Polish – for example use of personal verbal endings. At the same time, more recent Eastern Slavic influences are visible – an analytical verbal inflection and numerous Eastern Slavic constructions are appearing simultaneously – e.g. *работатъ кем*.

[MinAP93/2010F]

Interviewee's place of birth - Urodziła się Pani w Mińsku?

- Tutaj pot Połockèm. Dopèro ničëgo daval'i... Jak to panam'i na... dl'atego musël'is'my dvaz'es'cà załušmy vokuł uc'ëcac'...

Year of birth - W którym roku?

The family's fate after the revolution

- Ja '19. Żuc'il'is'my tam, zostal'i dom. Fšystko umebl'ovane jest... bo, dl'atego że mama była pšyjac'ułka sekretarka za Selsavëta. Ona, značy, pšyšl'i večõrem, teš pšyxožila, żeby nikt nie v'iz'al, że značy... nas pšygotovujom vyslac' do Syber'ji... no i fšystko zats'yma. M'el'is'my krove, zëmè svojom, fšystko žuc'il'is'my, to fšystko... roz'ice žuc'il'i to fšystko i pojeħal'is'my tu, pod M'ínsk, po pod M'ínskëm miał majontek ojčec matk'i, mojej mamy. Alè u něgo była taka sprava, że jakos' značy, on pracovał na mašyńnistom, juš musël'i svoje zarab'ac', kedy i značy on tam jak'is' rok,

tam... no pšyv'uzl tyx statyčytrnikuf jak'eš' tam tak'e mał značy tak niiby, juš było błogoslaveństvo Sovetuf, že jego nie rušał'i, s počontku n'e rušał'i, a potem fšystko jedno vysłał'i, žona zostala s'e xora, Park'insonam, bes pomocy, fšystko. Fšystko zabral'i

a jego vysłał'i na peńc' lat pod Arxang'eł'sk obno... takže v'iz'imy(?) fšystko, ktuży xoz'il'i. U nas nič a nič nie było... i dl'atego zaras... tak l'ep'ej s'e żyło...

- Tu się Pani wychowała?

- '41 roku... a značy, začela s'e vojna. Ja pošlam v vojsko i do '44, a potem f čterz'eštym p'ontym vyjeħalam z menžem do dužego pracovac' do Ošm'any i pšes 30 lat, a tak... a potem zнову vruc'it'am juš do M'ińska.... ot tak'e sprav'y...

- A jak Pani pamięta Mińsk przed wojną? Dużo było tutaj Polaków?

- Duża v'eńkšość' to byl'i Polacy, Žyž'i no... i fšystko tego było, dl'atego že i cmentaš kal'varyjsk'i, i košč'oły, i fšystko, i v ogule było v'eńkšość' Polakuf, tyl'ko katol'ikuf n'ekturyx... l'ičyl'i s'e tak... dužo, dužo fšystko, cała naša roz'ina była Polak'i... i fšystk'e rozmav'al'i po pol'sku... teras to fšystko... roz'ice poum'eral'i... a ž'eč'i učyły s'e po ružnyx m'astaħ, po ružnyx m'astaħ, bo to... samo g'luvne i dl'atego rozmovy pol'sk'ej i fšystko... tyl'ko ja jedna zostala ješče s'e... i tak. Syn jeden i drug'i, jeden f Smargoñi, značy teš juš emeryta, prav'e 70 lat... značy ješče tam po pol'sku troške... a tak v'ize, že tyl'ko juš rozmav'ac' v domu, rozmav'amy po rosyjsku.

- A jak wyglądała przed wojną polska społeczność? Mielicie polskich przyjaciół?

- Byl'i pšed vojnom pol'ska škola. Specjal'ne učyl'i s'e. F pol'sk'ej škole była žydostva škola, a potem

Military service

Work in Ashmyany

Return to Minsk after 30 years

Minsk before the Second World War

Use of Polish in the interlocutor's family

Dominance of Russian in the family

Polish school in Minsk

gžěs' tam, sama rozumě '36, '37 rok... značy tam menšczyzn pravě jak fšystk'ix jak tam było Stańisław czy Edvart, fšystk'im były Kuropaty, ałe fšystko jedno, koščuł pracował... značy Kalvarja była, Złotka Gurka, była, no Červony Koščuł był,

The terror of the 1930s**Concealing their faith**

katedra, no to było jakby to powěžec' mějsce takě i zbur katol'ikuf, i Połakuf... cuš rob'ic', vėš... musel'is'my χovac' sě, dlątego že sama rozumě... vy ně rozuměcě tego... zrozuměc' ně možna... navet pšes'ladovańe było takě... tyl'ko fkosćolaχ pšyχoz'il'i zec'i i pil'noval'i kto, gžě z zec'i χoz'i do kosćola... no, v ogulě tak špėgostvo, to fšystko i dlątego... to značy ně možna było mēc' ni Vel'kanocy i to fšystko... no ałe označal'i fšystko jedno... jakos' zvōnzek był mocny, koščuł barzo tšymał takže, a ščeguł'ne f katedže był, f Červonym koščelě, to ja tam znam, a f katedže był Pučka Xměłefsk'i... probošč koščola tego... f katedže... teš zg'imoł dlątego, že to fšyscy zg'inel'i byl'i vēcě tam po věńžeńaχ, tak o fšystko... a tak f procesje, ostatńa procesja to było na Bože Čało, to było ně paměntam, čy v '28 roku, čy '27 i teras ně paměntam... značy šła s Kal'varyji, i pšyšla do... na do... na Złota Gurka, s tej Złotej Gurk'i šl'i pšes całe mąsto... a teras to χozo po zakulkaχ za ftedy šła Bože ja pšy fstonšce, pšes całe mąsto šła procesja na Bože Čało no i tam, kto pomysl'il pol'icje i to fšystko mėsōnc ně ma. U nas ftedy, šła procesja, šła s Kalvaryji, do Złotej Gurk'i, ze Złotej Gurk'i tam šl'i tak šl'i stacje byl'i po droze... po samej głuvnej ul'icy šl'i... m'il'icja na końaχ... značy ońi... patšal'i za požontkēm i fšystko... ałe to było ostatńe potym juš vēncyj ně było... a potem i tak pošło, zakryl'i Červony koščuł.

The last Corpus Christi procession in pre-war Minsk**- Pamięta Pani, w którym roku?**

- Gžěš, ja ně paměntawm tego. Ilėš mně było, može zėšėńc' lat, sama rozuměš, zap'isyvac' leńkał'i sė fšėńžė, dlątego že to fšystko zap'isy, sama rozuměš,

tša bylo *χοvac'* i *fšystko*... u nas navet byl... ožel
bály na tak'im věš, na aksam'icě

zrobóny i my to jeho *χοval'i*, a mńe to pšyv'onzylval'i
na plęc: i *gz'es'* tak *zaχοval'i*, že potem *znales'c'* *ńe*
mogli, alě to najvažnějše takom... u *z'aduńk'i*,
tego *majontku* *gz'es'* tam..., takě *spravy* věš...
na... potem *tyš*... *zabral'i* *fšystko* i *katedre*...
i *f* *Červonym* *χοz'il'i* *spočontku*... *χοz'il'i* tam
luz'e... *modl'il'i* *sě*... v *z'eń* i v *nocy*... *z'eń* i
noc, alě *coz'e*•*ńe*. Čy to *dešč*, čy *mrus*, čy *co*...
pšyχοz'il'i *naokolo* *Červonego* *koščola*, *χοz'il'i*
luz'i... *potem* *cos'* tam *głodufka* *byla*... alě
teš *nazv'isko* *juš*, tam *zap'isane* *mus'i* *byc'*... u
Krys'tyny to *jest* *vyp'isane* *głodufke*, čy *koběta*
nocovala na *ul'icy* *pšy* *koščele*... tam *fšystko*...
jakos' *udało* *sě* *dal'ej*... *gal'eryje* *tyl'ko* *kavatek*...
gal'eryje tam *dal'i*... *no* a *potem* *fšystko*... *luz'e*
šl'i, *jak* to *sě* *muv'i*, *χοz'il'i* *dob'ival'i* *sě*... to
Šuškev'ič... *gdyby* *ńe* *Šuškev'ič*, to *by* *ńe* *mogli*
zrob'ic'... alě *Šuškev'ič*, *on* *že* *katol'ik* i *Polak* i
fšystko... to *z* *jego* *věk*... *mus'i* *jakos'* *tak*... *že* *byl'i*
fšystkě *koščoly* *dob'il'i* *sě*... alě *mus'el'i*... *potem*
začel'i... *tutaj* *věl'ka* *zastuga* *Vladyslava*, *ks'enz*
Vladyslava, *dłatego* *že* *on* *spočontku* *požontku*
p'il'noval i *fšystko*, *potem* *začol* *on*... *barzo*
rozumńe *fšystko* *rob'il*, *dłatego* *že* *on* *sšedł*. *ńe*
χοz'il *ńigz'e* *sam*, *jakos'*... *pověz'al*: „*Mńe* to
ńepotšebne, to *luz'am* *potšebne*, a *mńe* to, *muv'i*,
bez *ružńicy*. *Ja* *vz'ol* *val'iske* i *pojex'al*... v *drugě*
mějsce”. *Takže*... *dłaczego*... *sam* *čemu*, *ńigdy*...
on: „*Mńe* to *ńe* *tšeba*, to *potšebne* *dla* *luz'i*, *luz'e*
χοzom...”. *Z* *jakom* *rozumńe* to *rob'om*... *sam* *no*
ńigz'e *ńe* *lazł* *fšěnz'e* *luz'e* *šl'i* i *z'eńk'i* *Bogu* *tako*
dostal'i, i *katedra*, *mal'ěnka* *potem*, *jak* to *muv'i* *sě*,
budoval'i *Košc'ul* *Veteranuf* *f* *Serebrance*, *buduje*
sě *koščul*. *Tutaj* *od* *nas*, to *bl'isko*... *pšystanek*
tyl'ko. *Ja* *zber'al'i* *takže* *jama*... *teras*, to *juš* *nie*
dojade, *dłatego* *že*... *rozryte* *fšystko*...

Concealing the Polish crest

Hunger strikes and prayers for opening of churches

Good deeds done by Shushkevich

The beginnings of religious life

Father Władysław

Building of the church**- skoro rozkopane...**

- mamy tyl'ko jeden pšystanek... kapl'ice... jest... f tej kapl'icy modl'il'i... Na pevno jak ... kapl'ica i začel'i budovac' ješče košč'uł, al'e barzo trudno iz'e budova...

- Pieniędzy pewnie nie ma?

- Źeby ktos'... sponsora żadnego nie ma, strażnie... robočyχ nie było, może i ukończyl'i by... f każdym razie buduje s'e... jak on v'iz'i... troške teras níby zložy... troške dac'... zemie. Značy s'e... f Červonym koščele... teras tam jest níby jakes'... jakes'... počekaj, jak to nazývaja... nie... obvězeńe... značy kl'asa, čy cos'... i v'iz'el'i tam f

Learning Polish in the church**Polish, its value and significance****Gradual Belarusianisation and Russification**

pol'sk'im jenzyku to tak učy tam, ot... a tak barzo trudno, barzo trudno... no v'iz'iš, spočontku zec'i učyl'i s'e v ružnyχ m'astax. Nas mama v'ychovyvala, vyros'l'i v roz'ine, fkturej nie słyšel'is'my rosyjsk'ego, b'iałorusk'ego jenzyka, a tyl'ko pol'sk'e, a potem juš značy, učyl'i s'e s k'sonžek b'el'arusk'iχ... i fšystko. Pan Buk dał jakos' s'ily na s'v'eče... puk'i było vojsko pšes 4 l'ata ja s'e jenzyka pol'sk'ego, slova pol'sk'ego nie słyšalam i kedy pšyjeχalam tu do M'ínska... niekture svoje kob'ety fšystko zapomn'el'i... ja muv'e: „jak to zapomn'el'i” i okazuje s'e, nie z'ivnego. Ras nie rozmav'a s'e z'ec'i, a ja tyl'ko tšyma s'e jak ja tšymam s'e ješče... nie v'em, jak tšymam s'e... i... jakos' staram s'e teras časem cos'kol'v'ek, jakes' pare słuł po pol'sku, żeby troške, no i v'izom trudno, to tšeba s'e rozmav'ac'... tak Buk zexčał... Poł'ska ukarany... kaźde państvo zafše nagžešy tak... a my jak Poł'acy, fšystko rob'imy, pšec'eš było, al'e teš tak... Poł'ska... to χyba, že níkt i teras ježel'i tak pomys'lec'... to Poł'akom dužo, kto χce dob'ijac' χce, al'e nie barzo, bo te moje z'ec'i, χčel'i by okazuje s'e nie...

- A dlaczego nie mogą?

- *Ńe ma tyx dokumentuf fšystk'iŭ. Po p'erše, a po drug'e... trudno. Na pšyklad żežel'i vnuk raptem može postradać roboty. A sama rozumieš bes ŭleba... no... o i dl'atego... strašna ješče v'eš... kres ten... nič nie poraž'iš... tšeba žeby tak jakos' było... ŭočaš v'ize, že f Polšce... pravz'ivyx Polakuf barzo mała. Sama rozumieš, kšyš to učeł'i. Ońi Polacy juš troške... sama rozumieš... tšeba było žeby tak B'atorus'i potšebne... ońi f Polšce svoje tam... grupy te jak ońi, patšajom s'e by fšystko... tšeba jakos' Polakuf, žeby organ'izaciji jakejs' takej, ktura by jednočyl'i, jednak i fšystko, jak u nas rozumieš... Sama lepša b'atoruskaja.*

- Tak, to prawda.

- *Na kaźde slovo, łončyš b'ełaruskaje lepše, b'ełaruskie lepše, a fšy tam začnijće. Jak vy podejmujće žeby mieć kunke, ktury zna tyl'ko polšk'i jenzyk... h'istoryje... značy i sama głuvna žeč... by polšk'i jenzyk, polšk'i jenzyk žeby jakos' propagovac'... po rozgłos'ńaŭ, po radyju, že co polšk'e to dobre. Polšk'e lepše, polšk'e lepše, polšk'e lepše. Pańi rozum'e o čym ja mov'e. Ja rozum'em, małe ščegul'ne ni nie tšeba, žeby s'e ućyc'... že pam'entajće, že kto ty jestes'? Polak mały. Jak'i znak tvuj? A Pańi zna...?*

- No tak. Orzeł biały.

- *Ńe.*

- Jak nie?

- *L'il'ja bała.... Al'e ž'ełčynk'i: l'il'je bałe... Ućyc'. Kto ty jestes'? Polak mały. Jak'i znak tvuj? Ožeł bały... i tak dalej... Gž'e ty meškaš? M'enzy svym'i. V jak'im kraju? F polšk'ej zem'i... Obov'onskovo ućće kaźdego... al'e ž'ełčynk'i nie możne, že to i nie tšeba. Kto ty jestes'? Polak mały. Jak'i znak tvuj? L'il'je bałe.*

Fears about the children and grandchildren having work

Support for promoting Polish

Patriotic poems and songs

“Who are you?

-A little Polish girl.

- What's your emblem?

- A white lily.” (W. Bełza, *Katechizm polskiego dziecka* [“Catechism of the Polish Child”], Lwów 1912, pp. 3–4)

“The Snowstorm Killed the Clouds” – poem/song

- **A ja nie znałam tego. Pierwszy raz słyszę.**

- *Pravda. No bo zap'iš sobě. I učyc' sě tšeba... néxaj ožel b'aly znajom i dl'a z'efčynek: l'il'ja b'ala. V'iz'i ot, po p'erše, po drugę na pšyklat... my... u nas v domu, jak s'pěval'is'my pēs'ni po F stepě našym. Znaš te pōsenke? Ńe. S'nězna zaměc' obłok'i zb'ila.*

- **Nie znam.**

- *A... penzona poměny... pułnocny ślak. A f tej k'ib'i•ce pol'skej... dumne obl'iče ma. Pofstał młozėńec, potšonsnom głovom, ńe dbał, vzbuz'it žandarmufgńef... z oču obruc'it vzrok v roz'i•nom strone i tak'i smutny zasyp'a... i boi, boi sě roz'iny. O Pol'ske... o kraj... m'ila Pol'ska droga, gżė vol'nośc', gżė teras svoboda. Fšystko zg'ineło v reńku vroga. Ńikt juš teras reńki ńe poda. Ńe juš se swojej ańi roz'iny, fšystko... tak'i pōsenki u nas ucyli. Vanda leży v našej z'em'i, co ńe χc'ala Ńemca.*

Polish songs sung at home

- **To, to tak...**

- *Zna? Estro, Estro cuš nam ucyńilas'? Juzefa v nurtaχ utop'ila... zna te pōsenke?*

- **Słyszałam, tak.**

Vanishing tradition of singing patriotic songs at home

- *Juš sě teras tego v domaχ tak ńe s'pěva. Juš sě teras tego f Pol'sce, v domaχ ńe s'pěva tak'iχ... Věš s k'im tam s'pěvac'... že s'v. Juzefa... znamy juš fšystkiχ... dl'atego že ńe možna było tšymac', tšeba było znalež'l'i ńe daj Bože, no... teras značy... ješče jakė pōsenki: Na c'ixy věčur majovy, aš... Bėgła z'ėvečka, pšes las dembovy... Bėgła z'efčynka pšes las dembovy, z'ėvečka ta, bėgła z'ėvečka tak zadumana napšec'if cyganka ubrana, moja cyganka tyχ vruży... las zašum'i, ty go zrozuměš, proše*

změń... a ja c'i dam nalėžne z'ėńki... vružyc' kazala s'm'alo, žyc' mus'i, mēc' do koχańa

ńe zmus'i. On chce majontku, us'měchańa greckěj bog'ińi, dumnego čola, ty jestes' s'erotom... u z'ěc'i, ic' sobě šukac'... po s'věc'e.

Hiding in Minsk during the interwar period

- **Przed wojną w Mińsku Pani mieszkała z rodzicami, gdzieście mieszkali?**

- Jak my ućekl'i měškańe, mys'my měškal'i tak... jednom noc u jednyx znajomyx... kośc'ul barzo pomagał. Potem juš ńe měškal'is'my pšed vojnom juš mogl'i zěm'e, ńe vojna, pšed vojnom dal'i měškańe jak'es', značy jak'es' dostał'is'my... dl'atego že, jak cały rok my ńe choz'il'i do škoły, m'eł'is'my skryc' svoje ...

- **Żeby nie odkryli, że jesteście...**

- ... tak... a potem juš tak pošl'i... spočontku f p'iońerax, potem f kamsamolce na końec s'e najbarz'ej... takže byl'is'my... djabeł komuńistku, curka komuńistka... sama rozum'eš..., žebyś była... o tak... tak'e sprawy... c'ekav'e to tob'e?

- **Kościół mnie ciekawi, historia kościoła, sakramenty. Mówiła Pani o chrzcie, potem o Komunii i spowiedzi, że w Czerwonym Kościele. A bierzmowanie?**

- B'ěžmovańe to juš po vojńe... ńe pam'entam, f kturym roku teš, ał'e f Červonym kośc'ěle... b'ěžmovańe. Teras Złote Vesel'e teš było f Červonym kośc'ěle.

Confirmation

- **A ślub gdzie Pani brała?**

- A s'lup brał'is'my v V'il'ńe.

- **A w Wilnie?**

- Tak... bo... dl'atego że tutaj ńe było, ńe można było. Navet dokumentuf pros'il'is'my, żeby ńe p'isal'i dla nas... a teras żałuje sob'e, bo teras by byl'i... a teras... v'iz'iš... k'edys' v V'il'ńe, teras tak samo... jak'i i M'ińsk... jakos' pšyjexac' tšeba było.

Wedding in St Theresa's Church in Vilnius

Christening of grandchildren in both Orthodox and Catholic churches

No, ale juš tyl'ko v Ostrej Bramè, tam možna vzòrić. S'ľup bral'is'my v Ostrej Bramè, gžè teš xšćony. Žeć'i fšystk'i xšćono... vnuki pravè fšystkè, ale... nékture f cerkv'i juš... Xšćone... tak... nékture jest ješće... Curk'i staršy syn, dvoje žeć'i. Žećynke juš xšć'il'i f cerkv'i, a tak xłopak został sè, ktuš vè... može časem... ružné byva... Pšecèš kto to mys'lał, že gruxnie Zv'ionzek Razèck'i... ž'is' komu to pšyšło do głovy. Raptem stało sè. Sama rozumèš... al'bo ta... i juš... pros'imy Boga, že teras juš błogosłavòny Ojćec s'v. Jan Paveł II. Može On bežžè orendovnikèm za svojom ojczyznom. Cos'kol'vèk cos'...

- Czy był taki czas w Mińsku, że wszystkie kościoły były zamknięte? Czy zawsze jakiś działał?

Closed Catholic churches in Minsk

- V'iz'is', byl'i zamkněnty, z'alał... Mša... no i ... vòska tam, čy stacja... Červona nazyva sè, Krasneje... ale to Uša... kosc'ul Bały... potem z'alał, jemu v ružnyx mějscovoš'cax, v M'ińsku byl'i fšystko zakryte... navet f Kal'varyii zbèral'i sè... by tam, né byla f Kalvaryji?

- Byłam... byłam, byłam.

Prayers of the Catholic community at the Calvary Cemetery in Minsk

- Jak tam laž'ila, z drugèj strony laž'ila, takè čtery f'igury, né čtery – dvè, za ogroženè jak stont isć, s tamtej strony, tam zbèral'i sè, ale... né pozvalał'i sè tam vybèrac' i modl'ic' sè...

- Ale ksiądz, ludzie zbierali się?

Difficult beginnings of religious life

- Ně, nìkogo né było... s tego Červonego, s Krasneje... né było nìkogo, dlàtego že Kal'varja była zamkněnta. Złota ježž'il'i f tak'i ružne mějscovoš'ci, bo ta tu pèrša, co był, to Kal'varja. Kal'varja potem Červony, potem značy Katedra i to fšystko zavžènčajonc ks. Vładysłava Zavaľnuku proboščem, že to tyl'ko jego. Jak to jego praca, jego rozum, jego fšystko... z něgo to... i Złota Gurka,

The merits of Father Zawalniuk

i Katedre, i Červony Kosč'uł, i Kał'varja i to... jexał... jakos'... značy... o tak, ałe o fšystko... o tam sam Boz..., jak to muv'i sě, zakazašy nie odvez'iš. Jak nie rozmav'aš... to zapom'inaš. Jak rozmav'am... jak bylam f Pol'sce... značy dva razy... i bym pojexala, to svobodnie... nie

- **Ale Pani pięknie mówi po polsku...**

- Pšyjeχala tak jakby do domu... trošk'i, teras to ja troške zapom'inam, dl'atego že nie rozmav'ac'... i oñi navet nie v'ežom, že to... a tam, skont sě pšyjeχalo čy cos'... no a teras trudno, cuš rob'ic'... o takě sprawy... co ješče χcalaaby usłyšec'?

- **A czy z mężem Pani po polsku rozmawiała?**

Use of Polish

- A my z menžem rozmav'al'i, v'adomo že rozmav'al'i...

- **Po polsku?**

- Po pol'sku. A on teš stont poχoz'it'... on sam v M'ińsku uroz'it' sě... sam... był... brat jego był, teš służył f katedže. Značy... tam... m'iništrantem, dl'atego był doktorem, a potem... značy był na grañicy doktorem, v nevole popat sě. Vyżył, ałe Němcy... bo był doktor, a doktor baržo dobry značy, ałe nič nie tšeba było, komu płac'ic', bo svuj doktor, a

Speaking Polish to husband

Her husband

Her brother-in-law

jak naše pšyšl'i, to jego za kołneš i... V M'ińsku nie było, pozvol'il'i... no a žena i dvoje z'ec'i zg'inel'i, dl'atego že z grañicy jak gžes' on był... roz'ina gžes' byla, čy evakuovana... šukał'i... Nigž'e nič...zg'inel'i gžes'. A ona f Tadžyk'istañe, potem pracovał, a... ałe značy... curka jego, curka nič, curka żyje, wžoł dokont poz'el'iš sě, ałe... a druga počekaj, jakže ona... Ol'ga teš wyšla za Tadžyka... ten Tadžyk značy popatšył, jak začely sě ružne zav'eruxy, on značy vyježžał do Pol'sk'i, ot... b'eže nazv'isko žony, ałe v'ary nie χce zmėnić'.

Wandering

- Był muzułmaninem?

- On, został sê pšy svojej vëže. On tam račej nie barzo vëžoncy, ałe on nie nie χce, tyl'ko nazv'isko. I pracuje, značy ma, jest sê v Varšavë na pogotov'u... a meškajom oni... od granicy našej niedalëko... miasto... ałe zapomniãłam...

Family in Poland**- Białystok?**

- Ñe, nie, nie, nie Białystok. Jakos' f strone tam. Kl'učbork, pamientam. A tego drugëgo na fotograf'iji pšysłał'i zobačył... o pšysłał'i fotograf'ije, ałe ja nie moge zobačyc', ani pšečytac'. Zobačyc', może tu miasto beńż'e nap'isane, nie?

- Tu jest napisane: nasza wnuczka Dombrówka.

- Ewa i Ola, to z'ec'i mojej sòstry i vnučka. Vnučka Dõmbrufka, to duža jak na 4,5. Vzglõnda na staršõŭ. I co tutaj ješče? A... Juzef, Maryša, ja i muj mõiš. Maryša sòstra moja teš, stryječna. A to jej monš Juzef. Al'dony monš S'erg'ej. Ałe jak ta m'ejscovosč'... to nie ma. Ñe ma. Ałe to nie.

- Proszę Pani, jak katolicy przed wojną, żyli? Czy się wspierali? Czy sobie pomagali? Pamięta Pani, czy mama miała przyjaciółki z kościoła?**Secretly learning the catechism**

- Pšed vojnom, meškał'is'my značy u svoix jak to nazyval'is'my. Mama zbërała, toš potajemnie učyła z'ec'i katex'izmu. Učyła ve fšystkë... po pol'sku, no i učyła značy, zašë, dl'atego že pšykrysto fšystko Kryłov... bas'ne Kryłova. My ix učyl'i vëš, tak o, ałe... učyl'i... jedni drugëmu pomagali, vãdomo Polacy byl'i... barzo tak jedne... zvõnzane jedno z drug'im. I značy zbërali sê v meškañax ñekturyx, nie zašë v jednym m'ejscu, učyl'i fšystkë te pòsenk'i i to takë by'i... z vygnañia, to fšystko... teras značy ruźne tam byl'i orgańizacje... fšystko... i pšed vojnom ješče ktuš... V M'ińsku tak samo... Katedra... jeden drugëmu postarał'i sê roboty gž'es', na pšyklat moja matka.

Mutual support among Poles in Minsk in the interwar period

Muj ojcęc zg'inoł v 29 roku, to wypadek był... no... i značy mama zostala sě, troje z'ec'i, bes pracy, s kosćola jom užonž'il'i značy sě... žyła na... jedno značy. Potem navet te ojca, ojca zmarl'i, choval'i go f Kalvarji. Značy mam χc'ala dac' ksěnz'u p'ěnenzy, a kšonc, v'ěčnej paměńc'i, Pučyńeŕsk'i pokazal na ňe, a nas troje s'ědzom... muv'i: „Ot v'ěš ty co, tvoje s'ědzom bose, a ty m'ńe p'ěnenzy daješ... puž'ě i kup'i sandały”. V'iz'iš, jak ksěnz'a odnos'il'i sě do tego, značy žadnej platy, ňic ňe vzol. Opruč tego, ježel'i daval'i na Mšom, čy cos', zafše pytal sě: „Kšyvdy ňe rob'iš roz'ine?”. Jak nas'i ksěnz'a fšystkě... i teras jakos' juš... i potem pošl'i po vojńe. Davałam na Mše, i ne pravda i kšonc zapytal: „A ty možeš takě p'ěnoņze?”. Tak samy ksěnz'a pytajom sě. Ja v'em, že ot tego zdavalo sě tu ňedavno nam sě. Ty ňe kšyvz'iš roz'iny, v'iz'i fčym žeč? Že na tym byl'i ońi... jak položenem l'uz'i, jak'i glos... barzo pomagali... starali sě gžes' jakos', čy z robotom dac', čy... cos' takěgo. Opruč tego pomagali, ježel'i možna cos' bylo takěgo drug'emu. No a teras nam pomagajom. Kosćul utšymuje, Červony, pšes Červony... tam davna m'ilitarka. Pomaga. Toš Germańi... toš Němcy. Z'ec'i jez'z'ily na otpočynek... navet m'el'i bl'isko i fšystko.

- A Pani wnuki do Polski jeździły?

- Jez'z'il'i, da.

- Tak

- Jez'z'il'i, byl'i, otpočyval'i. Navet z'efčynk'i i syna, vnučk'i syna juš... otpočyval'i juš f Polšce i každy rok. Ja ježže tam i fšystko. Takže Polška teš mamy, jak može, to može.

- Czy może mi Pani opowiedzieć jeszcze o polskiej szkole w Mińsku przed wojną?

- była szkoła

Father's death

The priest's goodness and help for the bereaved family

Grandchildren on holiday in Poland

Polish school in Minsk before the Second World War

- Pani chodziła do tej szkoły?

- *Ńe. Do školy Ńe choziła. Choziła do školy mojej pšyjaćulki, s kturom my chozilismy do procesji, do kościółta. Szkoła była, dlatego powězec, f škole Ńe vĕm... vĕm tyl'ko, že to była szkoła polska, f polsk'im jenzyku i potem značy, zdaje '36 roku Stał'in vybudoval škole, školy i ftedy značy, zakryli te polska szkoła, nakryli žydofska, a zec'i po mejscovos'caχ... tam gž'e, kto žyl... ot... rozžel'ili jako že školy i fšystko. A tak była szkoła polska, jako te školy i fšystko. A tak była szkoła polska, była sama, o tu na dvorcu. Ježel'i ide na dvožec, tam značy červone takĕ budynki, one ješče stare stojom... tak'i skverek, jak iz'eš na dvožec jest tak'i skvĕr. Tam, značy, stoi. Jak to z jakĕj strony, ježel'i iz'eš... tak... Ježel'i jez'eš... to tam zobaczyš...*

- Zobaczę.

- *Jest takĕ, Ńevĕl'ke skvĕr, on tam, stoi zĕfcyna, s tak'im parasolĕm zrobonym. Tam spujš i tam jest tak'i budynek, tak'i s červonej cegły, na rogu, f tym... kĕdys' była szkoła polska... no vĕncej cuš ja...*

- A Pani gdzie się uczyła?

Home schooling

- *F škole, v domu. Mama razem učonc zec'i, kto χćal učyc' polskĕgo jenzyka. Ja učyłam sĕ po polsku fšystko, pĕrše čytaŃe, pĕrše opovadaŃe, to fšystko było polskĕ, potem učyło sĕ, juš... na arytmetyka, tam fšystko, to sama rozumieš, ... takĕže ja... my do školy Ńe chozilismy i tyl'ko jak szkoła... tšeba było išč' do školy takĕj zvyčajnej, značy była bĕsada i tego, značy ja pošlam do tšecĕj kłasy, od razu pošlismy, dlatego že pšygotovyval'i nas. I potem učyłam sĕ. Potem χćalam spočontku byc' doktorem i navet pošla i egzam'iny*

Dreams of studying medicine

zdała, tyl'ko že jeden egzam'in zdała, jednego baj...

- Punktu?

- Jednego procenta m'i nie starczyło. Na fakul'ciet... potem muv'ili, že zglupala. Tšeba bylo isč' gžes', na sańitarnie... raz'eckego... a po ukońcieniu zakończyš maturom. Tak ftedy možna bylo pujsč', a ja no... zexčala muv'i se na... nu mńe dano takè PGR-y... može na nastempny rok zdac' ten egzam'in. Dostałam trujke... jak'is' profesor... ja pracovalaam i zdavalaam egzam'iny... značy zdac' na nastempny rok... začelo se šsystko... juš po vojńe kańčalaam svoje nauk'i i pracovalaam naučycel'kom, z z'ec'i głučym'i. O tak, takže.

Working with deaf children

- Musiała Pani znać język migowy.

- Da. No to juš... jak to muv'i se, jak zexceš, to... o•davało se tom le•kośc'. Jakos' nie davało se barzo le•ko, može dlatego tak'i, cuš ja v'i•na... ot takè spravy. Teš pravde šsystkè końčily vy•še ucel'ńe, dla šsystkè učycel'e. No, a naučycel'e to u nas byl'i i jak to muv'i se za płace, oššymyval'i groše.

Low teaching salary

- Tak, jak u nas.

- Zafše, dlatego že učycel'e byl'i tak... vėš jak to muv'i se: naučycel'e, to... matematyk'i nie mogli tańcyč' juš naučycel'e... no nič nie poraż'iš. Sama głuńne žyła, mus'i takè pšez'yč'e, že Poł'ska jest obabrana, okražona. No, ałe juš o tym níkomu nie povėš... Níč juš se teras, nič... co zrob'ic'. Juš se teras po tyl'u latač' nič nie zrob'i. Ałe o... ftedy bylo takè položen'e, že... šsystko mu to do głovy vyšlo, že... ruč' nie... pravda čyš... i ot kedy mama pouča i jej ve s'ńe nie bylo, že to može cos'kol'vėk zrob'ic', a tu v'iz'iš, v'jedna sekunda i bes šsystkėgo. V'iz'iš, tyl'ko níkt nie xce tego pšyznac', zavz'ėnčajonc s'v. Jana Pavła II. Toš on rozval'il to

Merits of the pope

fšystko, né... ot tak samo mys'li... každý rozumè... bo né χce pšyznac' tego...ot.... Né zrozumèl'i níc, níc né zrozumèjom. Níc né zrozumèjom, dl'atego že pravoslavè bèže rak, že né vèš... a teras ja mys'lała može, jak Obama pojexał, že byl'i f Polšce, to každý svoje tšyma. A ftedy ońi tak vèš... i ftedy čemuš ońi, znuftedy barzo... barzo cos' takego... troške može sam'i Polacy, žeby ońi tak Francja, te fšystkè galancy, te fšystkè kap'itul'iry pšet N'ncam'i. Polacy mys'lel'i tak... ostońic' sè od jednyχ i od drug'ix.

- Proszę Pani, jak tutaj otworzyli kościoły to najpierw po polsku się odprawiało, a potem białorusku? Jak to było?

Renaissance of religious life in Belarus

- V'iz'is, modl'itevník pèršy byl f polšk'im jenzyku. A teras fšystko, nu potšebujom z jednej strony, níc né poraz'is. Państvo, no alè barzo agresyvńi ońi... barzo agresyvny. Ščegul'ne Bèlarus vèš... a ježel'i kopnonc' napravde, vžonc' jakèš' pare setek lat, to fšystko Polacy byl'i, tyl'ko, že ftedy Grožny, Katažyna. Ońi vyžonzal'i, toš patšaj... Raz'iv'il... jak'i ońi pravoslavne... toš katol'icy, Polacy. Nu, alèš v'iz'is, žeby né... jak to muv'i sè, né postrada žemòm, bogactvem, pšexoz'il'i na pravoslavè a teras pravoslavny, rusk'i... i fšystko. No, alè vèš co? Cuda byvajom, pšecèš né cud, sama pomys'li, zrujnoval'i v Moskve Xrysta Spas'icèl'... komuš to do głovy pšyšło, že on beńžè znovu stac'. Komu do głovy pšyšło, že stoi kłańajmy sè f cerkv'i. Takže v'iz'is... jak Pan Buk zexce, to može cos' zrobic'... ježel'i On stvožyl s'vat tak'i... sama rozumèš. I ot, ktury barzo jest tak i vèš... nékturys' ras Bèlarus'ista tak'i... on z zajadły né v'adomo co... ot, alè fšystko v reńku Boga. Fšystko v reńku Boga. Tyl'ko taka naž'èja, že može kèdys', by né može... no alè zreštom, kto jeho vè. A tak v M'ínsku fšystko bylo zakryte, to głuχło, na cmentažu f Kal'varji zbèral'i sè, dl'atego že Złota Gurka od razu začel'i tam

First prayer books in Polish

History of Belarus from the interlocutor's perspective

budovac'. Po čym ona zostala sě, košč'ut' ostat sě, pojeńća nie mam f čym tam byla... jeho nie znes'li... a f Kalvarji zběral'i sě na cmenatažu... ale tšeba było po večur osoby tak, žeby...

- Czy zbierali się na modlitwę w domach, czy tylko na Kalwarii?

V'iz'is', v domaχ baržo leńkal'i sě. Zběral'i sě, tam mēškał'ismy v Os'manaχ, tam zběral'i sě, tam zběral'i sě specjał'ne, tam jakos' było f tyχ rejonach...

- Spokojnie było.

- Spokojnej było także, dl'atego że tam košč'ut' odkryty. V domaχ zběral'i sě, vyběral'i sě teras, pšet vojnom na pšyklad, to był tak'i požondek... sonsėzi, značy był zrobony ottaš... no gospodarke, fšystko značy. Ten, kto zostavał sě, žeby dopatšec' krovny, s'v'ine i fšystko značy, zostavał'i sě, rešta jexal'i do Košč'ota, do M'ińska. Xoc' my žyl'i pod M'ińskėm, 12 v'orst od M'ińska, ot značy... a tu... kto zostavał sě, zběral'i... sonsėzi zběral'i sě... otpravała sě Mša, čy Nešpory... to v niežele i s'venta było. Na pšyklad i na Vel'kanoc, dl'atego že nie možna było, ale otpravał'i i Bože Narožeńe my i Vel'kanoc, i Zel'one S'vontk'i, to fšystko vyznačal'i. Znajom my χoinka, np.: nie možna było stavač', stavał'i, ale my stavał'i f sypal'ni, potem žv'i zamykal'i, šafom zastavał'i. Nu, žeby to nie było. Jajka farboval'i teš tak samo, ale tšeba było lup'ink'i zebrac', žeby niikt, Bože broń, nie zobačył, čyl'i byl'i Červońi. Nu pšyχoz'il'i, jako juš pracovałam naučyc'el'kom. Značy pšyχoz'il', cėkav'il'... na Vel'kanoc, fšystko, ale my teš stuł nakryval'i gžes' f sypal'ni, f pokoju zaběral'i fšystko i nič, jakby nič nie było. Dl'atego že nie možna było. Z robotom zabrał'i by i fšystko. A bez roboty sama rozumėš...

Fears of exposure during prayer in homes

Celebrating Easter and Christmas

Concealing celebrations from the communists

- Fears over using Polish** - **A jeżeli chodzi o język polski, to też trzeba było się ukrywać? Czy tak otwarcie można było mówić?**
 - *Ńe... patšonc gźe, v jakim s'rodov'isku...*
 - **No właśnie, to w jakim można było po polsku? A w jakim nie?**
- Polish only among "one's own"** - *Staral'i s'e ne muv'ic', dl'atego že... nítki ne x'cał s'e naražac'... jak to muv'i s'e luže leńkajom s'e, leńkajom s'e... i dl'atego rozmav'ac' na ul'icy, to juš žatko...*
 - **A w domu?**
- Current language situation** - *V domu, m'enzy svoim'i, f s'rodov'isku svoim... a tak, v ot... teras jakos' ne... juš ne tak, xoc' tu ne ma s k'im rozmav'ac'. Dl'atego že tutaj fšyscy B'elarus'i starajom s'e, B'elarus'i al'bo Rosjańe, al'e tutaj juš ne xova s'e, že ty katol'ik, že ty tam iz'eš do koš'c'ola, ot teras tak... al'e co, ja nič ne trace... a ot na roboč'e... troške, níby to nič, a na samej žečy... starajom s'e teš tak samo svoix postav'ic' žeby....*
 - **A jak to było, że mama do Warszawy przyjechała?**
- Interlocutor's mother in the Polish Home Army** - *Ońi byl'i ftej... jak to nazyva s'e?*
 - **Armia Krajowa?**
 - *Da! Bo, to tutaj, značy jak Ńemcy pšyšl'i...*
 - **Rozumiem.**
 - *Rož'ina moja, fšystk'iχ. A ja juš byłam v vojsku. I ońi fšystk'e vyjeχal'i. znaczy fšystk'e vyjeχal'i, opruč tego... tu był brat... čekaj... brat mojego ojca značy.... v '20 roku dostal'is'my kartke, že zg'inoł on był... A on okazuje s'e, został s'e f Pol'sce. Ńe, sama čekava była tak, jak Ńemcy*
- The family's fate**

pšyšl'i. Oñi vyjeχal'i, on vyjeχal do Grodna. Alè do Grodna kil'ka mèsency, Němcy, a potem značy, jak a mèskał on v Markaχ. Ignacy... no i značy v Grodñe roz' i sè Anžej u ñiχ, syn i tutaj Grodno pokazal sè na našej stroñe. Oñi znovu do Suwałek zdonžyl'i... i od razu vyjeχal'i do... vruc'il'i i teras žyjjom f Polšce, značy, jak to muv'i sè, v ... jak to muv'i sè... zvoñimy jedno do drugej, fšystko bylo Moñik'i žèlo. Ot v'iz'iš, on zostal'i sè, alèš to v'iz'iš jakže byl v Grodñe, zostal'i to i fšò, a tak vžèl'i znovu davaj nazat, f Suwałk'i i tam zostal'i. Potem rob'il'i, šukał'is'my, ñic, ñe jak žadnyχ v'adomoš'ci, v'adome trudne bylo. Ot v'iz'iš, alè Božeñka pomuğł im... tak ot... a mñe on... p'iš sobè... zob... A to ja odvlekam cèbè?

**From Grodno to Marki,
from Marki to Suwałki**

Mohilev

The below statement was transcribed in summer 2011 in Mohilev. The informer was born in 1920 in the Mohilev region. She attended Polish school between the wars. Unfortunately, I was unable to record her account of this period. She uses Russian on an everyday basis, and her Polish speech is full of Russian interjections. After around a quarter of an hour, she switched to Russian, explaining that she had become accustomed to this language and found it easier. The below statement was recorded while looking at her family album. It is worth emphasising that the language used in the very brief Polish passages is linguistically correct.

[MohJB91/2011F]

Ježel'i on [syn] bylby v domu, byłoby baržo dobže. Kèdy jego [syna] ñi beñžè, ja vam cus' povèm. Pèrša curka Reg'ina, druga – Mar'ija, a čšèca Al'b'ina, a ten Alèksander najmłočšy.

The interlocutor's children

Čšèba poslušac', co umèjo našy Bèłarusy. Tak to šukajon Polakuf?

Dvoz'èstego čšèčègo vžes'nà jej beñžè dva rok'i. To muj pravnuk Maks'im, pètnašcè lat, g'imnaz'ju kančajet. Ja muv'ilam vam, u mñe z'ac' zav'edujet g'imn'az'ijej.

Grandson Maxim

- Maxim's father** [Pravnuk] dobže ucy sè i ješče matem'atyka vžon, 'eta dab'avočnoje takoje. Možna vybërac', këm χceš byc'. [...] Dobry był papa [pravnuka], alë nëdobry čym [gest pokazyvańa al'kohol'izmu] i zmarł. I u mamy jego, o to mama i gžë ona ješče jest, to kedy młoda taka była, a to starša, a to młoda. Moja vnučka skońčyla teš uniwersytet, naš uniwersytet – Kulëšova.
- Educated granddaughter** To proše može rence čšeba umyc', gžë to maj'a žëtočka [syn]?Vot a eto ručk'i vyc'irac'.
- To u mnë mamusa tej vnučk'i masčëer po vërχñej ažëžžë mušskoj i ženskoj.
- Vot staršej dočkë u mnë šëz'žësont sëm lët, to ona s curka.
- Her daughter** Jak ja χcālap do Pol'ski pojeχac', nígdy ñe bylam, ñi Šenk''ev'iča, ñi M'ick''ev'iča ñi Až'eško ñikogo ñe v'iz'alam, tyl'ko čytałam, teras fšystko zapomńalam.
- Dreams of travelling to Poland** V žëck'ij sat χaž'ila, a potem do pol'skaj školy, s pëřšego klāsa i sedmōlatke pol'skon skončyłam, a potem pošla v licej, muzykal'nym licejuje, i tam značyt ošëm, žëvëñc', žëšëñc', jedenasčë klāsy to opščeobrazovatel'nyje klāsy i ñemëck'i jazyk, tak što čytac' pa ñemëck'i, navërno, kak i pa rusk'i umëju.
- Polish school in pre-war Mohilev**
- Gdzie się Pani urodziła?**
- V Mag'ilovë. A roz'ice, oj Kar'ytnica, pa m'ojemu tak była vës' mam'us'ina, ja
- Place of birth and mother's fate** znaju što Kar'ytnica ješč' takoje, navërno f Kar'ytnice m'amočka był'a i u ñej dvë čy čšy sōstry były i brat. I baržo c'ikavo. Potem mamusi ñi stało, tam była ñivāstka [...] i u mamy p'ap'inaj ñe było curek, fsò m'alčyk'i, fšystko χłopcy. I fšystkë χłopcy umël'i fšystko rob'ic', pomagac' mamë. A u mamy tam curk'i byl'i i jeden tyl'ko brat. I on žeñil së i ta ñevāstka była χaž''ajkaj fšëvo.

[...] załofka [b'ęgala po fs'i i kšyčala] moja droga
Kam'il'ka [matka pańi Jańiny] co ja narub'ila,
jaka ona čysta, jaka ona dobra.

Na ojca on podobny, a to muj małeńk'i prawnuk,
proše. Dobrego apetytu.

[s'p'ęva] Sv'ęnty Antońi dobry naš brac'e, łaskam'i
žyc'e nam vzbogacaš [2 razy]

Mohilev

In the below statement, departures from standard Polish occur mostly at the phonetic level, in particular the preserved dental *ł* and soft *l* in all positions. The informer pronounces nasal sounds as in standard Polish. In grammatical terms, this Polish displays very few differences from literary Polish. It is also important to note that the informer lived in Eastern Belarus, and had not used Polish in daily life for many years.

[MohSK82/2011F]

Tutaj duža była ješče grupka l'uz'i, ktuży modl'il'i
s'e po pol'sku, choc'aš no v domaχ muv'il'i po
b'ałorusku al'bo po rosyjsku ot, al'e modl'il'i s'e po
pol'sku i vlaš'ne v než'eł'e

i s'v'ęnta zb'ęrał'i s'e na cmentažu, no juš m'el'i svoje
okres'łone goz'iny i modl'il'i s'e, s'p'ęval'i p'ęs'ńi.
I v'e pańi časem byvalo tak, že ja pod v'ęčur ide na
cmentaš i začyna troχe zmrok jak gdyby zapadac',
i ten s'p'ęf na cmentažu to cos' ņesamov'itego bylo.
To bylo tak'e p'ęnkne. No vlaš'ne stavał'i obras,
gz'eš' tam na jak'ims' grobofcu. I vlaš'ne p'ęset tym
oltažem modl'il'i s'e s'p'ęval'i p'ęs'ńi. No vot to to
vlaš'ne m'i s'e barzo podobalo. No i ščegul'ne tutaj
tak uročys'č'e op'χozono s'v'ęnto s'v'ęntego Antońego
Padefsk'ęgo, bo l'ičyl'i, že to on jest patronem
Mog'il'ofšczyzny. Tak, tak byl i obras [cudovny] i
tutaj tšynastego čerfca zježžal'i s'e s'pobl'isk'iχ fs'i.
To juš tak, jak to bylo jak bylo zaprovazone k'ędys',
jak bylo pšyjente k'ędys'. Zježžalo s'ęn dužo

**Polish in the sacred sphere
(prayers) and Belarusian in
everyday life**

**Hymns sung at the cemetery
in Mohilev**

**Anthony of Padua – patron
of the Mohilev region**

luz'i. Spotykal'i sè tutaj, xož'il'i na svoje mog'ily, odvězal'i svoix bl'isk'ix zmartyx i mod'il'i sè. To vlas'ne teš bylo barzo pènkne, že to bylo jak otpust na S'v'entego Antońego, luzè pamèntal'i, pšyježžal'i.

A księza tu przyjeżdżali?

Church fair without priests

To fšystko bylo bes ks'enży, bes ks'enży, luzè sam'i. No a puz'nej pańi Gertruda umarla. Natural'ne ten jej domek rozebral'i. Počontkovo za jej domkèm byl duży kaval' cmentaža, gžè ne bylo pozvolone

German graves

χovac', dl'atego bo tam byly – tak mne muv'il'i, ja ne v'em, cy to jest pravda – byl'i poχovańi nemè•cy zołńeže. No i puz'nej pšešlo natural'ne sporo lat no i teras tam jest juš fšystko zajente, som mog'ily juš teras vlas'ne tam možna bylo χovac'

Mrs Wikcia, who took care of the cemetery

na tym mjejscu. No teras ješče pamèntam pańon V'ikc'e. Pańi V'ikc'a – Pol'ka, jakos' losy jom zagnaly do Mog'il'ova i tutaj ona meškala s svojon còcòn staruškön. Całe svoje dñe – juš ona byla barzo stara – ona na cmentažu tym vlas'ne spenzala. Opχoz'ila mog'ily, gžè mogla, cos' tam vyrvala jakons' trafke,

Missing Poland

mod'lila sè na pevno dužo. I ta pańi V'ikc'a to tak całym'i dñam'i vlas'ne byla na tym cmentažu. Meškala nedal'eko ot cmentaža, a juš jej ta còca byla barzo stara. No otšymyvaly natural'ne emeryture no i s tego żyly. Ona tak jakby trošecke juš byla v ne barzo dobrym stañe umysłovym. No tak, alè vlas'ne cały čas fšpom'inala, gžè ona kèdys' meškala, tenskn'ila do tyx mjejsc. Ona natural'ne meškala na byłym terytorium Pol'sk'i. No tenskn'ila do tyx mjejsc, zafše muv'ila, žeby χentne tam pojexala. No alè tu ne bylo žadnyx juš možl'ivosč'i. Zdrovè jej juš ne pozval'alo, v'enc ona całe dñe na tym cmentažu spenzala. Puz'nej ta pańi V'ikc'a umarla.

Skąd Pani przyjechała do Mohylewa

Ja pšyjeχalam z Grodna, v Grodně ja zakończyłam studia i pšyjeχalam tutaj. Byłam skėrovana tutaj do pracy. Tak do pracy. Počontkovo ja osem lat pšepracovałam ve fs'i C'išofka, to tutaj obok miasta, tutaj nédalėko, pare k'ilometruf od miasta. No a puz'nej ja pracovałam juš v mėsčė. No i tutaj vlas'ne dostalałam mėsčanko takė ma'utkė jednopokojove i mys'my ve tšy tutaj mėskały: mama, mamy sòstra i ja. No ja pracovałam f školė. F časė vakaciji pracovałam v instytucė na zaočnym – jak to povėž'ec' – o•z'elė z zaočnikam'i. No i tak całe žycė ja tutaj pšėžyłam. Alė mam, m'alam dvux braci' f Pol'sce. No jeden brat f pėnż'ėšontym pėřšym roku prosto mał tšyž'ėš'ci pėnć' lat, šedł do pracy i v'idać spuz'nał sė, šypko starał sė vlas'ne dojsč' do tej pracy i upadt pot tramvaj, no ji natural'ne n'a s'mėrc'. No i on poχovany jest v Gdańsku na Srebrzysku. Drug'i brat muj mėskał v Gdyni, no i tam mał roz'ine – žena i dvoje ž'ec'i, no a teras ni brat ni bratova nė žyjom, no a tyl'ko moi bratańica i bratanek. No ja čensto byvałam u niχ i čensto

jez'z'ilał do Pol'ski. No ji navet f pšėřlym roku ja vruc'ilał s Pol'ski – s'udmego grudńa. No a teras byłam dva tygodńe v Grodně. No Grodno ja barzo l'ubė to małto, barzo koχam to małto, ono jest pėnėkne. Jak sė učyłam tam vlas'ne v instytucė pedagog'ičnym, to mys'my navet pšygotovyval'i sė do tego do egz'am'inuf nad Nemnem v lasečku, no tam zbėral'is'my! Całom grupkom i vlas'ne pšygotovyval'is'my sė do egz'am'inuf. Grodno natural'ne ja znam i vzdłuř i fpopřek, fšystkė sčėřk'i vybėgane, bo v'ogulė nė l'ub'ilał v domu sėž'ec'. Ja teras jak vracam pamėnč'co, to navet nė pamėntam, kėdy ja sėž'alał i učyłam sė. Mńe sė zdavało, že ja tyl'ko bėgałam.

The interlocutor's origin and education

Work

Family in Gdańsk and Gdynia

Frequent visits to Poland

Beloved city – Grodno

Interlocutor's place of birth and fortunes

Ja sè uroz'itam v Bžes'cu. Uroz'itam sè v Bžes'cu. Muj tata był kolejażem i jego pšezucał'i. Jak dva lata młalam, to pšyjeħal'is'my do Zdołbunova, to jest na Wołyńu. Tam jest młasto Ruvne. To ñedaleko tego młasta Ruvnego jest male młastečko Zdołbunuf, ałe barzo ładne teš młastečko, to mys'my vlas'ne tam młeskał'i. No a puz'nej tata otšet od nas, zostav'il nas jednyħ i u nas natural'ne začeny sè čenske dñi. No ji pšyjeħala z Grodna mamy, jak pověz'ec', dvurodna [s'ostro]. No i ona zobačyla, že my čensko, s trudnoščom pšepyħamy sè pšes žyčè. Ona pověz'ata: d'avaj ja Stefke zabore do sèbè, ñeħ benzè u mñe, vam jest barzo čensko. No i ja, ona zabrała mñe. Ja ze Zdołbunova jakr'as pošlam do p'eršej klasy. Pojeħalam vlas'ne do Grodna ji dva lata ja młeskałam u tej c'oc'i svojej – u c'oc'i Koc'i, ona Konstancja. A puz'nej pšyjeħala i mama z mojimi brač'm'i i z mojo c'oca Marys'o. No ji tutaj młeskał'is'my v Grodnie.

- Jak pani przyjechała do Mohylewa, to te kobiety rozmawiały jeszcze między sobą po polsku, czy tylko się modliły?

Repressions of Poles in Mohilev in the 1930s

Račej ñe [rozmav'ano po polsku], dl'atego, bo tutaj były sil'ne represje f tšyž'estyħ lataħ, na počontku tšyž'estyħ. Ftedy pozamykał'i škoły, była tutaj i pol'ska škola do tšyž'estyħ lat. Zamknel'i škoły. No tutaj zamknel'i ñe tyl'ko pol'skom, ałe tam i żydofskè te škoły. No i vlas'ne zamknel'i kos'čoły. No takže v domu bał'i sè luž'è pšyžnavac' do tego, že som Pol'akam'i. No i vlas'ne zap'isal'i sèbè jako B'aluřus'ini čy tam Rosjañe. No ji v domu natural'ne muv'il'i po rosyjsku, čy b'aluřusku. A ja pracovałam ošem p'erfsyħ lat ve fs'i jak ja muv'itam i to była kedy's čysto pol'ska v'eš, bo nazv'iska takè były: Ńež'več'ki, Čeħańsk'i, Pogužel'sk'i, Łonck'i – to moi uč'novè byl'i tam, no Ńečyporov'iče. To tyl'ko jedñi Ńečyprov'iče, jedna roz'ina p'isal'i sèbè jako Pol'acy. A fšysycy jako B'aluřus'ini.

Closing of Polish and Jewish schools. Closing of churches

Leaving behind Polishness

The Polish village of Ciszowka

- Byli katolikami?

Račej to oňi byl'i katol'ikam'i. No tak, al'e níkt s'e nie modl'il, níkt nígz'e nie χoz'il, bo nie bylo dokond. Pracovały dvě pravoslavne cerkvě. Jednon puž'nej co na g'ľuvnej našej ul'icy cerkef to zerval'i ten, zb'il'i kšyš i tam zrobl'i kl'ub. No i została tyl'ko jedna cerkef koło rynku byχofsk'ego. No tam vlas'ne luž'e χoz'il'i. No al'e žeč f tym, že nam jako naučyc'elom byl'o pšykazan'o natural'ne nie pozval'ac' z'ec'om, umav'ac' (od ros. ugav'ar'ivat') z'ec'i, žeby nie χoz'il'i do cerkv'i. No teras tak troχe zb'ilam s'e s pantalyku.

Catholics had nowhere to pray

Orthodox churches

- W latach 50 już tutaj nie rozmawiano po polsku?

- Nie, tyl'ko v mojej roz'i'ne mys'my stal'e z mamom i s' c'oc'om rozmavały tyl'ko po polsku. D'l'atego ja na pevno i nie zapomniałam pol'sk'ego jenzyka.

Polish in the 1950s

- Jak długo ludzie modlili się na cmentarzu?

- Tak jak ks'onc Bl'in tutaj vlas'ne pšyjeχał [1989] i tutaj vlas'ne začela s'e restauracja našego koščola.

End of prayers at the cemetery only in 1989

- Do roku 1989 modlono się na cmentarzu?

- Tak cały čas, d'l'atego bo tam s'e zb'erala vlas'ne ta grupka, no vlas'ne tyχ Pol'akuf, ktuży modl'il'i s'e po polsku. No oňi može byč juš i byl'i nie Pol'acy, no modl'il'i s'e po polsku. No i tam s'e cały čas zb'eral'i, ja vlas'ne muv'e – fstav'al'i obras na pšyklat al'bo s'v'entego Antońego, al'bo Matk'i pšenajs'v'ensej i pšet tym obrazem modl'il'i s'e i s'p'eval'i.

Life without sacraments

- A sakramenty?

N'e bylo, pustyńa. Moja mama teš umarla bes ks'enz'a, bes namaščeńa i tak daľej i c'oc'a teš.

- A jak kościół zaczął działać, to w jakim języku były msze?

First church services after 1989 - *P'èrfsè byly pol'skè, pò pol'sku, ks'ònc Władysław fte dy ñe znał dobżè rosyjskègo i potem p'seχoz'ili na białorusk'i j'ènyk. Čensto l'iturg'ia byla pò pol'sku, a čytańa byly... Pol'ska mša vyl'ònyła s'èù f'sensè tak'im, że čytańa i f'systko bylo pò pol'sku, a białoruskè pò prostu stanely na swoje m'èjsce. [...]*

A były szlacheckie zaścianki w okolicach Mohylewa?

**Social differentiation
Petty nobility in the
countryside**

To vlas'ne f tej C'isofce, to m'ne vlas'ne opov'adal'i, tak, cos' tak'ego, że śl'aχeckè roz'iny, żeby sè odrużnić ot prostyχ v's'nakuf, oral'i v b'alyχ reńkav'ickaχ, tak, v b'alyχ reńkav'ickaχ. To m'ne vlas'ne f C'isofce povež'el'i.

Jak m'ne k'eroval'i tutaj do pracy, to vlas'ne ješče takom jak gdyby dedykacjom: Na p'è'veasp'itańije my vas posyłam v Mog'il'of, v mog'il'ofskuju obłast'. Dł'atego, bo v instytuc'e to m'ne nazyval'i n'agłaja Pol'ka.

Work order

A pačemu – ja čelav'ek ñe beščel'ny, ja barzo skromny, a dl'ač'ego tak nazyval'i. N'emcy m'ne nazyval'i Kreχe Pol'en, a Rosjańe Nagłaja Pol'ka.

Grodno

The informer speaks a form of Polish combining the grammatical features of standard Polish and the Grodno variant. This applies to both the phonetic and the grammatical layers.

[GrodMT77/2009F]

Mother buried in Poland

- [...] Mama zmarła f s'èdemz'èšontym p'òntym f Pol'sce, f'systkè tam m'ala bylo p'èc' s'ostruf i brat, a teras juš zostals'a, jedna odešla s'ostra. I co Pańi, p'iše?

- Skąd Pani pochodzi!

- Značy ja jestem Marja [...]. Ojčec muj był leg'ionerem polšk'im. I za to oni byli vyvžez'eni z'ev'ontego l'utego f'čterz'estym roku. Było barzo z'imno, pam'entam, no ja miała juš, ja tšyž'estego drug'ego, dvuz'estego p'ontego s'erpn'a urozona, juš miała na usmy roček. Pam'entam, jak nas v'ezl'i koñm'i f'sańax, dužo s'ńegu było, pševracal'i s'e te sańe. Jak na s'ńegu, puž'nej znovu nas saz'il'i f'te sańe do počongu v'ezl'i. Poz'nej f'počongu vagony te tak'e bydlenc'e. Barzo dlugo jex'al'is'my, barzo, tysency k'il'ometry. Zav'ezl'i nas Tomsk'i obvut, ał'e to [na Žym, na Rym]. I gž'e od razu byl'i zav'ezl'i ojca i mamu, fšystk'e cała roz'ina, s'ed'moro z'ec'i nas bylo. Nu i od razu ojca i mamu do pracy, do lasu. Vyslane byl'i do pracy, jak oni, i x'ne bylo v' domu, byla z nam'i ješče starša taka

s'otra Frańa. No i pšyšet samo x'ut, nas najm'nejšy x'voro do samo x'odu zabral'i i pov'ezl'i do doma z'eck'a. Od roz'icuf zabral'i, v' domu ne bylo roz'icuf, f'pracy byl'i. No i tak ja, starša ode m'ne s'otra Reg'ina, mločša ode m'ne Stas'a s'otra i Kaz'im'eš samy mały, on tšyž'estego z'ev'ontego roku roz'ony. F'čterz'estym počontku jemu ročku ne bylo, f'p'el'uxax jego zabral'i, zabral'i do domu ma'utk'i. Stas'a do pšetšk'ola, a [...] i Reg'ina juš do doma z'eck'a do šk'oly. Reg'ina starša byla ode m'ne xyba na tšy lata, čy troxe v'encej. Jak my, pšyv'ezl'i nas tam do doma z'eck'a, a my z' s'ostro jak z'afše v' domu, fšeńž'e po pol'sku, m'enzy sobo rozmav'amy po pol'sku, a z'ec'i fšystk'e, oni š tam ne slyšel'i tego jenzyka, ne znajo – cygank'i, cygank'i, po cygansku gadajo. Nu my juš muv'il'i, že my po pol'sku rozmav'amy, že my Pol'k'i. Aj, začel'i draž'nic' ruž'ne – Pol'ak, sv'ec'k'i brak, rasc'anuls'a kak č'erv'ak. Bože, nu ruž'ne, ruž'ne juš tam, nu ał'e to juš tyl'e tego. To juš ne tak'e č'eńšk'e, ał'e č'eńsko bylo, jak g'ut byl.

Fate of family. Legionary father

Family exile to Siberia in 1940

At children's home

Polish at the children's home

Teasing of Poles

Hunger at the children's home

Barzo głodne byl'i z'ec'i v domu z'eczka, a pševažné v z'ime. Oj, xoz'il'i po s'mětníkaχ, šukal'i, žeby cos' znal'esč' zjesč'. V ogul'e barzo, barzo bylo trudno, juš na v'osno, to juš bylo l'žej, fšystko... po pol'u xoz'il'i, gž'es' byla pošana pšeničica, tam kłosk'i te zb'eral'i, tam, gž'e kartofl'a taka zmarz'nenta. Mné čenško to fspom'inac', muv'e, Pañi, že napravde. Zdaje s'e, to jak něktury muv'o, a, davno bylo, a m'i s'e zdaje, začne fspom'inac', to fčoraj bylo. Fšystko mam f pamiěncč'i v ogul'e. Xoz'il'i ružne travy jedl'i, ružne... Byl' ščeñs'l'ivy z'eñ, jak bral'i do kuχñi oberac' z'emniak'i i vot tak my jedl'i te surove kartofel'k'i.

Tough living conditions

Al'e tak bylo nam smačne, oj, Pañi né uv'ežy, jak to bylo smačne. Jak pšyšlo s'e, ja v'em, ješče né dužo bylo, bo to juš jes'eñ, al'e s'ñegu napadało i spot s'ñegu tšeba bylo kartofl'u vyb'erač'. Rence tak'e zmarz'nente, Bože, v ogul'e, ja né v'em, jak oñi fšystko tam muv'il, aj tam, u Němcuf v lagrax tam z'ec'i mordoval'i. A ja mys'l'e, že nam né bylo l'pěj, né bylo nam l'pěj, jak tam f tyx němečck'ix lagrax. No i paměntam juš f čterz'ěstym, po vojñe, vojna skoñčyla s'e f čterz'ěstym p'ontym, a s'ostre zabral'i, bo juš jak skoñčyla čternasč'e lat, jej zav'ezl'i do Novos'ib'irska na škoły zavodovej. Pšyšlala mn'e l'ist, že ona juš pracuje, šesč' m'ešency učyl'i i juš do pracy, v'onz'e, rob'i skarpety, kožuχy, tak'e. No i dobže [...], dobže. Skoñčylasa vojna i juš začelos'a troxe l'pěj.

End of the war

Her sister's fate

Better food from America

Juš zupe stal'i davac' l'pšo, bo konservy v ogul'e fšystko z Amer-ik'i i rybne konservy žucal'i do zupy i m'ensne juš l'pěj bylo. I f čterz'ěstym šustym roku bylo pozvol'ono fšystk'im r-epr-es'irovanym Pol'akam vyjexač' do Pol'sk'i. I ojčec, to bylo tak, zabral'i zav'ezl'i, a ojčec ja ješče né um'ala p'isac', nič né tego, z jednego domu z'eczka do drug'ego, ot tak pšezucal'i, ojčec né znał, gž'e ja. I puž'nej jak to po vojñe začol ojčec fšystk'ix vyšuk'ivac'.

Opportunity to go to Poland

Search for family

Sòstre Stasë znalazł v Arab'insku, brata f Tomsku, a sòstra Reg'ina v Novos'ib'irsku. A zbornyj punkt był v Novos'ib'irsku. Fšystkë tam zbëral'isà i juš pšysłał m'i ojčec l'ist i mñe znalaz, pšysłał l'ist, že značy ñe pšëžyły, ñe denervuj së, jak ty vyzdrovëješ, čëbë pšyvòzo do nas, do Polšk'i. My teras v Novos'ib'irsku, ałe my poježëm do Polšk'i, a jak pšyjade na mëjsce, to ja tobě pšys'lu l'ist, adres, gžë beřizëm. A ja ñe byla ħora fcałë. Pamëntam, jak z'ëc'i tak'i ładny z'ëñ był, my na podvurku bav'il'isà, dostala l'ist, pamëntam, jaka ja byla ščens'l'iva, že znalaz'l'i rož'ice mñe tego.

Čytam l'ist, čytam fšystko ten l'ist, čemu tam jak vyzdrovëješ, no i pošla do z'ir-ektora, žeby mñe zavëz'l'i do Novos'ib'irska. A gžë ja byla f tym Małčanava, to tam vysoko na pułnocy ñe bylo kolei, počong'i ñe ħoz'il'i, tyl'ko samol'otem, a to byla vòsna i pvozë takë bylo, že statk'i ñe ħoz'il'i i tyl'ko jeden možna bylo – samol'otem. I ja pošla do z'ir-ektora i začala płakac', pros'ic', žeby mñe zavëz'l'i do Novos'ib'irska i pokazala ten l'ist. Dyrektor začel mñe muv'ic': Ty znaješ, tvoj acëc vrak naroda, ružne tam začel, ałe ja fšystko jedno ħčala, žeby zavëz'l'i mñe, ot. Ñe, ty astañesa, my čëbà vyyuč'im, my čëbë nap'išem, začal juš tam ružne mñe umavac', ałe ja fšystko jedno, ješče gožej začela płakac' do mamy ħce, do sòstruf. Oj, zły był, vygnał mñe i natyħmàst mñe pšëžuc'il'i v i•ny dom z'ëcka. I znovu š ojčec pojexał do Polšk'i i słał tam l'ist na, vracal'i, juš ñe ma takëj. I znovu znalaz mñe ojčec. Aha, skoñčyla ja čternasčë lat, to f čterzëstym s'udmym roku, mñe odesłał i do Tomska, f tym škola zavodova, ałe na tokara, točyc' to žel'azo. Ja pros'ila, žeby tako jak sòstra, no cos' rob'ic' takë, žeby ñe s tym želastvem. Plàn, tam plàn i muš'im tam vysłač'.

Problems with returning home

Futile search for daughter

School in Tomsk

Hard work

Two easier years during exile

No i co, otprav'il'i m'nie tam, i znovu š'ne v'em, g'z'e p'isac' do ojca, bo ne znam adresy i ojcec ne p'ise, bo juš'ne ma m'nie tam. I znovu š'puz'nej, to bylo pravda te lata byl'i, ja byla f'tym Syb'iru prav'e tšynas'ce lat. I s'tyx tšynastu tyx dva lata byl'i najl'epše. Učylams'a dobže, ne m'alam navet trojek. Ale pam'eńc s'tego... ne v'em, jak po polsku, moge rob'ic' po čvartym razr-az'e, jak to po rusku. Začyna se s'p'ěršego, drug'i, tšec'i, čvarty. Ne, ne z'miana, ale stop'eń tego, pracy tej. Že juš'po čvartym, bo p'onty, to juš'jest masc'er. A ja m'ala čvarty. I f'čterz'estym z'ev'ontym juš'kančal'i my te škoły, ojcec pšes Červony Kšyš znalas m'ne. No i ojcec potšeboval, žeby m'ne zav'ezl'i do Polšk'i. Oni m'ne... Ah'a, tel'efonuje m'ne z m'il'icji, žeby ja vz'ela kop'ije

1949 – father finds his lost child**Further problems with going to Poland**

dokumentuf i pšyjeχala tam do m'il'icji i to juš'oni m'ne zav'ozo do Polšk'i. Pšyšla ja do sekretark'i vz'eńc'e te dokumenty, a ona muv'i, a, n'igz'e ne pojez'eš do Polšk'i, muv'e, čemu tak, bo dala nap'isane, že byla ruska. I tego, Bože, i znovu š'pojexala ja do tej m'il'icji, ne, ne, f'Polš'u ne ma, ne Pol'ka, ne pusc'il'i. I v'e Pańi, zav'ezl'i m'ne f'taka tajga, dva barak'i v'leše i ne ma tej tokar'ni, tego stanka, žeby ja mogla rob'ic'. Nic, dal'i m'ne el'ektrop'ila, d'lugos'c' pultora metra i tak'i motor tak'i dvuz'eš'c'i kilo i to s'tym v'leše rob'ic'. Bože, jak m'ne bylo čeńsko...

Time of hard labour in the taiga**- Ile Pani mała lat?****The plight of those transported to Siberia**

- Proše. Nu f'čterz'estym z'ev'ontym m'alam šedemnas'ce. A χuda, ščuřla taka byla, Bože, mała [...]. Čeńsko barzo m'ne bylo, čeńsko. I v'e Pańi, jak ja byla f'tej škoľe, byla z'eřčynka jedna taka, ona Uzbečka čy Kazačka, taka i jej barzo čeńsko davalos'a, nauka ta jej ne šla i ona f'cale ne mogla n'ic rob'ic' na tym. A m'ne škoda jej bylo, ja jej pomagala. Ja jej pomagala, ja jej t'umačyla, co ona muš'i, jakos' tam na drug'i stop'eń zdala ona.

I vè Pańi, ješče f tej škole byla dobže, že mël'i svoja orkestra, no i jak to, provèrał'i słuχ, kto ma słuχ, i mńe vzel'i do tej orķestry. Ja i ješče dvè z'eřcynk'i, tam v'encej χłopcy, grał'i f tym orķestše, pouč'il'is'a, puź'nej nas zaprašal'i tam gž'es' na plas'atk'i, tańcy grał'i, to zaprašal'i, potem čenstoval'i, juš né bylo tak z'le. I vè Pańi, mńe zavèzł'i do tej Tuzèjk'i, a ta Liza Baturyna [...]. A to na pšyklad tak jak, žeka i né bylo drog'i i tak na pšyklad, jak to kreńc'i s'e, to tu na pšyklad Baturyna, a tu Tuzèjka. A jak po žeče, to tšeba bylo tak dał'eko jexac'. Ona doznała's'a, že ja f tej Tuzèjk'i i pšyjeχala do mńe. Muv'i, jez'em tam, jest m'ej'sce, beńz'eš rob'ic' na stankaχ na Kal'kuće na tokara. Ja né mogła do statku vejsč', bo stał, a u mńe, čemu tak fšeńz'e mńe z'le pozval'i [...], bo v

In the school orchestra

Visiting a friend

dokumentax bylo nap'isane, že DVN – doč. vraga naroda. I vot tak [...]. No i tego, pšyjeχala ta Liza [Kadyrbajeva] jez'em, ja né moge vyjsč', bo stoi načal'nik i né pušč'i bez dokumentu. I co ona muv'i, že tak na prosto, že muv'i, nédał'eko, pšez las i pšez błoto, tam bagna f tak'im m'ej'scu tak'e straše i ona mńe vyprovazila napravde. S'ł'i my rańušeńko fstal'i, žeby níkt né v'iz'al, tak, jak ućekala, bo níc né muv'ila načal'niku, nu my z'ńom pošł'i i tak juš pravda m'ala tyl'ko na reńku atestat ten svuj, že skońčyla ta škola. I z radosč'om pšyjel'i mńe do pracy, níkt né pytał dokumentuf, jak ja tam rob'ila, to bylo f p'eńz'esontym p'eřšym roku, pracovala, zarob'ila p'eńenzy na podruš, us'ondła na poč'ónk, tam juž byl poč'ónk, koleja byla i pšyjeχala... Ah'a, nap'isala do ojca, že značy, mńe v m'il'icji dal'i adres, nap'isala, že mńe né pušč'ajo do Pol'sk'i, B'áloruska. No i puź'nej ojčec nap'isal, mý žyv'om tam tšy s'ostry rosno v Vas'il'iškaχ, ječ' tam, i tam žyj. Pšyjeχala tutaj, al'e bes dokumentuf. Ah'a, ojčec p'iše, že pojez'eš do Grodna, vezm'eš v arχ'iv'e svoja metryka i ftedy juš tak.

“Daughter of an enemy of the nation”

Fleeing with a friend

Applying for permission to return to Poland

Searching for documents in Grodno

**Polish father, Polish mother,
but no nationality**

Nu pšyjexała, jak'is' čas tam jexac' do arχ'ivu, to tšeba było męc' sprafka, skont, gž'e męškaš i značy mńe nígž'e né zap'isano. Al'e jak'is' čas tam pšešlo, puz'ńej jakos' załatv'ilos'a tymčasovo nuby zameldovana byla. Puz'ńej juš mus'ała s ta sprafka pojexała do Grodna, dostała metryka. Al'e v metryce né pišo, že Pol'ka, ojcęc Pol'ak, matka – Pol'ka, χščona fkosc'el'e, al'e nacjonal'nošć' né ma.

- **Žadnej nie ma?**

- Né ma. Nu i tak bylo. Puz'ńej starałaš, žońz'ila še teš do pracy troxy, tak jak umala tyl'ko tym tokarem. Pracovala, fšystk'e sprafki tšeba bylo. Ojcęc pšyšło zaprošeńe, tšeba bylo fšystk'e sprafki męc' na starego.

- **Udało się Pani do Polski, dojechać?**

Return to Poland in 1952

- V'e Pańi, tak, ja né v'em, to tak'i jak'is' muj ľos. S'v'entej paměńc'i monš... Tak, ja całk'em né mys'lała za monš vyxoz'ic', al'e to f'pěńž'ěšontym juš dvaž'ěšća lat, f'pěńž'ěšontym drug'im jak vruc'ila. Nu, bėdna byla z'ěfčyna s Syb'iru, al'e né v'em, jak'ěš ščėńšć'e m'ala. I tam z v'oski jeden tak χcał M'ixal tak'i był [...], Bože moj, c'otečny brat moj, oj, ic' za M'ixala, ni za kogo, muv'e, né pujde, pojade do Pol'sk'i, do roz'iny. Al'e f tamto lato oni né pšyjmoval'i dokumenty, to tšeba bylo z Vas'il'išek do Grodna prav'e sto k'il'ometry, autobusy né xoz'il'i, to tšeba bylo autostopem, i to na tyx na v'ěšxu jexac', jez'z'ila, Bože moj. Tyl'ko v Grodno pšyjmoval'i te dokumenty. Po p'ontkam i po f'orkam, pam'entam. Pšyjež'ěš v' f'orek, zaras pošuka jak'ěš' cos' tam, znajz'e né tak, juš tšeba pšerab'ac' ta sprafka. F' p'ontek pšyjež'ěš, oni pracujom i znovu, tak bylo jakos' tak fšystko tak c'ogneloš'a, né χc'el'i pšyjmovac'.

**Travelling by horse to
Grodno**

I tyľko jeŝe ftedy pŝes Moskve fŝystko ŝlo. Puzńej, vĕ Pańi, pŝysńila m'i sĕ, ěe vĕm, ĉy opov'adaĉ', pŝysńilasaĕ m'i sen tak'i, Matka Boska na podvurku, i Matka Boska spusc'ilas'a z ěeba mńe, i tak poŝla do našego mĕškańa, do pokoju, gźĕ ja i tak venzelek zostav'ila mńe na ľuŝku jakĕŝ. Mńe ľos tak'i. I ja vzĕla ten venzelek, rozv'onzala – vel'õn, bordova suķenka i ĉarne buty, takĕ ŝnurovane, kĕdys' to tak nos'ilos'a. Ja vzĕla te buty, o•dala ĉoĉ'i, ojca s'õstra, muvĕ, maŝ, ĉoĉ'a, beńzĕŝ nos'ic' te buty. A sama ubraľa ta bordova suķenka, tak mńe bylo ľadńie, taka zadovol'õna, a vel'õn poloźyla, muvĕ, ěex sobĕ leźy tak na ľuŝku. Vĕ, Pańi, ten monŝ, ten ģłopĕc, muvĕ, ěe zvracaľa ěi na kogo uvag'i, bo fcalĕ ěe mys'ľala za monŝ vyjsĉ'. I vĕ, Pańi, tego, ten ģłopĕc, pravda, on zĕŝeńĉ' k'ĩlometruf mĕskaľ od nas, od Vas'ĩľeŝek [...]. Jednego razu poŝla ja s [...].

stryjeĉnym, rozõne to fŝystko f Polŝce, poŝľi do fil'mu. I tak, v'ize, skońĉyl sĕ fil'm, potħoz'i do mńe i teras [...], moźna z Vam'i, zĕfĉyno, otprovaź'ic' do domu? A to bylo puľtora k'ĩlõmetry od Vas'ĩľeŝek. Bo my byl'i v Vas'ĩľiŝkaħ, a u ĉoĉ'i mĕskaľa v Dvorĉanaħ puľtory k'ĩlõmetry, bl'isko. [...] l'istopat ģyba takĕgo mĕsõnc, jeŝeń. A, nu dobźe, juŝ izĕ, otprovaze. No i do v'izeńa juŝ koľo domu, muvĕ, do v'izeńa C'i, moźna zajsĉ' vody nap'ic' sĕ, muvĕ, juŝ puźno, ĉoĉa s'p'i, nu ģoc' vody nap'ic' sĕ. Nu to juŝ. I vĕ, Pańi, zaĉoľ do mńe ģoz'ic' i na pĕħote zĕŝeńĉ' k'ĩlometruf, pŝyħoz'i, do dvunastej poŝeź'i i s povrotem zĕŝeńĉ' k'ĩlometruf. To bylo tak zaĉoľ puźńej, ěiŝ jeŝeń byla, nu i tak ģoz'ĩľ. Puz'ńej jednego razu muv'i tak mńe, vyħoc' za mńe za monŝ. Ja muvĕ, ěe, ěigdy v ģyc'u, ěe, ja ěe pujde ěi za kogo za monŝ, ja pojade do Pol'sk'i, ěe ģe sľuħac' navet. I on muv'i, jak Ty ěe vyjzĕŝ za mńe za monŝ, to, muv'i, ja sobĕ ģycĕ odbõre, ja ěe bende ģyc'.

Dream about the Holy Mother

Meeting her future husband

Marriage proposal

Family's good advice

Pevno, zasmálaša, pevno, ja jedna na svěcě, tylě zěfčont tam maš u sebě v domu, tšeba ɣoz'ic' zěšec' k'ilometry. Ně, ně, ježel'i Ty za mńe ně pujzěš. Ja muvě, ja pojade do Polšk'i. Ty navet ně mys'l'ńic, ja ní za kogo tutaj ně vyjde, tyl'ko pojade do Polšk'i. Teras ně pšyjmujom dokumenty, ja juš mam fšystkě zebrane sprafk'i, jak tyl'ko bendom pšyjmovac', ja od razu pojade do Polšk'i. Bože, začoť, ja ně bende žyc', ja sobě cos' zrobdě. Ja muvě, no i co Ty zrobd'íš – ja znajde, co zrobd'ic'. Niby tak žartovala puz'ńej ta cōca moja, fajna byla cōca Viktorja, barzo fajna byla, mondra taka. I ona mńe muv'i tak, věš co, Marys'u, fajny ɣlopec, fajny, kto by to ɣoz'il zěšěńc' k'ilometry, muv'i, a Ty ješče cos' muv'íš mu. Ja muvě, cōca, nu ja fcaľe ně to, že za něgo, ja v ogulě ně pujde za monš. Ty věš co, kědy to ješče beńzě, puz'ńej jak co, to pojezěčě razem. No i pravda tak, muv'i, škoda, že jak on sobě žycě odběže, to beńzě na Tvoim suměńu. No i tak

Father's concerns

nap'isala l'ist do roz'icuf, muvě, no ně vēm, može, vyjde za monš juš, ɣc'alyby, žeby blagosłoveństvo jakě čy cos'. Ojcěc od razu mńe telegram pšysťal, po telefonu rozmovy. I tak, ně vyɣoc' od razu, zěcko, ně vyɣoc' za monš, tutaj vyjzěš, ně vyɣoc'. Ja muvě, tato, muvě, muše vyjšč'. Oj, tak sc'ix'ńiby, ně vēm čemu co, m'ilčal, m'ilčal, puz'ńej, cuš, jak muš'íš, to vyɣoc'. On pomysľal, že ja f cōnzy. Bože moj, Bože, a mńe ně puknelo do głovy o tym pomysľec', ja navet o tym nígdy ně pomysľala. O Bože moj, Bože. Pov'iz'ala, muše, bo on sobě ɣce žycě odebrac'. I tak [...] staťoša, no i vyšla za monš. I puz'ńej, ojcěc, jak muš'íš, to vyɣoc'. Ja tak puz'ńej pšysťala do cōc'i i bratova moja, nu jak tam [...], ja muvě, no tyl'ko [...]. Ot Ty narob'ila, ja muvě, čemu? Ojcěc pomysľal, že Ty f cōnzy. Aɣ, Matko Boska, ja muvě, nígdy ně pomysľala o tym, že on može o tym pomysľec'.

Father's blessing

Nu na pravda. I tak staťosa. Vě Paňi, aš pòntego lutego my s'ľup braľi. On fšystko χoz'it tu i v z'ime, i s'ńiek byl i zavějki, i on tak χoz'it fšystko do mńe co kaźda ńezěla pšyχoz'it. Jednego razu byla taka zavějka, no i tak, pšyšet, poseźal i pošet tak, jak zafše. Rano fstaľ ten moj còtečny brat, vyšedľ tam na vòske i muv'i, znajecě što, znalezl'i dva trupy zamarzl'i. Monš z žonom zablonz'il'isa, ńe znalezl'i drogi, bo byla vėl'ka zavějka. Bože moj, oňi na mńe fšystkě, začem Ty jeho otprav'ila? Ja muvě, skont, ja tam moge, ja ńe vyχoz'ila, ńe v'em, čy tam zavějka čy ńe zavějka. Bože, my fšystkě pšežyval'i, jak on, čy on žyje puz'ńej. Jakos' tam puz'ńej ej brat dověz'al sě, že fšystko dobže. Bože moj, Bože. [... Koxane l'ico...] veseľem tym. Dľa còc'i [...] som f prezencě čarne buty mńe [...]. Jakos' muraχy pošľi po cěľe, aš ja usòndľam. Sòstro, ot čego Ty, ja muvě, čemu Ty čarna, a ja ńikommu ńe

opovadaľam o ty sńe, aňi komu, jakos' tak myslala, aj tak myslě, kto uvězy. I v ogulě ńe upom'inaťa, tyl'ko sobě zafše miala na mysl'i. I tu čarne buty dľa còc'i, kturě ja o•dala jej. Bože, aš m'i ńe dobže. Muvòm, čemu Ty tak, a myslě, že còcě na ľepěj bendom buty, nu pevně, že tak. Žyl'i my ruźńe, ńe byl kepsk'i, ńe byl zľy, aľe... Pracovaľ inžyńerem, po tyχ traktorax, samoχodaχ tyχ f koľχozě. Tu tšeba tam komus' za cos', to jemu ktos', pjank'i, byl'i pjank'i. No i puz'ńej juš dvuχ synuf mamy [...]. Pěrfšego uroz'itam pravě v rok, pěrfšego styčńa f pěńz'ěšòntym s'udmym. To byl cyv'il'ny šľup, to f styčńu pšyv'us do nas sekretarka, žeby na pevno ja juš...

- A ślub kościelny?

- Tak. Pòntego lutego. Jak pšyjeχal'i svaty, pšyjeχal on ze swoim švagrem, sòstry monš byl. Jego roz'ina, koň tak'i ľadny byl f sankax i tego, jak oňi, kaľakol'č'ik'i.

Winter wedding

Lethal cold and snowstorm

Her husband

Her sons

Matchmaking

Church wedding**- Dzwoneczki**

- Żvonečk'i. A ja níkomu v domu né pověz'ala, on né pověz'al, že pšyježě svaty, fcałe né brała do głovy, fcałe, ja né v'em, jaka. Bože moj, Bože, pšyježžajom pšet domem tym. Bože, oj, kto š to tak [...]. Aχ, Matko Boska, a ja brała tam cos' prala tego. O Jezus, to juš bratova moja, c'oca, a brat, a fšystkě zaběgal'i, a čemu š Ty né pověz'ala. Vě Pańi, nu na pravde, fcałe né myśłala o tym, fcałe né χcała za monš vyož'ic'. Né pov'em, né l'ub'ila tak, žeby tak vot koχańe takě, né. Był né bžytk'i, vysok'i, pšystojny, ałe ja jakos', ja né v'em. Ješče o, pėńżes'ont lat jak bylo, ja né mys'l'ala o tym, ałe syn s synovom pšyjeχal'i, mama, jez'em, može, cos' novego kup'is' sobe, tam sklėp. Oni juš tam z'ec'i kafe tam zamuv'il'i, čterz'es'ci pėńc' osup bylo, tak i tego, pojeχal'i kup'ic' tam ubrańa. Vě Pańi, sukenečke s tak'im krutk'im i nažuta byla

50 years of marital life

bordova i granatova. Nu poměz'yla, syn moj, muv'e granatova, né, bordova, ta dobra. I vě Pańi, na pravda, ja byla f tej bordovej sukence, na pravda byla vesola, i to š to, k'edy to bylo, šustego roku, a ja tańč'yla, a ja byla taka ščes'l'iva, i navet né pomys'l'ala, že to ta. Ałe puz'ńej sobe pomys'l'ala, Bože, pšec'eš ja né m'ala takěj pėńżes'ont lat prož'yla, né m'ala takěgo ot ubrańa ftedy tak, jak m'i pšys'ńila s'e Matka Boska ftedy. To moje sonzeńe, to muj tak'i los. Ałe ja teš sobe tak pomys'l'ala. Ałe né povėdz'ala Pańi, jak my vyož'il'i s tom L'izom s toj tajg'i, s Tuz'ijk'i. S Tuz'ijk'i, vě Pańi, bo to tšeba bylo łasem i pšes bagna. M'ala tom val'izečke, taka mal'eńka. [...] vž'el'i na jedno pl'eco, na drug'e, [...], v rence jedna i druga reńka palk'i takě dłuęe i tak patšal'i, gž'e tvaro, gž'e možna stomp'ic'. O tak ukołyχalos'a. Jak strašńe, Bože moj. Ja muv'e, Matko Boska, provaz'ila, na pravda. Božeńka nas uratovał, tak ja by nígdy né vyšła.

The Holy Mother's help

Jak to muv'i sè, zrup komu dobže, žeby puz'nej teš otšymac'. Na pravda, ja nígdy né mys'lata, žeby tam Liza čyms' m'i pomogla. Jak ona taka bédna byla, jej čenško bylo ta nauka davaťas'a, ja pomagata, bo žalovata jej. I jak statos'a, že ona pšyšla i m'ne vyprovaz'ila. Ve Pańi, to na pravda ja m'ala navet, o, né v'em, oš'emnasč'e m'ala lat, od razu jak m'ne pšyvěz'l'i f ta Tuz'ijka. S tej školy, co tam dal'i, buc'ik'i tyl'ko i ubrańa takè, fufajka, čy bušlat jak'is' tam. Takè mrozy, tak čenško bylo, Bože moj, Bože, f čterz'ěšč'i stopńi tego mrozu mus'iš rob'ic'. A na v'osne juš jak z v'ěšxu s'ńek, a pot spodem voda juš, ja f tyx buc'ikaχ svoiχ cały z'ěń stoje mokre nog'i. Puz'nej pšyjde, a barak tak'i byl, duży dom, né ma tam, že pokoje, tyl'ko jedne ten cały pokuj, [...] tak spal'i. Nu i jak pšyjde s tej pracy, žuce te svoje buty, pońčoχy, nog'i to takè pokarpane, f [...], takè strašne. Byla teš, ona Ukrainka sama, c'oca Mańa taka byla, Ul'man, on byl Něm'ec, al'e ješče za Níkołaja, čy za Kac'er-iny, né

Memories of a hard life in Siberia

pam'entam, na Povolže. I iχ teš vyv'ězl'i tam i tak ońi, juš starše byl'i i ona, i on i iχ curka Oł'a byla, tak tam jak'ims' materjaem čy jak'ims' čym odgraz'il'i sè, kont sob'e tam m'el'i i žyl'i razem. Ona jak pšyjz'ě, jak ja rozb'ore sè, jak vyjz'ě, rence łamata, Bože moj, Bože, moja Oł'čka to juš davno umarlaby. Ja muv'e, že m'ne i [sm'erc'...] obratno. Ty né taka, jak fšystk'e, zостаneš. Tak možeš č'erp'ec', al'e muv'i, čekaj, čekaj, jak beńz'ě Tob'e čterz'ěšč'i lat. Ja muv'e, čy ja dożyje. Muv'i, fšystko Tob'e beńz'ě vyxoz'ic'. I to pravda. Pam'enetam ten dom z'ěcka, jak byla, to cały rok l'ěžata f šp'ital'u, reumatyzm byl, a cuš, Bože, né ma zdrov'a.

Fears of rheumatism

- Czy Pani rodzice odnaleźli młodszego syna?

- Tak, znaleźli, zabral'i, on byl f Tomsku. Fšystk'iχ znalas ojč'ec. S'ostra v Arap'insku byla, Reg'ina v Novos'ib'irsku, to najl'ěpej na m'ějscu tam.

Her younger brother

**Day of departure for
children's home**

Najgożej ja. Jak nas zabral'i samoxodem, s'otra pol'ec'ala do lasu, pob'egla i pov'ež'ala mam'e i tatu, že pšyjeχal'i samoxodem i zabral'i čvoro najmńejšyχ. No i mama s tatem juš puz'nej teš pošl'i tam, al'e to χyba byl tam kaval drog'i, ne v'em, jak tam bylo. Pam'entam, že mama byla puz'nej pšy nas. R-eg'inka jakos' tak ne plakala, Staša može ješče ne rozum'ala. A ten mały, to v ogul'e. No muv'ila i puz'nej mama opov'adała, ja pam'entam, že ja mocno plakala. Jakas' byla brama taka, ot z'em'i byla taka dyrka, ja pot tym bramom χc'ala uc'ekac' do mamy, do mamy. A puz'nej pšyjeχala do Polšk'i, to muv'e, mama, ja tak pam'entam, že ja plakala, jak zabral'i nas. Ona muv'i, ani Reg'inka, ani Staša, ani Kaz'ik, niikt ne plakał, tyl'ko ty. A to moje serce čulo χyba, že na zafše zab'erajom mńe.

**“My heart felt they were
taking me away forever”**

**Meeting with parents years
later – 1956**

- Jak długo nie widziała Pani rodziców?

- A to bylo f p'eńz'ešontym šustym roku v ješeńi. F p'eńz'ešontym šustym p'ontego l'utego muj šl'up bral'i, a juš

Meeting her parents

na v'osne, v maju začel'i pšyjmovac' dokumenty. I ja pojeχala i zdała do Grodna i zdała dokumenty, fšystk'e te sprafk'i, co m'ala pšyšykovane zdała i mńe nič ne muv'il'i, že ja za monš vyšla čy co i tego, i pšyšl'i v ješeńi, f p'eńz'ešontym šustym, tyl'ko χyba fpaz'z'ern'niku bylo, tak, fpaz'z'ern'niku bylo. I pšyšl'i m'i dokumenty, i ja pojeχala do roz'icuf. Oj, Pańi, jak'e bylo spotkańe. Mama, Bože, sež'el'i gadal'i, rozmav'al'i i puz'nej juš mama muv'i, kladńij s'e, kladńij s'e, položyla s'e, zasnela, pšebuz'ila s'e – mama sež'i pšy mńe. Mama, ic' kladńij s'e, co Ty... Aχ, z'ecko, ja C'ebe ne pušče, ne pojez'eš. A ja muv'e, ne v'em juš, f c'onžy bylam, nu, p'eřšego styčna uroz'il s'e staršy syn Kazym'ir. Oχ, a ten monš muj, s'v'entej pam'eńc'i, Bože, každy z'eń telegramy, pšyježžaj prenzej, pšyježžaj prenzej – on juš kup'il meškańe. Vot tak od razu jak poženil'i s'e do nego

było źeśeńc' k'ilometruf, a puz'nej v Vas'il'iškaχ kup'il tak'i stary domek. Prenzrej pšyježžajom, ja kup'il dom. Ojc'ec tak pověž'ał, muv'i, navet nie χcała słuχac', že ja bende vracac' do Białorus'i. Ale ojc'ec pověž'ał tak: zapytał s'e m'nie, jak on, ja muv'e, tato, nu dobry, nu co ja moge pověž'ec', dobry. Jec', jec', a puz'nej beńž'em v'edac', jak beńž'e možna, razem tutaj pšyjež'ec'e. Do mamy muv'i, nie rozlančaj iχ, on puz'nej pšyjež'e. Mama navet nie χcała słuχac', žeby ja vruc'ila. Ja C'e'b'e nie vydavała, teras Tvoje źecko [...], Ty i znac' nie beńž'eš. Mama... I tak puz'nej pšyjeχala tutaj, jak'e on zrobit', že ja pultora m'ešonca była. Pšyjeχala, on tak'i zły, tak'i, Bože moj, puz'nej tak m'i juš opov'adał'i moje c'otečna s'ostra muv'i, jak'i on był, muv'i, aχ, nie nie χcał ješč, a nie, tyl'ko Marys'a m'i s'e nie pšyježža. Tak denervovał s'e, že ja vru... , nie vruce. Trudno było, trudno, ale puz'nej jak pšyjeχał tato, vylał'i dl'a taty zaprošeńe i dl'a mamy, no to tato pšyjeχał, a jak ja tam była, on tak mocno kašłał, Bože moj, tak mocno kašłał [...]. Bože moj, no i do tyχ pšyjeχał do m'nie i muv'i, curka, v'eš co, postaf tutaj cos', sama

v'eš, jak ja kašlam. Muv'e, dobže, tata, dobže. Obuz'il'i s'e rano, nie słyše, kašłał. Ańi razu nie zakašłał. Sam tak'i z'iv'ony był, co to jest f'pov'eš'u. Oj, jak'i on był. Muv'e, tato, muš'iš tutaj pšyjeχac', Tob'e tutaj pasuje te pov'eše barzo dobže. Puz'nej jez'z'il'i čensto tam z menž'em jez'z'il'i. Oni do nas jez'z'il'i. Tak zostałasa, tak.

- A jak się Pani modliła?

- Tak, ja muv'e, že my s s'ostrom jak byl'i i modl'il'i s'e jak to zaš'e v domu, zaš'e ukl'eńk'niemy tak. Oj, a tam fšystko rusk'e te. Bože, jak oni z nas tam ruž'nie draž'n'il'i nas, ojej. Tak'e byl'i, možna pověž'ec', podle te ž'ec'i. Može, oni nie rozum'eł'i, co oni robom, ale dosyt nam było pšykro c'erpeć to fšystko.

Parental advice

Return to Belarus

Visiting parents

Prayer in childhood

Mockery of Polish prayer at the children's home

Forgetting Polish

Ukleńkne, to tak nad ranem my modl'il'i s'a. Puz'nej my s s'ostro tak pomuv'il'i, ona juš tak muv'i, v'eš co, Marys'a, ne benz'em, žeby o'ni v'iz'el'i, my benz'em modl'ic' s'e, žeby o'ni ne v'iz'el'i. I tak gž'es' tam χoz'il'i sob'e, znajž'em tak'i, kontek, že c'ixo tam, n'ikogo ne ma i tak modl'il'i s'a. Ale prentko jakos', χyba jak čternas'če l'at može ona ma'la, tšynas'če, prentko jej zav'ez'l'i do [...] do tej škoły zavodovej. Sama zostala. Škoła, fšeñž'e juš puz'nej zapomn'ala pol'sk'i jenzyk. Jak pšyjexala tutaj, Bože, nu i fšystk'e – Vas'il'išk'i, to tam fšystko po pol'sku. C'oca od razu ne zapomn'ala, zobačče tyl'e l'at, ona z z'ev'ešset, tego, muv'i do m'ne, kto stvožyl, muv'e, tata, mama. Tak to bylo. Nemečk'i jenzyk ucyła fško'le, puz'nej kšonžečke m'ne dała c'oca. Čytac' prav'e te l'itery podobne, začela ucyč', čytac' po pol'sku, kšonžečk'i, χoz'ila i tego i ne bylo tego, žeby tam, jak teras, na kateχyzmy χozo z'ec'i na l'afkaχ, a to š' to tak, to co c'oca tam troxy naučyla, gž'e jest Pan Bóg no i tego troxe juš i puz'nej do p'erfšej komu'nii pošla. Tam, gž'e ja tutaj bylam fPol'sce, ne

pam'entam tego, χyba ne bylam.

- **Dopiero po wojnie tutaj, jak Pani wróciła?**

- Tak, jak tutaj vruc'ila fpeñž'es'ontym drug'im roku. Bo Reg'ina i Stas'a pšyšt'al'i m'ne s Pol'sk'ej do p'erfšej komu'nii o'ni byl'i, to značy ja teš ne byla do vojny. Pam'entam, do koš'cola χoz'il'i i pam'entam, do škoły m'ne teš juš vz'el'i ucyč'. Ale bral'i kref s pa'lca i ja zemdl'ala, pam'entam. No i povež'el'i, ne, ješče f tym roku ne.

Return in 1952

- **A tam, gdzie Pani mieszkała, czy to jest szlachecka okolica?**

- To tak, m'astečko k'edys' bylo Vas'il'išk'i, oj, bylo do vojny to barzo fajne bylo, ale my jako osadnik'i, ojčec, to my byl'i ješče od Vas'il'išek, to mus'i byč' jak'eš' dvaz'eš'ca kil'ometruf.

Settler father

Alé z Vas'il'išek ojčec, z'adek i praz'adek Lipsk'i fšystké z Vas'ilišek. A mama byla M'ix'nev'ičuvna, barzo bogatej roz'iny, šlahta to byla. I opov'adal'i mne navet te čotk'i, jak pšyjeħala juš s Syb'iru tego, to oni opov'adal'i, to [...] i jak žeñil'iša ta juš tego vujka žena byla, stryjka ojca brata žena, Ha•na taka byla, s'ventej paměnc'i, ona juš davno ne žyje, to ona mne opov'adala v'encej. Muv'i, tak, jak žeñil' se Tvuj ojčec z mamom, a jak kedyš, to fšystko posax, tak i muv'il'i. Muv'i, tšy duže krovny takě, muv'i, koñ og'er tak'i vel'k'i strašne. Bože, muv'i, [...] jak opov'adala. Barzo byl'i bogate, nesamov'ice. I ja mysl'e teras, neħ on trošecke počep'leje, ja pujde do arħ'ivum i rodoslovnaja, jak to, dževo roz'iny, čy jak to, i ħce o M'ix'nev'ičaħ znač'. Nu Lipsk'i to tak slyšalam, z'atk'i, praz'atk'i fšystké byl'i z Vas'il'išek i ojčec byl' urozony v Vas'il'iškaħ, kedy tšeba bylo mne dostac' karte Pol'aka, to ja ħoz'ila do arħ'ivum. Bo ne nap'isano u mne, že ja Pol'ka i mušala ja jakos' to udovodnič', že jest Pol'ka. I ojca metryka, nu to vzala, tak p'iše: Lipsk'i, tysonc z'evėnset

Mother's noble roots**Her parents' wedding****Polish Card****Father. Year of birth, denomination.****Greek Catholic father**

p'ėrfšego roku urozeña, roz'il se v Vas'il'iškaħ, ksc'il kšonc [...] i značy teš ne nap'isano, že Pol'ak. Tyl'ko greko-katol'ičeskaja v'ara. No i tak, no i že šl'uboval' z Marjom, mama teš Marja, z Marjom M'ix'nev'ičuvnom v dvaž'estym tšec'im ħyba roku. A teras ja mysl'e sobe, pujde do arħ'ivu i ħce znalesč' ot mamy roz'ine. Fšystké vyjeħal'i do Pol'sk'i M'ix'nev'ičy, fšystké, bo iħ teš dužo: tšex braci bylo u mamy i šostra, to šostra zmarla. A te jak brace fšystké M'ix'nev'ičy vyjeħal'i. To v'em v Mal'borku Cezar-i, byla u niħ ja kil'ka razy i Cezar-i pšyježžal' do mne teš. No, M'ixał. Īyba Juzef ješče, Juzefa ne pam'entam. M'ixał i Cezar-i, v Gdańsku M'ixał il'i v Gdyni, v Gdańsku. Jego curka v Łoż'e, teš pšyježžala do mne tutaj, dužo pšyježžal'i jak roz'ina juš M'ix'nev'ičuť. Može juš za dtugo, [...] može herbatk'i, ide nastav'ac'.

Mother**Parents' wedding****Uncle in Malbork**

Rubiazhevichi

The text below comes from a 22-year-old female inhabitant of Rubiazhevichi, currently studying in Minsk. Polish is a secondary language for her, and despite her Belarusian national identity, it remains her language of prayer. Currently, she uses Polish in her conversations with visitors from Poland and she does not attend any language courses. In her social circles, the interlocutor consistently uses Belarussian.

About Poles and Catholics in Rubiazhevichi

Teras v Ruběžev'ičaχ mēška v'encej Pol'akuf i katol'ikuf i bapčà né opovadała m'i tyχ h'istorji jak tut muvòm, že „mus'iš byc' B'atorus'inem” i to fšystko, oñi zap'isane som Pol'akam'i. D'l'atego moi roz'ice teš Pol'acy, χoc'aš nígdy né byl'i navet f Pol'sce. No a v Žurav'ince, gž'e ja teras mēškam, zv'onzek raz'eck'i k'edys' byl to i teras barzo mało katol'ikuf i Pol'akuf, tyl'ko c'i co pšyjexal'i potem, tyl'ko my jesteš'my Pol'kam'i, a tam pravoslavn'i. P'eñc' k'ilometruf. Roz'ice teš Pol'acy i ja teš l'iče s'e, že

teš jestem Pol'kom, al'e ja muv'e, že jestem Pol'kom b'atoruskom, no poñevaš roz'ílam s'e po b'atorusku i jenzyk f kturym rozmav'am, to b'atorusk'i, roz'ice m'enzy sobom v jenzyku b'atorusk'im, no taka troxe mēšanka, rosyjsk'íχ sluf, pol'sk'íχ troxe jest. V'em, že bapčà i z'adek pom'enzy sobom rozmaval'i ze sobom v jenzyku pol'sk'im. Z'adek davno zmarł, ja navet né v'iz'alam go, al'e on byl pravz'ivym Pol'ak'em, te časop' isma pol'sk'e miał, z'ec'i učyl' čytac' po pol'sku, z bapčòm rozmaval' po pol'sku, no i do koš'c'ola χoz'il'i i pac'eže v jenzyku pol'sk'im. No i j ešče né χoz'ílam do škoły, mēškałam u bapč'i i ona nauč'yla m'ne tyχ pac'eży v jenzyku pol'sk'im, k'edy ješče né um'alam čytac' po b'atorusku, d'l'atego teras zafše χoze na pol'sk'e mšy, poñevaš c'eñško m'i jest jenzyk b'atorusk'i to pšettumačyc'.

Ješče u nas v Ruběžev'ičaχ koščuť i tam sprubovano bylo žeby řystko to pšetlumačyc' na b'atorusk'i, žeby bylo po b'atorusku, leč bapcě kategoryčnie sě spšec'iv'ily pověz'aly, že mogom teras naučyc' sě v jenzyku b'atorusk'im i u nas teras jest Mša jedna tyl'ko v neželě, pońevaš no malo ľuz'i, ale po pol'sku. Kšonc poχoz'i, no on jest stary, uroz'il sě tu ješče na tereńe Pol'sk'i. Ukońčyl sem'inar'um i vruc'ił do svojej męjscovosč'i. A potem školom kateχetyčna byla pšes cale ľato χoz'il'is'my na zajeńc'a, to b'ibl'ie čyťal'i, i čyťal'is'my po rosyjsku i po b'atorusku, no bo ruźne z'ec'i, ņe řyscy znaťi jenzyk pol'sk'i, pacěže řyscy, no egzam'in po tym mēl'is'my i pacěže v jenzyku pol'sk'im 1999 rok.

A bierzmowanie?

– ņe bylo, ņe pšyjeźžal ješče do nas b'iskup, f klasě 11 jak byľam zako•ńica i učyła nas do bęžmovańa, ale ņe pšyjeχal b'iskup, tam cos' zdażyło i ņe pšyjeχal. Co neželě jeźže do domu, tam f swoim koščelě s'pěvam, tam χože f χože koščel'nym, tam mam organy, no žatko byvam v M'ińsku. Ježel'i do koščola ide, tak vyχoz'i, že muše zostac' v M'ińsku, to ide do katedry. No jak svuj koščuť, ale to jest barzo ņeregul'arne, bo navet roz'ice ņe majom bęžmovańa. Roz'ice ješče s tego pokoleńa, že ņe možna bylo fχoz'ic' do koščola, bapc'a byla taka, čensto χoz'ila do koščola, byľam Pol'kom, ľisty p'isala po pol'sku. Navet do vojska, jak ojčec sluźyl p'isala, po b'atorusku, leč pol'skě slova. Dľatego bylo mu čenško čyťac' i dľa tego muv'i, opovadať m'i, že bapc'a go vzela do kosc'ola i tam po tym byla naučyc'el'ka, ktura zafše maľa dyźur i vyžucono go ze škoľy, pšes dva tygodńe ņe musal odvęzac' zajeńc'a. No ņe vol'no bylo.

The use of Polish among those from the parents' and grandparents' generations

About the language in the church in Rubiazhevichi

Religious practices

Ile jest mszy w w Rubieżewiczach?

– V *ńezěle* tyl'ko jedna. No a do tej paraf'iji *dvazěsća* fš'i ješče. No starše pokoleńe baržej *χoz'i* do *koščola*, no *zěc'i* tam pšyvōzom vnuku, ałe na fš'i to mało osup doježža do *koščola*. M'i sě vydaje, že v *měsće* to možna, po *prostu* u nas v *Rubieżev'ićaχ*, tam, gžě *měškam*, *ńe* ma żadne roboty z *mložezom*, *ńe* ma *ńijakěj* roboty, spotkańi, *čy* tam tyχ *pōsenek* *pos'pěvac'*, no *ńe* ma tego, na v *měsće* *věm*, takě, ješče taka tendencja, že jak na pšyklat z našej tam školy dostaje sě na studja *vy•še*, to do *koščola* coras *žazěj* juš. Na pšyklat mam brata, rok *młotšy* jest, *teš* sě dostał na studja, *teš* *f'ilibolog'ije* studjuje, jak *χoz'il'is'my* do školy, to razem *χoz'il'is'my* do *koščola*, po tym jak dostał na studja, *pšestał*, no pšes rok ješče *χoz'il*, a potem juš *povežal*, že *ńe* *beńžě* *χoz'il* i *ńe* s tego povodu, že *p'ije* ał'bo *cos'* tam takěgo, *ńe* po *prostu*, jak on *muvi* *začol* *mys'lec'*, *v'iz'ec'*, *cos'* tam sobě *vymys'lac'*, že *Boga* *ńe* ma, takě, na *pevno* u každygo *člověka* *začynajom* sě *χv'ile*, že *začyna* *vontp'ic'*, *može* tam nu, i potem *okres* jest, že *ńektužy* *congłe* *χozom* do *koščola*, tam *lamajom* sě, a *ńektužy* juš *ńe* *χozom* i na pšyklat, jak *muj* *ojcěc* tak i *brat* i na pšyklat *ras* v roku *jakěs'* tam *s'vento* do *komuńiji* do *spověz'i* *pšystempujom* no i to *fšystko*.

To wszystko, co mówisz o swojej polskości jest pochodną twojego wychowania i urodzenia, a gdzie jest w tym miejsce na twoją białoruskość? Jak możesz te sprawy oddzielić?

About Polish and Belarusian identity

– No *bałoruskość* u nas na pšyklat v *jenzyku*, *pońevaš* my *rozmaŋamy* po *bałorusk'i*, *ńe* po *rosyjsku*, *věle* osup tutaj *rozmaŋa*. Navet *bapcā* nu po *bałorusk'i*, *leč* ze *slovam'i* *połsk'im'i*, ałe to tak *baržej*, *ježel'i* to *muvi*, že to *jenzyk* *měšany*, to on *měšany* *pomiędzy* *bałoruskim* i *połskim*,

ńe poměny rosyjsk'ím i białorusk'ím. Potem no co ješće, że my uroz'il'is'my na Białorus'i i polsk'i, ježel'iby f škole ńe było jenzyka polskěgo to navet mogli by i ńe rozmav'ac', no tak pacěže by odmav'al'i, al'e tak navet bez zrozuměńa o co choz'i.

Gdzie uczyłaś się polskiego?

– F škole v Rubėžev'ičaχ, tam jako drug'i jenzyk opcy. Od drugėj kłasy obov'onskove zajeńc'a a ot šustej do vyboru. 10 łat jedna goz'ina f tygodńu. Može ta, v jednej kłase były dv'e goz'iny. Ostatńo to była jedna goz'ina, a v jedenastej kłase m'eł'is'my egzam'in na stypendjum Semper Polońia i kto tam il'eš punktuf nabrał, to puz'ńej dostaje stypendium potčas studjuf. No ješće musi być dobre oceny v indeks'e. M'i fšystko f Pol'sce podoba s'e ja čułam s'e barzo dobže. F Pol'sce to mam tam znajomyχ. Jenzyk barzo m'i s'e podobał ješće jak odmav'alam pacěže, a potem f škole była ješće barzo dobra naučyc'el'ka, ktura te fšystk'e tradycje, fšystko to no teš s tyχ terenuf. Barzo dobže rozmav'ala po pol'sku, i m'eł'is'my v'ig'il'je i jak V'eł'kanoc to jajka to barzo nam s'e podobało i sama była taka ełegancko ubrana no Pol'ka taka ładna.

About learning Polish

Jeżeli mówisz, że jesteś Polką to...

– że moje fšystk'e bapc'e z'atk'i, praz'atk'i, pšotk'i som Polakam'i. Pogrubby tekst badacza: A jeżeli chodzi o religię, to swoją religijność, która się wyraża w języku, gdzie byś ją umieściła, po białoruskiej stronie, czy po polskiej? – Odpowiedź respondenta

Mówisz, że jesteś Polką po przodkach, ale oni też żyli w granicach państwa białoruskiego. Twój rodzice jednoznacznie uważają się za Polaków?

On identifying with the territory

– Tak no u niχ tam s'v'adectv'e nap'isane, že som Pol'akam'i. Pońewaš roz'ice ojca z Bałostoku, no on juš uroz'it' s'e tutaj, χoc'aš po pol'sku nie umòm nic pov'ež'ec', no rozumòm m'imo to som Pol'akam'i, že na pšykat katol'icy, Pol'acy f tej fs'i i baržej χozom do košćola i kšyže te na pšykat tam. Ve fs'i pravosl'avnej u nas nie ma ni žadnego. Nie ma cerkv'i i nie ma ružnicy, gž'e tak na pšykat Vel'kanoc pos'v'encac' te pokarmy, ońi mogom do košćola sχoz'ic'. My jestešmy baržej gosć'i•ni zafše pomogom i tam ješče v'encej p'ijańic

A jak będziesz uczyła swoje dzieci pacierza, to po polsku czy białorusku?

On the children's religious education

– Mam takom sytuacje, že jes'li bende m'ala ž'eć'i, a monš rozmav'a v jenzyku rosyjsk'im, ja rozmav'am po białorusku to χc'ałabym, žeby ž'eć'i ućyl'i s'e i tego i tego jenzyka, leč bende z nim'i rozmav'ała po białorusku, ale oćyv'isc'e, že bende ućyc' pac'ežy, no ješče bende patšec' jak'i košć'uł, v jak'im tam jenzyku bendom mše, no ježel'i tam mše po białorusku f tym mšec'e, gž'e bende mēškala, čy tam ve fs'i ježel'i mše tam bende pobiałorusku, muše ućyc' po białorusku pac'eža, leč baržo bende χc'ała žeby jenzyk pol'sk'i teš znal'i.

A kiedy modlisz się sama przed Panem Bogiem, to jak po polsku, czy białorusku?

Personal prayer

– Po pol'sku, jes'li proš'iš cos' ot s'ebe, čensto proš'iš o to... to po pol'sku. Ježel'i cos' ot s'ebe na pšykat potem f košć'eł'e, čensto muvòm, že proš'iš to, to po pol'sku i tak navet automatyčnie, že nu, proš'i s'e.

Eastern Slavic Texts

The texts that I refer to as Eastern Slavic were mostly recorded in Eastern Belarus. Only the transcription of the last interview, with a young man, is from Grodno.

The interlocutors from Eastern Belarus do not use Polish and do not always understand it, although they often use Polish church service books. The below statements have the characteristics of a mixed code, although in each case the individual features of the language should be noted.

Bezchynne (Mohilev District)

The text was transcribed in the Belarusian-Russian borderland. The informer's statement contains characteristics of north-eastern Belarusian dialects.

[BezchMN74/2012F]

- **A po pol'sk'i možna s vam'i pagavar'it'?**

- *Net, ja n'i mah'u razhav'aryvac'. Čytac' čytaju, ks'ionžačku čytała, jak hlazy v'iz'il'i, a s'ijč'as i čytac' ni mah'u saūs'im, i razhav'aryvac' pa pol'sk'i toža ni mah'u.*

Reading Polish church service books

- **No vy gavar'il'i pa pol'sk'i? Mama, možet, gavar'ila s vam'i pa pol'sk'i?**

- *Da. Mama razhav'aryvała maja, i uč'ylas'a. Jan'a małađaja pamòrła. Jan'a rask'azyvała mne, što u nas tut daža kasč"ol byu. Dyk kasč"ol ja pomnu, i byl'a škola. Učyl'i iχ, i razhav'aryval'i jan'y χarašo', razhav'aryval'i use pa pol'sk'i. A u nas užo pry našaj žyž'ni školy ni byl'o, uč'yc' nas niχtò ni uč'yū, tak my i as'al'is'a, što ni možam razhav'aryvac'. A mama, kańeš'ne, naša razhav'aryvała. U nas b'yl'i adn'y kat'ol'ik'i: i mama katol'ik, i papa katol'ik, i z"eduš'k'i našy kat'ol'ik'i – use byl'i u nas kat'ol'ik'i. Us'e χaž'il'i u kasč"ol – u nas tut na kl'adbiščy byl'a kapl'ička, use χaž'il'i, use mal'il'is'a. Kapl'ičku užo ja pomnu. Pry mne ni rab'otala, razlamal'i jaj'e i •syp'al'i tud'y z'arn'o kat'χ'ozy.*

Her mother's knowledge of Polish

Her Catholic parents and grandparents

Prayers at the cemetery chapel

- **Gd'e an'a byl'a kapl'ič'ka eta?**

Na kl'adb'iščy.

- **Eta d'erev'na B'esč'inje nazyv'aje•ca?**

The family village, where only Catholics lived

- B'asčy•na – 'eta naša z'arev'na. I ū nas tut adn'y kat'ol'ik'i žyl'i. U nas ni byl'o pravastaunyx. Z'al'il'i ūžo papo•žy. Načynałas' eta reval' ucyja, nastal'i, u katoryx ni byl'o ničoha, z'aml'u paabrazal'i u katoryx, maład'yx s'ud'y trox'i pats'al'il'i, s'am'ji z'v'e try ūs'ah'o byl'o tut.

Year of birth

- **A f kak'om gad'u vy rad'il'is'?**

- Ja raz'ilas'a ū try•cac'ftar'yam.

Her mother and father

- **A mama kagd'a χad'ila f p'ol'skuju školu?**

- Mama maj'a z az'ina•cataha hoda, papa z vas'm'oha. My m'al'eńk'ija byl'i, mama naša ūže pam'orla, papa naš jašč'e inval'it byu, jon z vajn'y pryjš'o ū, dyk jon z nam'i byu jašč'e pak'a h'oz'ik'i try, pat'om pam"or. Jon byla nam rask'azyvaic', što Maryja, Jezus Xrystus naraz'il'is'a k'al'a sk'ota. Ja pom'nu χaraš'o. Ja jašč'e ma'aja byl'a, spr'ašyvaju: „Papa, a atk'uda vy ūs'o heta zn'aič'a?” Jak Razž'astv'o načyn'ai•ca, i ūs'o heta nam rask'azyvau. Dyk jon havoryc': „Z'etka maj'a darah'aja, my š χaz'il'i ū školu! Nas ža ūčyl'i! Pa'etamu ja ūs'o znaju”. A pry nas už'o ni byl'o školy, nas už'o niχt'o ū ūč'yū. Nas už'o zaχvac'ila Sav'eckaja vlašč', a vy zn'aič'a pry Sav'eckaj vlašč'i, stroha b'yla n'astraha. Naša kapl'ička rab'otala na kl'adb'iščy, pastaj'a•naha ks'an'za ni byl'o. Ja rask'azyvaju, jak našy rask'azyval'i, mamy, papy, z'edušk'i i b'abušk'i. Ja š ūna pom'nu, ja małaja byla. Byu u nas tut z'eduška, ja h'etaha z'edušku χaraš'o pom'nu. Jan zvaŭsa, i jon každy z'eń v'ou službu ū kapl'ič'ki. A ks'onc pryja•ž'au u apryz'al'o•nyja d'ni. Zn'aič'a z jak' oj r'adašč'u jah'o ūstračal'i? Z'etak us'ix padhatov'ic' u pl'acijcy

The chapel

b'eleńk'ija, i v'anoč'ki, i c'vat'oč'ki. S c'vat'očkam'i vyxoz'uc', ustrač'ajuc' ks'anž'a. Ne tak, jak s'ič'as. Zn'ajica, jakaja byl'a pavaha k ks'enžu, ne tak, jak čap'er. A z'edušku J'ana n'ašaha, katory u kapl'ič'ki v'ou us'o heta, i službu v'ou, i l'už'i us'e xaz'il'i, zabral'i i rastryl'al'i. St'areńk'i užo byu, sl'aběńki. Zabral'i, i ne v'arnuusa jon.

- A Vy f kakuju školu xaz'il'i pr'i Sav'eckaj vlast'i, v r'uskuju il'i b'elar'uskuju?

- R'uskaja i b'itar'uskaja.

- A kak'oj jaz'yk Vy izuč'al'i?

- My izučal'i i rusk'ij, i b'itarusk'ij. No zn'ajica, jak tad'y učyl'isa? Tol'ki adn'o byl'o pra St'al'ina. U kniškaŭ nas navučal'i us'o tol'ki pra St'al'ina dy pra L'eńina. Byl'i i

p'eš'ni us'ak'ija. Pryxoz'is' u školu i jak „Ojča naš”. Tak i jan'y „dva s'okała na dub'u z'al'onym da nat čem prastoram dva s'okała”. Vot tol'ki znal'i pra L'eńina, pra St'al'ina. Vot nas čah'o učyl'i. Pak'udava kašč'oty ne atkr'yl'isa, ja ni znała, i ni v'iz'ila. Jes'l'i p, zn'aica, jašč'e byl'a maj'a mama, a to mamy ni byl'o, my žyl'i b'is m'amy s'irat'oj, nič't'o n'ikoha ni uč'yu. Pak'udava kašč'ot ni atkr'yusa. U z'iv'anosta z'ivatym, kapl'ička na pol'sk'im kl'adb'iščy snačala atkryv'atas'a. My rasp'isyval'isa z ma'im mužam, už'o kašč'ot atkryusa, ja hot xaz'ila u kapl'ičku na pol'sk'im kl'adb'iščy. Kašč'ot jašč'e ni rabotaŭ, a pat'om užo pad v'oš'in kašč'ot st'al'i p'eradav'ac', pryńim'ac'. My xaz'il'i pryńim'ac': Fr'ancaŭna, jaj'e muš V'it'al'ij nas vaz'iu na mašyni. Mamu i x'riuju i mań'e. My v'anč'al'isa, m'ne dal'i udastav'ir'eńijka, što my z im pav'anč'al'isa, us'o zap'isana. U z'iv'anosta z'ivatym my v'anč'al'isa. U kašč'ot p'irajšl'i s kapl'ič'ki. kašč'ot jašč'e byu tol'ki pryńaty.

Languages at school

The beginning of religious practices in the 1990s

The interlocutor's church wedding after spending many years together with her husband

Z₃'etal'i us_o u Zaχr'ysc'iji i mal'il'is_a my us'u z'im'u. A letam stal'i z'elac' rem'ont, mal'il'is_a my us'e na v'ul'icy. Vynas'il'i skam'eječk'i, stanav'il'i i my mal'il'is_a. A U₁laz'is_{ta}u naš byu ks'anž'om, jon v'ou nam službu na v'ul'icy. A kasč'ot hety uv'es' abrab'atyval'i za leta. A my užo v'anč'al'is_a u z'iv'atym had'u dva•cac' f₁taroha z'ikabr'a p₁erat samym Ražz'astv'om. P'irajšl'i u hety kasč'ot u Zaχr'ysc'iji mal'il'is_a, i my tam z ma'im m'užam pav'anč'al'is_a. Nas v'anč'au ks'onc Stań'is_{ta}u. Jon užo nav'erna um'ir, ja us_o spr'ašyvala. Nu ks'onc b'edny! A jak ža on nas uvaž'au! St₁užbu v'az'ec', a tad'y pryjz'ic' i m'añ'e vo tak pa haloucy pah₁laz'ic'. Tak uvaž'au, što my pav'anč'al'is_a. U nas ža užo vozrast byu, my byl'i ni v'anč'anyja, u m'añ'e užo z'ec'i balš'yja byl'i. Ni ma₁lad'yja my v'anč'al'is_a. Dyk jon tak

A priest who did not know Russian

uvaž'au, tak uvaž'au m'añ'e. A pańim'ac' pa r'usk'i ničah'o ni pańim'au. Tol'k'i pa pol'sk'i. Vo byu jak'i ks'onc darah'i! I jon nas pav'anč'au dva•cac' f₁taroha z'ikabr'a, p'irajšl'i u hety kasč'ot u Zaχr'ysc'iju, tam byl'o ničoha jašč'e ni z₃'elana, us'o raun'o, tam byla jak adn'o reval'ucyja, us'o razl'omana, st'endy stajal'i, tam tr'aktar, tud'y my daža ni zaχaz'il'i. Byu χot u Zaχr'ysc'iju, s tyx dv'ar'ej, što u stal'ovuju zaχaz'ic', s tyx dv'ar'ej, i t'uta mal'il'is_a. I my pav'anč'al'is_a, i dva•cac' f₁taroha pajšl'i u kasč'ot. Ražz'astv'o prajšl'o dva•cac' p'ataha, my pav'anč'al'is_a tryc'ataha z'ikabr'a. A p'ers-n'ap'ers mal'il'is_a jašč'e u kapl'ičk'i na kl'adb'iščy, p'erva n'ap'irva prys₁tal'ik nam ks'anž'a. J'anuš, ma₁l'oz'iničk'i byu, ničav'o ni pańim'au pa r'usk'i. B'edničk'i, jak jam'u byl'o čaž'ola rab'otac', patam'u što nas niχt'o ni učy_u, tol'k'i zn'al'i rusk'i, a p'ol'skaha ni znal'i, d'ažy ks'onž'ačku čyt'ac'. Ja kup'ila tam jašč'e ks'onž'ačku, i uč'y₁lasa čyt'ac'. Dy ja čyt'ac' navuč'y₁lasa, a razhav'aryvac' ja ni mah'u pa pol'sk'i.

Learning Polish from books

Dyk hety Januš b'ednińk'i, jon u nas vòu da v'asn'y, tad'y prysła'i Stań'islava. Stańislau p'irav''ou s kapl'ick'i u Zaxr'ysc'ju, z'e mal''il'is'a us'u z'im'u da leta. Pad v'asn'u užo prysła'i Ułaz''islava Bl'ina. Ety už'aus'a za remonty. Strašny byu kaśc'oł, strašny. Tad'y užo pad v'asn'u atkryl'i dv'ery. Boža, tam strašna b'yla, us'o jon b'ednińk'i z'z'etau. Ramonty, ramonty, us'o ramanc'iraval'i, l'uz''ej pryhtaš'au, kap l'uz'i pryħaz'il'i, pamahal'i. Us'o z'z'etau, tad'y zabr'al'i jah'o.

- A skažyc'e, kagd'a vas kr'est'il'i?

- Kahd'a naš tut kaśc''olčyk byu. Rabotau hoda, nav'erna, da try•cac' p'ataha, c'i da try•cac' šastoha, patam'u što maj'a s'astr'a, jan'a s try•cac' šastoha hoda, i jaj'e užo krysc'il'i u Mahil'ov'e u tym kaśc'ol'e. A m'añ'e jašč'e krysc'il'i (s'astr'a maj'a m'eńšaja za m'añ'e na dva h'oz'ik'i, ja try•cac' ftaroha, a jan'a try•cac' čac''ortaha), nas pakrysc'il'i u našaj kapl'ick'i, kšonc pryjažž'au s'ud'a, tut u nas i v'anč'al'i,

rask'azyval'i, kańešńe, heta ni pry mńe, ja š małaja byl'a, ni pomńu užo. No jak rask'azyval'i, ja us'o pomńu. Našy b'abušk'i, našy còc'i, jak by jan'y čap''er ustal'i, jan'y p z vam'i pahavar'yl'i, jan'y us'o um'el'i, us'o znal'i razhav'aryvac'. Heta š my, Sav''eckaja ułasc' heta us'ix nas sp'orc'ila, adb'ila ad us'ah'o, us'ix ninav''izil'i nas, vot tak'ija my kal'ek'i ast'al'is'a naum''etyja. Tak už'o uč'yl'is'a, st'al'i my u kapl'icku ħaz''ic', kapl'icku pryńal'i os'i•ńu, u z'iv'anosta vas'my'm, nav'erna, leta mal''il'is'a tam u kapl'ick'i.

- A zd'es' žyl'i pal'ak'i?

- Pal'aka u ni bylo, katal''ičyskaja v'era byl'a, pal'aka u s Polščy ni byl'o l'uz''ej. A byl'i v''ernik'i katal''ičysk'ija. Jan'y mahl'i havar'yc' m'ezdy sob', jan'y uč'yl'is'a. Ja s'ič'as, jak už'o stała ħaz''ic' u

Rebuilding the church

Closure of the church in 1935

The interlocutor's christening

Knowledge of Polish among the interlocutors' older relatives

No Poles, but Catholicism thrived

kašč'ot, ja uslyxala i pra Maryju, Jezus Xrystus jak naraž'iusa, dyk ja stala usпам'in'ac', što mój papa heta us'o mne rask'azyvau, jak my m'al'enk'ija byl'i.

Her father spoke Polish

- Jon rask'azyvau pa pol'sk'i?

- Da, a ja havar'u, u jah'o spr'ašyvaju: „Papa, atkuda vy uš'o zn'aica?“. A jon havar'yc': „My š u škołu xaz'il'i, nas ža učyl'i“. Nu tad'y u toja urem'a učyl'i, zn'aica, v'era byla očyń v'ernaja, ni takaja, jak s'ič'as.

- Vy gavar'it'e, što papa razgav'ar'ival pa pol'sk'i?

- Mahl'i, kašešni, razhav'aryvac' pa pol'sk'i.

- A vy jem'u kak atv'ečal'i?

Multilingualism

- Tak jon pa ruski razhav'aryvau. A jes'li p jon byu z vam'i, jon by razhav'aryvau pa pol'sk'i. A tak u nas tut us'e b'elarus'y razhav'aryval'i pa b'elarusk'i. Byl'i, kašešni, jašč'e star'y•nyja b'abušk'i, ja pomnu byl'a u nas tut takaja b'abuška, Al'ena zv'alaša, nazyval'i pańi Hal'ena.

Polish honorifics

- A gavar'il'i „pańi“, „pan“?

- Da, Pańi havaryl'i uše, pańi Maryja, pańi Al'ena.

- A gavar'il'i na vas, što vy šl'axta?

The petty nobility

- Da. Našy ni havaryl'i, a čužyja z'areu'ni, kat'oryja pastar'o•nija, jan'y š byl'i pravas'taunija. U nas tut tol'k'i adn'a z'areu'na byla kat'ol'ika, a tut ža kruhom u nas ni adnoj z'areu'ni daže net, štop byl'i kat'ol'iki. H'eta u h'etu st'oranu k Č'ausam, tam byl'o bolejš' rav'eń, tam i kašč'ot byu u Č'ausax, tam bolejš' rav'eń byl'o katal'ičysk'ix.

- A tam tože gavar'il'i, što šl'axta?

- Nu abzyval'i tak, iχ nixt'o ni sl'uχay. Naša z'ar'euňa, jan'y s pravasl'aunym'i ni val'i nij'ak'ix z'al'ou, ni apšč'al'is'a. Heta uže jak stala Sav'eckaja vlasč', už'e pasaiž'inál'i, us'o sp'utalas', sauměsna užo us'ak'ija stal'i nazyv'ac' i us'ak. A rańšy tol'k'i u nas byl'i katol'ik'i, jan'y ni apšč'al'is', nixt'o z im'i nijak'ix z'al'ou ni val'i s pravasl'aunym'i. Nijak'ix ni spraul'al'i, tam, naprym'er, što spraul'ajuc', što s toj z'areuňaj, što s toj. I ni žań'il'is'a. Eta my, naš už'o vozrast, užo pam'aš'al'is'a. A našy raz''ic'il'i, jan'y nixt'o ni vyxaz'il'i, štop jan'a vyxaz'ila zamuš za pravasl'aunaha u jak'uju-ńebuc' tam druhuju z'areuňu. H'etaha ni byl'o. Jan'y, jesli nada, j'ezz'il'i za p'atn'a•cac' k'il'om'itrau i za dva•cac' k'il'om'itrau katol'ik'i k katol'ikam, i apšč'al'is'a, i žań'il'is'a. U nas s'amaja bl'ižňaja z'areuňa byl'a Lubav'in, vot jan'y j'ezz'il'i małaz'oš, tud'y paj'educ', a•t'udava małaz'oš pryhłas'at s'ud'a, u našu z'areuňu, nu i tak pažań'il'is'a mn'ohija.

- A vaš muš atkuda?

- Moj muš toža sa sl'eduščaj z'areuňi, jon pravasl'aunyy. Ja užo zm'ašala svaj'u v'eru. No ja us'o adn'a svaj'e v'ery i pamr'u z'aržuša us'o urem'a... jon jak sab'e xočyc', xočyc', naχ'aj iz''ec' u cerkau pravasl'aunuju, a ja pa svojmu, kud'y xaz'ila, kud'y maj'e raz''ic'il'i xaz'il'i, z'e m'ań'e p'irykrysc'il'i i kud'y m'ań'e prytažyl'i z z'ectva s'amaha maj'e raz''ic'il'i, ja tak i

žyv'u. Us'o urem'a xaz'u u kasc'oł, i u kasc'oł, i u kasc'oł. Jon naχ'aj jak xočyc', xočyc', u c'erkau, xočyc', xaz''i u kasc'oł. Spas'iba, ni atkaz'au, skazala, pašl'i pav'anča•ca, paš'ou sa mnoj, pav'anč'al'is'a my u kasc'oł'i. Spas'iba jam'u, daj Boh zdarouja. Druhija ž'aluju•ca ž'enščyny, vo tak sama saiz'in'onyja, što na xočuc' i•c''i u kasc'oł v'anča•ca.

Contacts between Catholics and Orthodox Christians

Her Orthodox husband

The interlocutor's faith

Fear of admitting to Polishness - **A vaš papa gavar'ih o s'eb'e, što on pal'ak?**

- Nu dyk eta us'e znał'i i rask'azyvac' ni nada byl'o. Kat'ol'ik'i byl'i i zv'al'is'a. U nas kras'iva byl'o. Kras'ivaja z'areu'na, kras'ivyja l'uz'i byl'i, kras'ivaja kapl'ička byl'a. Rask'azyval'i, z'eduška Jan, paš'ou, havar'yc', zvanoč'ki zazvo'nic', l'uz'ičk'i us'e a z'in za adn'ym us'e u kapl'ičku. Tad'y už'e posl'i vajn'y, jašč'e st'aryja našy bap'k'i byl'i, sab'ir'al'is'a u χ'atkaχ, u dam'aχ, tam abraž'ik, na maj'ovyja nabaž'enstva χaž'il'i mal'i•ca.

May and rosary devotions held in people's homes

Ružancovy mēs'ac us'o χaž'il'i, čap'er u Fr'ancauny m'ol'u•ca. Jan'a małaž'ejšaja, my staryja, my bal'nyja, my moža tut što ni tak. A jan'y maladyja, spas'iba im, daj Boh im zdarou'ijka. B'ožačka im dapam'ožyc', što jan'y us'ahd'y nas pryv'ectvujuc' i a•c'a n'ašaha Hryh'oryja, i m'ań'e, spas'iba im bal's'oja, Fr'ancau'ni. Ja i ni v'izu, maj'e hl'azačk'i ni v'iz'ac', jan'a m'ań'e zaus'ody pryv'az'ec', i u mašynku pasoz'ic', jon m'ań'e voz'm'a kała dvar'a, pryja•žaič, zab'iraič i pryv'oz'ic k im. Tam u iχ pam'ol'ims'a, i naz'at pryv'az'ec' s'ud'a. Daj Boh sdar'ou'ijka, spas'iba. U kasc'oł j'ezž'ila pašč'i šta us'e pr'azničk'i, k'aždaja vaskras'eńijka. Była druh'i ras χaž'ain na m'ań'e troχ'i par'uhivaic': „Što ty us'o tak časta jezž'iš?” A m'ne nij'akaj c'ažysc'i ni byl'o. Try•cac' k'ilam'etrau da Mahil'ova, aut'obusam nada jeχac'. M'ne ni byl'o c'ažysc'i. Uv'es' inc'ar'es, us'a radasc' byl'a – kasc'oł. A s'ič'as, vy zn'aic'a što, vo hlazy atkazał'i, sam'a bal'naja saus'im, ins'ul't

Trips to the church in Mohilev

pab'yu, adb'iu maj'u hał'ovačku, adb'iu maj'o serca us'o słaboje saus'im. A jašč'e mała tah'o, jašč'e i hlazy atkazał'i. Jašč'e tr'ošačku χoc' svac'il'i. Spas'iba, što χoc' pryja•žaic'k nam ac'ec naš Hryhoryj, m'ol'ims'a my, čap'er u nas us'a radasc', us'a uč'ęa u Fr'ancauny. Oč'ny χaroš'ij.

- A č'em atl'ič'alas' vaša d'er'evná at pravoslavnaj?

- *Atl'ič'alas', 'eta mah'u skaz'at' točna. Byl'i l'uz'i očyn' uvaž'yc'ilnyja, byl'i l'uz'i očyn' pač'otnyja, jan'y níkahd'a ní ustr'aival'i níjak'ix, jes'li, naprym'er, bašetka, jakaja il'i svaz'ba, usáhd'a l'uz'i byl'i vas'otyja, usáhd'a spával'i p'es'ink'i, usáhd'a níjakaj nípryj'atnasc'i ní byl'o. Z'areu'na byl'a očyn'-očyn' ħar'ošaja, l'uz'i byl'i us'e uvaž'yc'ilnyja, us'e ħar'ošyja, us'e d'obryja, uvažal'i ač'in adnah'o. Níx't'o ní razu ní abzyv'au níj'ak'im'i stavam'i. A jašč'e u nas byl'a b'abuška, ja časta uspam'inaju jaj'e, jan'a d'ažy na n'ašym kl'adb'iščy paħar'ořina. J'eħal'i pl'im'a•ník'i, dyk zabral'i u Tašk'ent. Jan'a byl'a inval'iz'ik, zuby u jaj'e ní rab'otal'i, i vot jan'a nas sabr'ala i pav'al'a u j'ahady, jašč'e my byl'i małyja, h'ož'ikaŭ pa z'ešac' byl'o. Ceły z'aňočak spávala svatyja p'ešni. Vo čalav'ek! Vot najz'ica čap'er takoha čalav'eka. Ja ní znaju, moža u Polščy tam u Vas josc', no u nas tak'ix ní najz'oš už'e l'uz'ej. Tak'ija u nas l'uz'i byl'i u n'ašaj z'areu'ni. J'ezzil'i pa hasc'aħ maj'a mama, moj z'až'a, zaprahal'i sva'ix k'oňikaŭ, jak'ija jan'y nav'yhadal'i, jak v'yjaduc', dyk tol'k'i stoj da hlaz'i. Mnogo atl'ič'alaša, l'uz'i byl'i očyn' ħar'ošyja.*

- A v dom'e b'ýlo tak, kak u pravosl'avnyħ?

- *Net, u kat'ol'ikaŭ us'o byla lučšy. Dažy ač'iv'al'is'a mnoha ras lučšy, kul'turnej, kras'iv'ej. Dažy ač'ežda us'akaja paz'elana, sam'i š tad'y tka'l'i, i sam'i sab'e ní jupak tak ní pašyl'i, tak'ix jupak našy kat'ol'ik'i ní nas'il'i, jak'ija jan'y nas'il'i. Jan'y nas'il'i, zn'aic'a, im nada, kap byl'o u zbory tak'ija šyr'ok'ija, a našy nas'il'i jak i s'ič'as, j'upačku*

Differences between Catholic and Orthodox villages

pašyjuc', jan'a r'ouñiñkaja, pr'am'niñkaja u jaj'e, akur'atniñkaja. Rask'azyval'i, ja jašč'e ñamnoška pomñu, dl'i•nyja nas'il'i, da s'amaha poļu. Jan'a tam j'upačka jak j'upačka. Mnoha ras kulturñeja a3'iv'al'is'a. Kat'ol'ik'i josč' kat'ol'ik'i.

- A kñig'i u vas byl'i v dom'e?

Polish books in the interlocutor's family home

- Xa3'il'i ma'i raz'ic'il'i u škoļu, jakija u iħ kñih'i byl'i, ja š ñi zn'aju, a u mamy maj'oj, i 3'eduška z nam'i jašč'e žyju, u iħ tol'k'i ks'onžačk'i, tol'k'i na pol'skam jazyk'e. U mañ'e toža ks'onžačka, ja jaj'e kup'ila u našym kascel'i u Mah'il'ov'i.

Polish books sold in church

- A kak vam lučše mal'i•ca pa pol'sk'i il'i pa b'elarusk'i?

Praying in Polish and Belarusian

- S'ič'as ža u nas v'iz'ica, balšynstv'o na b'ilaruskaj, a u kascel'i s utr'a iz'ec' na pol'skaj mov'i. Patam'u šta tam staryk'i, jan'y žylajuc', štop na pol'skaj mov'i. A małaž'ejšyja, kat'oryja pauzraslel'i, stal'i xa3'ic', ñi zna'l'i pol'sk'i, heta š ñi každy nav'učy•ca tak bystra čyt'ac'. Ja kahd'a kup'ila s'ab'e ks'onžačku i stala učy•ca, mñe byl'o očyn' cažoļa, ja ñi znaļa ñi bukvaŭ, ñičoha, ñi mah'l'a čyt'ac'. Mama jes'l'i p byl'a maj'a, jan'a moža mañ'e p i navučyļa. Mama maj'a pam'orļa u sorak šast'ym had'u. Jan'a bal'eļa had'y dva, laž'ala b'edniñkaja, jan'a meñ'a ñičoha ñi navučyļa mal'i•ca pa p'ol'sk'i. A ja sam'a sab'e navuč'yłas'a i mal'ilas' ħaraš'o, ks'onžačku ħaraš'o čyt'ala. A s'ič'as žeš'ac' let už'o hl'azy atkaz'al'i, nu jašč'e byl'o ħoc' čuc' čuc' carp'ima.

Learning Polish from a book

- A što vaša mama gat'ovila na Ražd'estvo?

Holiday dishes and ways of serving them

- Oj, kat'ol'ik'i jan'y vapsč'e pryhat'avl'ival'i! Kat'ol'ik'i josč' kat'ol'ik'i. Jan'y panahat'avl'ivajuc', ja pr'ama ñi zn'aju! Jan'y pryhat'avl'ivajuc' jad'u us'akuju l'učšy. R'añšy, naprym'er, tam sv'az'bu 3'elajuc', s'am'i usah'o panahat'avl'ivajuc', a pravas'taun'nyja, ja vam skaž'u atkr'yta, nav'aruc' krup'eñi. Vy pañim'aica krup'eñi – kartoška i krupy. U čuhun'u navaruc',

Christmas in the 1930s

u m'isk'i naklad'uc' – i na stoł. Nu razvè š heta možna? U

nas u našaj z'areu'ni níkahd'a tak nixt'o níčah'o ní pryhat'avl'ival'. U nas hat'ov'il'i usò očyn' čaraš'o. U nas zarežuc' i paras'onačka, abž'aryvajuc' i m'aska, kałbasak. A p'akl'i! Panap'ak'uc' i r'ezničkau, i p'irašk'ou, i vatr'ušačak, i s'y'rničkau. Us'ah'o panap'ak'uc', tam nám'a znač! Čap'er vyzyvajuc' maład'yč na padarak, kap pryčaz'il'i. Raňšy vyzyval'i, kanf'etak ní byl'o, p'áč'eńijka ní byl'o, sam'i panap'ak'uc' p'áč'eńička, torč'ik moža jak'i sp'ak'uc', pa kusočku adrežuc', na tar'elačku, i padn'os'uc', tam už'o i r'umačku jakuju tam už'o pastav'ac'. B'ar'uc' pazdrau'ľajuc' maład'yč, padaj'uc' hasc'incy, što jan'y užo na tar'elačk'i palažyl'i vatr'ušačk'i, c'i tam p'áč'eńejku jak'oha sp'ak'uc'. Us'o p'akl'i očyn' čar'ošaja. N'iz'e tak ní hat'ov'il'i, nixt'o!

- A kak'ije eta byl'i gody?

- Try•c'atyja, jašč'e j da try•catyč. Už'o načné•ca m'asajet, posl'i Ražž'astv'a, k'aždyja vyčadnyja praz'nik. S'ahod'na u mań'e bank'et, sazyvajuc', pryčaz'i, z'au'tra k' družomu pr'az'niku druž'i zazyvaic' bank'ety. Tak hul'al'i! Tak hul'al'i, pryhat'avl'ival'i! Kałχοzy užo byl'i, jan'y usò adn'o kat'ol'ik'i až'al'al'is'a, pryhat'avl'ival'i. Sab'ir'al'is'a tam kr'ez'b'iny il'i svaz'ba, pryhat'avl'il'i ní tak, jak pravasl'aunyja. Pravasl'aunyja tr'ošačku s'ič'as jan'y stal'i. Kańeš'na, ja ní čač'u skaz'ac', što jan'y i s'ič'as tak'ija. S'ič'as už'o pravasl'aunyja tak ní z'elajuc', eta raňšy, eta byl'o u star'ynačku, daun'o, byl'i star'y•nyja 'etyja l'uz'i. Jan'y byl'i c'omnyja, jan'y ní pańimal'i ničoha. S'ič'as už'o małaz'oš, jan'a užo byv'aja us'udy, hl'az'ac', apšč'aju•ca, u harad'ač žyv'uc', jan'y užo z'elajuc' taks'ama, jak i u nas. Heta ja rask'azyvajuc', što pravasl'aunyja byl'i tak'ija, heta u star'ynačku daun'o daun'o jašč'e tak pryhat'avl'ival'i.

Christmas among Orthodox Christians

- Polish surnames in the village** - **A kak'ije byl'i fam'il'ii v vašej d'er'evné?**
 - *U nas byl'i tol'ki p'ol'sk'ija fam'il'iji: Tyk'ock'ija, Ivan'oušk'ija, S'ipajly. U nas tut byl'o try fam'il'iji. Puχ'oušk'ija jašč'e. U nas už'o s'ič'as kat'ol'ikau ňet. Už'o asta'os' tak'iχ nas try ženščyny, kat'oryja naraz' il'iša tut. Našy raz'ic'l'i, vot jak ja. Maj'a byla z'ev'ič:ja fam'il'ija Puχ'ouškaja, i s'ič'as Puχ'ouškaja. I muš pap'aūs'a Puχ'oušk'i. Papa moj byu Puχoušk'i, a mama byl'a S'ipajla.*
- **A kak'ije im'en'a byl'i?**
- Polish first names** - *Mama maj'a byl'a Ańela, papa M'ik'ida, z'eduška byu Stas', z'až'a byu Stas', z'eduška druh'i byu L'iksandra. Tak'ija byl'i u nas u z'areuŋi Kl'ara, V'ikc'a (V'ikt'oryja), Ańa. U nas pravastlaunyx im'on ňi byl'o.*
- **A pr'aznaval'i im'eŋiny?**
- Celebrating namedays, not birthdays** - *A z'eŋ ražž'e•ńa ňiχt'o tad'y ňi pr'aznavau. Ja tak pražyl'a ūs'u žyzŋ i ňikahd'a ňi atm'ičala svajh'o dńa ražž'e•ńa. I ja pražyl'a i ňi znaju jah'o. I ňi atm'ič'ala ňikam'u. I, slava Bohu, Boh pryŋimaic'... Ja jašč'e małaja byl'a, ja skadžu mam'e: „Mama!”... My š ňi smel'i skadž'ac' „ty” mam'e, „m'aměňka, p'apeňka”. ňiχt'o ňi nazyv'au ňi mama, ňi ty, ňi b'abuška, štop baba. Baraŋi B'oža, ja i c'ap'er ňi mah'u skadž'ac' ňi na kah'o baba, c'i z'eť. Ja pražyl'a ūs'u žyzŋ, jak u maŋ'e z z'eťctva prykl'az'ina, tak i s'ič'as u maŋ'e ūše b'abušk'i, us'e z'edušk'i. Navučyl'i, i ja pryvykla. I jan'y ūše tak i žyl'i, i u nas na „ty” ňiχt'o ňikoha tak i ňi nazyv'au.*
- **A kak vy gavar'il'i vzroslym: Paŋi il'i toť'a?**
- Honorifics** - *My c'oc'a nazyv'al'i, a mama, kaŋ'ešŋi, naša, Paŋi nazyv'ala, jes'l'i apšč'al'is, u iχ svaj'e razhavory, dyk jan'y na Vy až' in da adnah'o (nazyv'al'i). U nas ňi byl'o, štop kah'o ŋib'uc' na „ty” nazyv'al'i u z'areuŋi.*
- Forms of address to adults**

- A kak zdar'oval'is' na 'ul'ice? Vy gavar'il'i „z'ėn dobry”
 „Dzień dobry” – Polish for
 “Good day”

il'i „zdr'astvujt'e”?

- Da, z'ėn dobry ũs'e havaryl'i. S'ič'as ũž'e, kaėeėni, ĥoc' by zdrastvuj (skazal'i).

- A jesl'i kto-nib'uc' k vam pr'ixad"il' dam'oj, to gavar'il'i „z'ėn dobry” il'i „ėeĥ benz'e paĥval'ony Jezus Xrystus”?
 “Praise be to Jesus Christ”

- Kaėeėni, havaryl'i „ėeĥ benz'e paĥval'ony Jezus Xrystus” u praznik. Raėny naėy b'abuėk'i (ũs'e jan'y ũžo na kl'adb'iėĥy laė'ac'), raėny sab'ir'aju•ca s prac'es'ijaj, i paėl'i na kl'adb'iėĥa, id'uc' i m'ol'u•ca. ũs'o jan'y tak byl'i prykl'aė'iny star'yja. My ũž'o, jak nas prykl'al'i, my tak'ija d'ouhija i pav'yraėl'i, vo tak i praėyl'i.

- A nakanuėe Raėd'ėstv'a u vas byl'a tak'aja v'eėera p'osnaja?
 Christmas Eve dishes

- Da, da, ku•c'a. Kaėu varyl'i, tam jaėĥ'e mama pryhatov'ic', spaė'e nam jak"ix p'iraėk'oũ z hrypkam'i, pryhatov'ic'. ũs'o p'osniėkaja byl'o. Z r'adac'u ũdal'i. Aėydal'i z r'adac'u,ėtop mama nam i p'ac'ik'i paėyla, i bac'inaėk'i kup'ila k pr'azniėku. Z'ėduėka u nas byu, nam pamah'au ũėahd'y, jah'o raskul'aėyl'i, saėtal'i, a jon i tam b'ėdniėk'i... zabral'i ũėo i saėtal'i aė na Ur'ał. A jon nam a•tuda prysl'au pas'yłaėk'i. Mama u nas ťyla, jon joj kup'iu maėynu. U t'oje ũrem'a ģa ũ k'aėdaha i maėyna byl'a, navuė'yu ťyc', dyk jon ni ťyja ũžo, a prysl'ec' materyjału, mama sam'a paėyjić nam p'ac'ik'i k Val'ikadėu. Bac'inaėk'i prysl'ic', p'latoėku prysl'ic'.

Her grandfather who was
 dekulakised and exiled to
 the Urals

Her mother who worked on
 a sewing machine

- A skol'ka vas byla d'et'ej u mamy?

- U mamy byla mnoha z'ac'ej: p'ac'. B'ėdniėkaja pam'orla i try saėtr'y pam'orli m'al'ėnk'ija. Z'ėduėku saėtal'i na Ur'ał, d'umal'i,ėto jon tam

Grandfather in exile

- Dekulakisation and exiles in the 1930s** *zh'iinic', a jon tam žyū. Kal'i jon byū čatav'ek pačotny, jah'o i tam uvaž'al'i. Ja tam ni byl'a, z'edušku ni v'iz'ila, kat'oraha sasta'l'i, jah'o jak raskul'ačval'i, mań'e jašč'e saūs'im ni byl'o. U try•catyx had'aχ*
- Her father's family** *raskul'ačval'i, •syła'l'i. Mama pas'l'a zamuš u druh'i dvor, u Puxoušk'iχ. Jan'y byl'i toža b'ednyja, z'e papa moj žyū. Mama ū iχ pamòrta, u iχ ni byl'o z'ac'ej mnoha. Dyk vy skažyc'a, nada š tak'im byc' lužam – pryšl'i tam, zabra'l'i jaj'e. Na papu havorac': „Ty χočaš esc', χočaš nie, a čab'e zab'iraim”. I zabra'l'i jaj'e, zavez'l'i na Urał. Nu vy skažyc'a, jak jan'a b'ednaja p'iražyła? Tad'y ū Mahil'ou zav'azl'i, dyk heta ja małaja byl'a, jan'a mńe ni rask'azyvala, jašč'e ū jaj'e samy meńšy byū brat, z'az'a ūžo moj, dyk heta jon, kal'i ja byl'a ūžo uzr'oslaja, dyk jon pryja•žau z Urała s'ud'a, jon mńe rask'azyvau, dyk ja pa'etamu tol'ki zn'aju. Havar'yc', pryj'eχala, druh'i ras zabra'l'i ū Mahil'ov'e, zak'inul'i tam n'ejk'aja zd'ańijka byl'o razl'omanaja i razb'itaja. Duža, havar'yc', prysm'otra ni byl'o, jan'a saz'ela-saz'ela, vyjdu, havar'yc', pahlaž'u, níz'e níkoha ni v'idna, níχt'o duža za mnoj ni sl'az'ic'. Znak'omaja u jaj'e byl'a ž'enščyna, u katoraj jan'a vuč'yłaš'a šyc'. Dyk jan'a bačk'om-bačk'om vyšla, prajd'u-prajd'u, ahlanuš'a, pahlaž'u, c'i h'ońa•ca za mnoj. Tak pajšl'a, pajšl'a, i zajšl'a k joj už'o. Heta ūžo z'az'a mńe rask'azyvau. Z'az'u jak raskul'ačval'i, jon meńšy byū, čat'yrna•cac' h'oz'ikaŋ byla, a druh'i z'az'a, jon z vašmoha hoda, a mama z az'i•nacataha. Toj z'az'a byū troχ'i c'iš'ejšy moj starejšy, a hety tak'i havaryła byū, jak i ja, l'ub'iy duža pahavar'yc', raskaz'ac'. A tut byl'i u nas ž'enščyny, i còc'a maj'a byl'a, tak'aja duža v'erujuščaja, mal'ilas'a, oj jak mal'ilas'a, i b'abuška jašč'e tut byl'a adn'a, toža. Tak'ija v'erujuščyja byl'i, tak mal'il'is'a. Čap'er ža*
- Transportation to the Urals**
- Learning to sew**
- Religion in the family**

pamr'ec' čalav'ek, níkah'o u χac'i níž'e, pryjž'ic', pah'laz'el'i i pajšl'i. A to pamr'ec' u nas byvala, pryχoz'uc', us'o zž'etajuc', s'az'ac', m'ol'u•ca. Pryjduc' i s s'amaha v'ečara i da utr'a s'az'ac', us'o m'ol'u•ca i us'o sp'av'ajuc'.

The custom of wakes for the deceased

Us'o kasc'ol'nyja p'es'ink'i, sv'atyja p'es'ink'i. Ni to, što čap'er, sab'aru•ca na paχar'onj, dy u niχ adn'y razhavory, što kaľa pak'ojníka nil'z'a razhav'aryvac' tak'im'i razhav'oram'i. Mal'i•ca niχt'o ná m'ol'i•ca! Niχt'o! A u nas byl'o da s'amaha utr'a. Utram b'ednínkija užo sχoz'uc', i ũstanuc', a•dayn'uc' namn'oška tam čas'y pa dv'a, pa tr'y. Pat'om sab'ir'aju•ca ap'ac'. I m'ol'u•ca, pak'ul' s χaty ni v'yńisuc' h'etaha pak'ojnaha, i da kl'adb'išča, i na kl'adb'išča pravažajuc', m'ola•ca, p'ěsnk'i sv'atyja, ni ab'y jak'ija, i mal'itvy tol'k'i za pak'ojníka. Vo, jak mal'il'is'a! Jakaja krasac'išča byl'a u nas! A čap'er! I havar'yc' daže ni χ'oča•ca. Krasac'išča byl'a u ž'areuńi! Jak by ũstal'i ũš'e h'etyja b'abušk'i, što na kl'adb'iščy laž'ac', kap jan'y toja ũslyχal'i, što vy pryj'eχal'i k nam i razhav'aryvaica, i s Polščy, Boža moj, jan'y tut by ni znal'i, jak χaž'ic' Vo, jak'ija byl'i l'uz'i! Jak jan'y ũvaž'al'i! A čap'er! Oj, nam'a čah'o havar'yc', i havar'yc' ná χ'oča•ca!

Her elder relatives would have given anything to be able to speak Polish as one can today

Prodvino

Prodvino is a village located close to Bobruisk in Eastern Belarus. I conducted the interview together with Dr Małgorzata Ostrówka. In the language of the informer, who uses Russian (she spent her entire adult life in Bobruisk working as a nurse), one can discern a number of Belarusian phonetic features, such as the hard articulation of č and š characteristic of Belarusian dialects: *v"eščy, ž'enščyna, abrašč'ali, v'enčany, uč'ylišče*; pronunciation of the nonsyllabic ũ derived from [v]: *ũšo, pravosł'aũnyje, had'oũ*, pronunciation of a voiced fricative *h: havarat, noh'i, v'inohr'ada, h'aralsk'iže, zahať ov'it*; mixed pronunciation of *r: b'er"íce, pr"ińes"ot, na kar'id'or'e, pr'iv"etsvoval'i, vr"em'ja*, but: *ńe c'er'ala, smatr'yće, havar'yc'*. In terms of morphology, Russian characteristics mix with Belarusian: the ending *-s'a* in

reflexive verbs alongside the Russian -s': *sab'ir'al'is'a*, *podym'al'is'a*, *paľuč'yl'os'a*, *uč'yl'is'a*, *v'enc'alis'a*, but: *pav'enc'al'is'*, *paľuč'yl'is'*.

[ProdFŽ75/2010F]

**Our Lady of the Gate of
Dawn and Our Lady in
Braslaw**

**The marriage of a Catholic
woman and an Orthodox
Christian man**

Dinner table conversations

- **U vas jest' kart'ina Ostrabramskaj Božej
M'at'er'i?**

- *Jesč', jesč', eto jesč'o m'am'ina, ja vam pakaz'ala, f sp'al'ne, a eta n'aša, belar'uska M'at'er Boža Brasl'afska. Ij'uñ pa belar'usku naverno č'erv'eñ, ja i sam'a ne zn'aju. U meñ'a kal'end'ar v'is'it, dyk ja, belar'usk'ij. Kak eta t'ep'er žniveñ. Eto ftar'oho ijul'a, ja j'ez'z'ila, byl'a davn'o, j'ez'z'ila, hoda tr'i. No č'ip'er ja už'e ne j'ežu, patam'u što noh'i bal'at. [Bylo zafše] 'očeñ, 'očeñ xaraš'o. Vot L'il'a maj'a v'yšla za pravost'avnaha z'a muš. Tak etot vapr'oz byl. Nu pr'avda, an'i rasp'is'al'is'a, a venč'a•ca byl tak'oj vapr'os, on ni u kak'oj u kasč'oł, a jan'a ni u kak'uju c'erkof', i d'olha vr'em'a rešaš'a 'etot vapr'os u j'ix i ni za št'o ne paš'oł na ust'upk'i jej. No ja už'e moč'č'ala. J'esl'iby on k nam pryš'oł v dom i žyl u n'as, my kañ'ešne by š staral'is'a, a tak an'a, u neh'o troxk'omnatnaja kvarc'ira u M'inske i jan'a paš'la tud'a, a on tože v'erujuščyj [...] x'oz'it f pravost'avnuju c'erkaŕ, vot, i nik'ak i nik'ak. Jej č'ažel'o. Tem b'oleje, što an'a byla, xaz'ila f kasč'oł, an'a fsj'u d'ušu a•dav'ala, an'a ihr'ala na arg'anax, pr'osto, vy ž v'iz'el'i, my patxaz'il'i k nej i jej'o pr'iv'etstvoval'i, patam'u što an'a očeñ xaraš'o p'ela [...] a u j'ix n'ada p'erexaz'ic'u v'eru. No an'i žd'al'i tak što p toko ne p'er•exaz'c'. An'a havar'it už'e l'adna pajd'u, už'e pav'enc'ajemsa, t'oka št'oby ja ne č'er'ala svoj'u v'ëru. Vot tak ix b'ac'uška i pav'enc'al'ne č'er'afšy, ne č'er'afšy. An'a f kasč'oł a on f c'erkof. Bër'ic'e kalb'ask'i, kaša ñemnoško. T'olka v'etam had'u u meñ'a tam'aty, pam'eñ'ala ja, pap'utala ja, vmësto ž'oltyx, saz'ila kak ž'oltyje tam'aty, paľuč'yl'is' u meñ'a r'a•ñije m'al'eñk'ije*

kr'asnénk'ije, vot tak'ije i fs'e, n'eskol'ko t'ol'ka k'alevek ast'atosà ž'oltyx, dyk ast'av'ila na s'emàn'a, a tak us'e r'a•n'ije kr'as'nénk'ije m'al'énk'ije byl'i, rano k'ončyl'is'. Može s'ol'k'i nado bylo, i sal'an'ka m'al'énkaja jeta, p'usta v'ec'.

- A kak vas kr'est'il'i?

- Do vajn'y kasč'ol byl. Ješč'o moj z'eduška pak'ojn'ik, vot on z'ž'es' pačar'oñen, Fel'iks, tak oñ'i, eto s'amoje... eto rask'azyvala mama. Na koñax, s Mah'il'ova vaz'il'i k'irp'ič kahd'a kasč'ol str'ožil'i. Vot učastník naš z'eduška byl.

- Kak vy pr'inimal'i p'ervuju kom'uniju?

- Vot čep'er z'etk'i pr-inim'ajut p'eršu kam'unju. X'ožat na padhat'ofku. Vot ks'enž'y sk'o'ko, ne zn'aju sk'o'ko oñ'i zañim'ajutsa, no na padhat'ofku x'ožat. A pat'om ks'onc naznač'ajet vr'emà, v'l'etnjeje kañ'ešno vr'emà, na kañ'ikulax, i p'erveje pr-ič'asc'je pr-inim'ajut kam'unja. A u n'as, u n'as... Ja ž havar'u što my ne p-inim'al'i. Ot kagd'a u meñ'a L'ila m'al'énkaja byl'a, my j'ez'z'il'i u Kr'asnoje, tut u Bečar'us'i. Tam kasč'ol rab'otal. Vot, eta, eta, kak vam skaz'ac' Kr'asnoje za M'insk il'i p'ered M'inskam, no j'ez'z'il'i. No f to vr'emà sav'eckoje ješč'o hañ'al'i. My paj'ečal'i, u nas maš'yna byl'a, my paj'ečal'i. I L'il'a maj'a staj'ala u očerez'i do sp'ov'ež'i i ja... i pat'om kamuñ'isty pryšl'i i razahn'al'i, nam pr-išl'i skaz'al'i, što pr-išl'i kamuñ'isty. As'obe•no šk'olníkof. Pat'om saapsč'al'i u šk'olu, pat'om vot. No vot, dak ja dak sčaz'ila tam k sp'ov'ež'i a L'ila ne sčaz'ila vot. A ja, napr-im'er... eto bylo va vr'emà vajn'y. Meñ'a kresč'l'i, ja p'omñu eta vot, no ja ne pr-inim'ala pr-ič'asc'ja, ni k sp'ov'ež'i patam'u što n'e bylo vot. A kagd'a kresč'l'i, ja p'omñu, eta byla va vr'emà vajn'y. M'ne nav'erna b'yla s'em, što ja p'omñu i m'eñšaja sestr'a u m'amy na ruk'ač byl'a. Eta va vr'emà akup'ac'ji b'yla.

Baptism

Building of the church in Bobruisk and transporting bricks from Mohilev

Preparation for the First Communion of children today

The long journey to an active church

Christening during the war

German priest

Kašć'ot u nas v Babrujskè rab'otaf p'ervoje vr'emà vajn'y i nav'erno ñemëz byl' kšonc. Tak što u mën'a p'ervaja kam'unja byl'a kagd'a my pavënc'al'is', ja tagd'a da sp'ovëz'i s'xaz'ila i eta s'amaje, vot tak'oje b'yta. No ja rada i tam'u byl'a. Ja pras'ila muža i daže p'akala [...] dajcè mñe dar'ohu štob ja mah'l'a xaz'ic'. Nu ast'al'is'a m'am'iny s'led'y. Mama naša 'očeñ v'er-ila.

- **A mama uč'ila vas mal'i•ca?**

- *Uč'yta, uč'yta, fš'o vr'emà my mal'il'is'a.*

The language in which children were taught prayers

- **Na kakom jazykë?**

- *Na p'ol'skam, na p'ol'skam. I vot ja t'oko čëp'er zap'omñila ja n'ačala tav'a uč'yc' čyt'ac', pa pol'sk'i xac'eta, i s'ec'ix mal'itf, ja, mal'itf'e•nik'i b'yl'i u nas, ja br'ala mal'itf'e•nik. 'Ojčë naš ja to zn'ala, a pat'om štoby znac' b'ukvy, ja pa mal'itf'e•niku uč'yla. I tak ja v'yuč'yla čyt'ac'. Ja ñemn'oho čyt'aju, no m'ožet i ñepr'av'il'noje udar'eñje, no čyt'aju, čyt'aju t'oko pa mal'itf'e•niku. A ruk'oj što p'isano, ja ñe fš'o zn'aju... no... no ji čëp'er u mën'a, vot ja i xac'eta i spras'ic' u vas, ta mal'itva kat'oraja mama nauč'yla. Ño slav'a ñep'oñnyje ñej'asnyje i ñepr'av'il'nyje.*

Learning to read Polish from a prayer book

Evening prayer

Vot naprymër: klad'ymsa spac', ñe m'ožem ñic z'l'ega stac', An'ol' Božy do pomocy doskan'aty, vot 'eto sl'ovo, a eto d'avñešñaja mal'itfa i ja jej'o p'omñu, no sl'ova doskon'aty ...klad'ymsa spac', ñe m'ožem ñic z'l'ega stac', An'ol' Božy do pomocy doskon'aty, najm'il'ejšy Bar'anek, ktury ležy Pan Jezus u gr'obe, daj nam otp'očnoic' pšy Tobë. Vot slav'a, vot 'ec'i vot mñe ñej'asny. Vot u mën'a p'ap'ina B'ibl'ija ješč'o ast'atas', vam pakaž'u. U m'amy b'yl'i st'aryje, st'aryje kš'onžečk'i, dak my raz'zël'il'i m'eždu sab'oj i mñe pap'ala eta B'ibl'ija, a trom s'ostram t'ože pa mal'itv'e•niku. I vy pasmatr'ic'e eta pr'osta përe... eta nu druh'aja ab'l'oška.

Her father's bible

I vot ja z'im'oj, c'ip'er ja m'ala čyt'aju, a z'im'oj, kak načyn'ajetsa dyk ja čyt'aju [bukvy] m'al'enk'ije, no pok'a ja pok'a v'izu, no pań'atnaja 'eta pań'atnaja tak'aja B'ibl'ija pań'atnaja. M'am'ina fsò. No p'apa pah'ip va vr'emà vajn'y, a m'ama čyt'ala i mal'itas', ruž'ańec u jej'o s ruk ne vyħaz'it. I kagd'a bal'ela an'a fsò s ruž'ancem v ruk'ax. Eto kak havar'at u nas nespoz'ev'anaja s'merc' pr'avda. No kań'ešne [...] u n'ašej mamy. An'a

Her mother's piety

mal'itasa, a tr-in'acac' had'ou lež'ala, muč'yasa, i nam b'ylo čažel'o, rab'otal'i, ma'yje z'ec'i, šk'ola, i an'a lež'ala, no u nas tag b'ylo, što vot, č'etv'ero naz z'ec'ej, d'oček i my tak aprezel'il'i, što adn'oj čažel'o fsò vr'emà z'erž'ac' tak an'a pab'uzet u adn'oj nemn'oha, u druh'oj nemn'oha. Vot. No mužj'a, napr-im'er moj muš, dak, byl tak'oj niħar'ošy, no, ja k'ak ta ni skaz'aušy jem'u zabr'ala mamu, tak on skand'at uč'yñit tak'oj, što ja ucěk'l'a s ħ'aty, c'ip'er on rab'otajet, už'e votku ne vyp'iv'ajet, a tag doma jes'l'i vot tak v'in'a v'yp'jet i fsò a tagd'a šaf'orom rab'otal, m'ožet i ž'enščyny b'yl'i u jev'o, kto jeh'o zn'ajet. No a nam b'ylo kań'ešno ž'atko m'amu, my že vměšče s nej u z'er'evně. An'a l'ub'ila z'zes' u z'er'evně, an'a tut raz'itasa i žyl'a i harav'ala, tut vajn'a fsà tud byla, tak an'a l'ub'ila u z'er'evně byč'. Pat'om my n'a z'imu my bral'i u h'orot jej'o, vot. No an'a star'atasa što to pam'oč. S'iz'ela an'a ne ħaz'ila. No ješč'o i L'ila maj'a, an'a pamah'ala mne jej'o na sudn'o saz'ic' da, tak ap'ortasa ap'sc'enku, havar'yt oj mama neužel'i ja budu s tab'oj m'učycsa tak. To že s'ama i mal'itasa i vot n'ada b'ylo bal'ec' st'o'ka, no tak sužžen'o. T'o že mama n'aša, a kto paj'av'itsà il'i vrač il'i mēdsestr'yčka, an'a tak s u'lybočkoj fstreč'ala vsēgd'a. 'Eto u moj'ej sestr'y vot 'etoj što byla sa mn'oj v mēsč'e f'kasč'ole, u jej'o že syn pam'or. My d'umal'i što on pam'or, a jev'o ub'il'i.

Mother's illness

Daughters' fortunes

Mother's love for the countryside

Nephew's death

S'orok p'ac' s'orok šešć' had'ou. Tak'oj ħar'ošyj syn kras'av'ec, dup, no i čep'er aprezel'il'i, už'e sl'etstv'ije iz'ot, što jev'o kt'o to ub'il. D'oma, d'oma. I níkav'o né b'ylo, ní žen'y, ní z'ec'ej. M'ožed byc' d'aže... no padazrev'aňje... an'i p'l'oħa ž'yl'i, žen'a hul'ala, p'il'a.

3'ec'i t'ože hul'ev'yje byl'i. S'estr'a havar'yła un'uku, Ž'eňa smatr'yc'e p'apu, havar'yc'. A vdruk on pam'or [...] syn tak šešn'a•cac' let. No tak padazr'eňje na svaj'ix. Str'ašna, str'ašna... no i pryšl'oša tak, a pam'or on kak r'as pry s'estr'e. V vaskr-es'eňje s kasč'ola an'a v'yšla i paj'eħala k'nem'u. Níkav'o d'oma n'e bylo. Vad'y pad'ac' né bylo [...] i pry n'ej on 'um'èr [...] s'l'etstv'ije iz'ot. Jej'o dapr'ašyval'i, byl'i p'j'anyje. Ł'ožnyje pakaz'ac'el'i dav'ala dyk na 'etot stuł saz'il'i jej'o. *Vot. No što ja ħač'u skazac', my na p'oħoronaħ t'ože sabr'al'is'a, s kasč'ola ž'enščyny i my s Val'us'ej pryšl'i, vot, dak vot v asnavn'om mal'il'is'a a pat'om p'el'i žal'obnyje p'ès'ni. Dak 'etot un'uk zaprešč'al nam. Pryš'oł, da š'er'j'ozno, prekrac'ice vam skaz'al, sl'yšyc'e tak'oj ah'ul. A p'er-ed' etoj s'm'erc'ju un'uk f Sal'ih'orsk'e raz'b'il'sà na maš'yne. 'Eta m'esac s čem to praš'oł, b'olše m'es'aca, vot tak'oj ah'ul'. An'a tak'aja ħar'ošaja, har'učaja, tak'aja har'učaja. [ona] tr-i h'oda st'arše m'eň'a t'ol'ko, no a vot tak'oje. I f's'u žyz'ň harav'ala f's'o, a pat'om kagd'a razreš'yl'i uč'astk'i zaňim'ac', an'a vz'ał'a 'etot uč'astok, razrab'otala. I ħar'ošyj kak r'as uč'astok. An'a st'o'ka s'etoj... ha uč'astka z'eňeħ, f's'o rašč'ila, vaz'ila, pradav'ala i f's'o z'ec'am, i f's'o 'etamu s'ynu. Sam'a sl'abaja, u jej'o batar'ejka fst'avl'ena s'erca, dyk an'a s'ynu pałaž'yła z'es'ac' m'il'j'onaf. 'Etamu že s'ynu pałaž'yła z'es'ac' m'il'j'onaf što b on jej'o ħaraň'il. *Vot a d'očka d'alše f Sal'ih'orsk'e žyv'ot. *Vot dak an'a, on pabl'iže, tak vot f's'o an'a a•dav'ala to d'očk'e to s'ynu.***

Family tragedy

A *nev'estka* vot tak'aja, no jej'o an'i i *ne* *ħac'el'i*, an'a byl'a tak'aja, kagd'a *žen'its'a* *adhav'aryval'i*, uč'icel'a *pryħaz'il'i* i *živ'o* *adhav'aryval'i* at *nej'o*. An'a uč'ylas' v 'etoj škole i zn'al'i jej'o i on učyls'a i *adhav'aryval'i* učycel'a daže, *ni* *past'uša*. I vot tak'aja s'merc', bylo

tak'oje h'ore, ja sam'a vot kak *usp'omnu*, kak *usp'omnu* 'etot S'aša lež'al. [...] s'lecstf'e iz'ot, kak b'u•to sfaj'e.

- A gž'e vy mal'il'is', kagd'a *ń'e* byla ks'enž'a?

- Da, d'om'ig byl mal'itf'e•nyj, kup'il'i, kat'ol'ik'i *sabr'al'isa* i kup'il'i d'om'ik i *ħaz'il'i* tud'a mal'il'isa. Mal'il'isa. No sko'ko eto had'ou bylo ja tak *ne* p'omnu, no ja zn'aju što ja *ħaz'ila* tud'a hot. *Xac'eta* naučycsa mal'icsa *patam'u* što ja znala „Otče naš“, „Zdr'ovas' Mar'yja“ vot „V'ežen v Boga Ojca“, *asta'n'oje* d'umaju no xoz'by i čyt'ac' nauč'ylasa, no dyk už'e t'ože i rab'otala i z'ec'i i *ħac'elos'a*. K'aždoje vaskr-es'eńje j'ez'z'ila v 'etot d'om'ik v mėsč'e v mėsč'e s 'etoj s'estr'oj i mal'il'isa, a pat'om už'e z'evan'ostyje hody atkr'yl'i u *Babr'ujsk'e*, ja k'oje što zn'ala. No ja vot *ne* zn'aju. 'Eta už'e on [dom'ik] d'olžen byl kasč'olu prynadl'ež'yc'. Tak c'i on an'i prad'al'i, no ja eta *ne* zn'aju, no eto už'e pajz'ot koń'ešne, *ħoc'* i *ne* prad'al'i, eto dla kasč'ola už'e buz'et i pat'om nav'erno dv'e ž'enščyny um'ir'al'i i svaj'e kvarc'iry zav'eščal'i kasč'olu.

- Byl'i v 'etam d'om'ik'e kto *ńib'ut'*, kto v'ot mal'itvy?

- Da, da byl'a ž'enščyna, no an'a byl'a *neħar'ošaja*, no už'e umert'a eta ž'enščyna. An'a kahd'a va vr'em'a vajn'y 'i'i kahd'a tam us'e vot 'ec'i vot abraz'y, fs'o vot eto s kasč'ola, an'a v'iz'imo s kasč'ola i *ħarań'ila* u s'eb'e i ni a•dav'ala. I kahd'a p'ervyj ks'onž byl u nas Anžej, an'a *ħac'eta*

Religious practices in the communist era

Prayers – the Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, I Believe in God

Care for church equipment

rukavaz'ic' ksenz'om, da. I vot s'ec'im'i v'esch'am'i, kat'oryje an'a pazab'ir'ala, ja ne zn'aju, gze an'i z'el'isa vot 'ec'i v'eschy. C'i an'a a•d'ala. No an'a umert'la sam'a. A star'atas'a byc' st'aršej, kahd'a eta, v d'om'iku mal'il'isa, star'atas'a. I ksònc pryježž'al, što p ksònc jej patčyn'ats'a. Tak'aja ženščyna byl'a nexar'ošaja. Nexar'ošaja byl'a ženščyna. No an'a

umert'la vot. No 'ec'i, ja už'e ne zn'aju gze.

- **Kagda vy fstr'eč'al'is'?**

Prayer meetings

- V vaskreš'enje, f pr'azdník'i i v vaskres'enje, i pr-ix'oz'il'i daaa... b'es ksenz'a no ja znaju, što vot an'a no mšu pravaz'ila, mšu pravaz'ila, usò kak datžn'o byc', kak ksònz z'elal tak i an'a z'elala. No i jej'o hreχ vot eto vo, što an'a ne a•dav'ala. Vot ksònc jej ne patčyn'ats'a, zn'ačyt an'a ne a•dav'ala ec'i v'eschy. A pat'om z'e ja ne zn'aju, Juzefa, no an'a umert'la, no ješč'o adn'a byla i jej pam'oščnica tak'aja. Ah'a do 'etaha d'om'ika fstreč'al'isa na kl'adb'iščax. U nas na kladb'iščax paχar'oŋeny dva ksenz'a, i až'in ksònc paχar'oŋen u kašč'ol'e, u kašč'ol'e, tam v'id'ac' m'esto tak'oje što byl'a padn'ata pl'itka. Tak fstreč'al'isa u mah'ily ksenz'a i tam mal'il'isa, vot. I t'am že b'abuška naša, m'am'ina b'abuška v h'orož'e paχar'oŋena, an'a p'os'le vajn'y sr'azu umert'la a z'eduška m'am'in papa tut paχar'oŋen. My čep'er χ'oz'im us'egd'a na kl'adb'išče.

- **Kak vy χaranil'i um'eršyχ, kagda' n'e bylo ksenz'a?**

Funerals without a priest

- Mal'il'is', pr-i hrob'e mal'il'is' da, pr-i hrob'e fsò vr'em'a mal'il'isa my. Sab'ir'al'isa b'apk'i. A u n'as u z'er'evne dak na fs'un'očnuju, kahd'a Paχa dak doma sab'ir'al'isa, t'ože u adn'oj b'apk'i sab'ir'al'isa, fs'un'očnuju, mal'il'isa. A my b'yl'i m'al'eńk'ije dak my [...] sl'ožyms'a i sp'al'i, spal'i. Pat'om už'e rano 'utrom na ra•s'v' ec'e už'e podym'al'isa, už'e v'es' ohyje, šl'i pat'om.

- Kto sv'at'il pradukty na Pasxu?

- A b'yla sol' s'venc'ona, s'am'i s'vac'il'i s'ol'ju, ah'a razvaz'il'i sol' i eta vaz'icka s'vencona b'yla. Fsò vr'emà tak eto mama z'etala. I kahd'a ní'e bylo u n'as tut ksènz'a tak fsò s'am'i tag z'etal'i. S V'il'ńusa

pr-ivaz'il'i. Vot n'aša còca pak'ojńica an'a j'ez'z'ila u Vil'ńus i pr-ivaz'ila s'ol'ku i nam fsèm davala. Kahd'a zèc'ej n'ada b'yla kresc'ic', dak an'a b'ystreńko saapšč'ala, štob eta b'ystro pakresc'il'i. Fsò tak z'etal'i fsò kak možna byla eta. Da sama glavna što zařav'al'i v'neru, vèru zařav'al'i.

- Na kak'om jazyk'e vy mal'il'is' 'okała pak'ojńika?

- Pa p'ol'sk'i, r'ańše fsò pa pol'ski i p'es'ni, kak'ije mah'l'i, tak'ije pa pol'sk'i. A c'ep'er už'e na b'elar'uskam. U nas mša pa b'elar'usku. Už'e skaz'ali tak, no što kto žyv'ot v B'elarus'i, kań'ešne eto naš jaz'yk b'elar'usk'ij. My m'ožem prastavl'ac' B'oha i pa b'elar'usk'i. No na pol'skom tak b'apk'i nav'erno p'es'ni ne 'očeń to m'ohut p'ec'. Ja p'ervoje vremà řaz'ila fsò na p'ol'skuju mšu, vot. A pat'om nam zruč'ńeje v z'er'evńu v eto vr'emà pryjež'ajem, a tam 'očeń r'ano my pr-ij'ez'em. No tak na b'elar'uskuju [mšu]. Ranše ja t'ože fsò naiz'usč' zn'ala. Ne pa ks'onšk'e. Kak ksònc havar'yl atv'ec'ala pa p'ol'sk'i i fsò pryuc'yłas'a k pol'skomu jazyk'u. No a pat'om už'e pa b'elar'usk'i i st'ala p'utac' tud'a s'ud'a, tud'a s'ud'a.

- Kakoj byl vaš p'ervyj jaz'yk, na katoram vy apš'al'is' s mamaj?

- Eto i byl b'elar'usk'ij vm'esč'e s rusk'im, vot. A m'am'ina s'estr'a u g'orož'e ž'yła, vot eta [...] u nej'o d'očka byl'a 'Ala. An'a razhav'aryvala na pol'skom jazyk'e s'estr'a m'am'ina.

Blessing food for Easter with salt and holy water

Language of prayer

Languages in the family

Prayers only in Polish

Education

A my už'e m'ama rab'otala, kalχ'oz byl, zab'ota, pa p'ol'sk'i už'e as'oba n'e bylo kagd'a 'učyc' v jej'o rab'ota, rab'ota... dak my... mal'itvy byl'i u nas na p'ol'skom jazyk'e, apšč'al'isa na b'elar'uskom i škola byla [b'elar'uskaja] četyr-e a pat'om [tr-i], s'em ja zak'ončyla, s'em [kłasof]. B'abuška an'a umèr'l'a. An'a havar'yla pa p'ol'sk'i kańešnie, no ja 'etaha nie pomnú, no

an'a razhav'aryvala pa p'ol'sk'i, a z'eduška vaapšč'e r'ana 'umèr, vot, a b'abuška razhav'aryvala s'etaj dočkaj svaj'ej [...]

- Kakaja byl'a b'abušk'ina fam'il'ija?

- B'ok'ije, B'ok'ije

French surnames in the Mohilev region

- B'ok'ije? Eta nie p'ol'skaja i nie b'elar'uskaja fam'il'ija.

- Ja ž havar'u, nav'erna Napol'e on tut ast'av'il svaj'ix franc'uzof. No a n'aša dam'ašnja V'išn'efskaja fam'il'ja. Papa V'išn'efsk'ij byl [...] V'išnouka [...] net net u n'as St'ašeuka ješč' vot dalše, vot 'etot aft'obus, dak i havar'yl'i, što ot 'imèni St'as'a 'eta z'er'evnia, no tam adn'i pravast'avnyje. U nas ks'onc R'oman byl i on arχ'ivy smatr.'el i fs'o i vrož'e by kak'ije to vremèn'a byl'i što zastavl'al'i i•c'i f'pravast'av'je 'i•za zèml'i, 'i•za zèml'i. Vot eta vot St'ašeuka, no an'i fs'e pravast'avnyje [...] an'i byl'i kat'ol'ik'i. Belar'uša pačc'i i fs'a byl'a katal'ičeskaja. A vot 'ec'i vr-emèn'a 'i•za zèml'i i š'l'i f'pravast'av'je.

Belarus predominantly Orthodox Christian today

- A možet byt' vy praisχ'od'it'e is š'laχty?

The nobility

- No nav'erno tak. No papa naš, ja ž havar'yla, on va vr-emà vajn'y pah'ip, a my b'yl'i m'aleńk'ije. A m'ožet što i havar'yl, no nie p'omnú. A pat'om jev'o zabr'al'i na vajn'u i "on pah'ip, vot, no a mama možet što i havar'yla, dak pazabyv'al'i, ni abrašč'al'i as'obaha vñim'anija.

- **Kagd'a um'erŭ a v'aša b'abuška?**

- B'abuška sr'azu p'os'le vajn'y. A kak'oj eta hod byl, ja ne zn'aju.

- **Da vajn'y mn'og'ije ŭd'i razgav'ar-ival'i v d'er'evne pa pol'sk'i?** Polish in the interwar period

- Naverna. M'ožet maj'a s'estr'a zn'ajet'eta. Sx'ož'im vot k s'estr'e i na kl'adb'išče sx'ož'im m'ožet an'a m'ožet jej'o muš'sto to p'omnit vot. Muš' u nej'o t'ože kat'ol'ik, no ne

v'enčany. V'ošemž'es'at hadou, už'e s'čes'ń'ajuts'a v'enč'a•ca [...] a to s'čes'ń'ajets'a. No an'a x'ož'it u kašc'ol' j'ez'z'it t'ože. Jej už'e v'ošemž'es'at ftar'oj hot, a jem'u nav'erno v'ošemž'es'at tr-i. No an'i tak ješč'e ničev'o. No on ne j'ez'z'it u kašc'ol'. On tože s'erd'ečnik on i sl'abyj, no i an'a slaba. No fs'o ravn'o... no my d'oma v'enč'al'is'a t'ože, yhy doma, my pr-ihtas'il'i. P'ervyj k'sonc u n'as Anžej byl i my jeh'o pr-ihtas'il'i, abed ž'etal'i. On nas pav'enč'al'. Z'ec'i [...] byl'i i fs'o, i x'araš'o. [K'sonc u nas] x'ar'oš'ij, u n'az byl p'ervyj Anžej, a pat'om n'ekatoroje vr'em'a zaměn'al'i ja š'ni p'omnu. A pat'om k'sonc Roman byl, a pat'om k'sonz G'endr-iχ i pos'le G'endr-iχa J'urij.

Her sister and her husband

Priests

Fashchivka

The below interview was conducted in Russian, which is probably the informer's primary language (her mother was Lithuanian, but did not pass this language on to her children), and Russian was spoken at home. Furthermore, for 40 years she worked as a nurse in Mohilev, and the Russian code operated in her work sphere in Soviet times. In spite of this, certain Belarusian characteristics may be discerned in her idiolect, especially in the phonetics, e.g. pronouncing a voiced [h] in both Belarusian and Russian words: darohu, ihrat, kúiha, mahtá, mnoha; mixed pronunciation of [r] – dominant is a soft articulation characteristic of

north-eastern Belarusian dialects as well as the Smolensk region²⁰⁸: *kr'ěsč'ili*, *p'ěredavali*, *pr'ixaz'ic'e*, *r'ěšył*, *kr'ičat'*, but: *havaryła*, *havaru*; there is also sporadic mixing of the scopes of usage of *u* and *v*: *xaz'ic' u cerkof'*, *byli v adnoj bap'ki*.

[FashchMP78/2011F]

Parents' origins

No už'e xoc' nač'ala ješč'. Luž'ej mn'oga b'uz'et, no kak an'i b'udut xaz'ic'. 'Očeń p'oxo x'oz'at [...]. U n'as da'k kak ta nač'in'ajut ješč'o t'ol'ko [xaz'ic' f'kasč'ot]. M'ožet i b'uz'ec' ja ne zn'aju, no ja, zn'ajec'e, ne v'er'u 'etomu už'e. V'er'u il'i ne v'er'u, no us'o ravn'o že'l'ańje^a, 'očeń xac'elos' pastr'ojeć' tut i xac'elosà št'oby tut št'o ĩubuc' b'yla. I havar'yla, j'es'l'i by ks'enz'a uv'iz'el'i kak ja vot p'omnu, m'ama rask'azyvala ješč'o davn'ym davn'o, što an'i nu patzl'iby na kal'ačkax kak gavar'itsa po ž'er'ev'enskomu, patsk'om vaš'i, no daš'l'i by da ks'enz'a. Kak pr'iš'os'a, što ks'onc pr'ij'exal, ĩikt'o ne iz'ot. S'l'ušajc'e č'uda, a čev'o, ne zn'aju. Vy zn'ajec'e, u meń'a ac'ec s F'ašč'eu'k'i, a mac' s Litv'y. My ne pańatno kto tak'ije. Mama kahd'a 'etava ješč'o f'čet'yrna•catom had'u byla vajn'a, vot tad'a Ľemcy nastupa'i 'eta pa raskazam jej'o i vot užežal'i kak b'ežency, uc'ekal'i at Ľemca, nu i vot an'i daj'exali da F'ašč'eu'k'i raz'ic'el'i jej'o. Papa byl il'i ž'eduška už'e moj, darožnym

Family's fate

m'asč'eram, on strojil vot 'etu darohu, kat'oraja iz'ot, na katoroj vy j'exal'i, tol'ka ne znaju na č'om, nu i vot an'a tut i astalaš'a, pal'ub'ila Ivana svajev'o i tak i astalaš'a žyc'. [...] A r'otstv'e•ĩik'i u nas v Litv'e, f'K'aunas'e. An'i žyl'i v Al'aks'uc'e, no K'aunas tam č'eres Ľoman, an'i tam žyl'i i s'ěj'as žyv'uc', no už'e c'oc'i paum'iral'i, už'e hoda dva, nav'erno tr'i tam'u naz'at pas'l'edńaja um'ert'a dvaj'urodnaja s'estr'a. [...] Pak'a z ĩimi apšč'ajemsa xaras'o.

Lithuanian – mother's native language

208 In the dialects in use in the Mohilev and Smolensk regions, the historically soft [r'] has not hardened [Pacropyev 1960: 62].

Mama ščytala sěb'a pa nacjajal'nasc'i Bělaruska. No kak Bělaruska? Kak an'a p'is'ataša v 'etu z'er-evnu, patam'u što an'a baj'atasa štop né byla z'ěcam p'loxa, a tut jašč.'o muš um'ěr rana – 'eta gž'e to tr-i•cac' s'ěz'm'om had'u. M'ne ješč.'o bylo p'ac' l'et tol'ko tahd'a, kańešne zn'ajec'e an'a baj'ataša 'etava, p'isala Bělaruska i Bělaruska. Aj, mama an'a razgav'aryvala pa rusk'i, kad'a s'ud'a pr-ij'ečala, an'a rusk'ij jaz'yk znała, tak što jej b'yla, 'etava, prošče z'ěta [...] an'a havaryła pa litofsk'i [...]

- Na kakom jazyk'e vy mal'il'is'?

Family language

- Na b'elarusk'im.

- A mama kak uč'ila?

- Ņet, vy zn'ajec'e, mama nas vapšč'e né učyla ničem'u. I tože ni ab'idy níkak'oj na mamu i ničev'o. An'a baj'atasa b'edna, an'a nas ničego né učyla, apsal'utna níčev'o. Sam'a an'a mal'ilasa, patam'u što u nej'o byla i k'riha l'it'ofskaja. An'a s'az'et, č-itajet tam što to, nu štoby an'a z'ěcam što n'ib'uc' učyla kavo ta, űet. űe znaju 'il'i an'a baj'ataša, 'il'i an'a što. A tad'a j'es'l'i by što byl'o, kak 'etava, zn'ajec'e, tak štop né baj'al'is'a Boha fspam'in'ac', dak 'eta an'a i što n'ib'uc' mozet byc' i uč'ilaby nas. A tak an'a s'iz'ěta svaj'im c'ix'ońeč'ka, mal'ilasa da i níkak'ix bol'se. Ja už'e, kad'a atkryłsa kašč'oł u nas mal'ilasa da, da i všem havar'u, jak ja xaz'ila i uč'ilasa „Ojče naš”, nav'erna m'ěšac, né mah'l'a níčego zapom'nić, 'etava, česna havar'u vam. Vot bumašk'i tak'ije daval'i u kašč'ol'e Stańislava, 'etava kašč'ol'e. No ji 'etava, havar'yt, no vot, uč-ic'e „Ojče naš” pa b'elarusk'i, patam'u što bužet na b'elarusk'im jazyk'e imš'a jic'i. To ja nas'ila u karmańe, vot xaz'u, xaz'u, uč'nu, uč'nu, pat'om né znaju dal'se, dastaj'u [is karmana] i ap'ac' [...]

Interrupted transmission of religion in the family

Prayers

- Church school** A pat'om, 'etava, kagd'a už'e stal'i, 'etava, χaz'ic' už'e u kasč'ol' no vot tak už'e nauč'itasa sam'a s'eb'e. Nu to što patskažut, to što tam na jims'y na 'ety, nu ji tak troški nalam'atas'a, χoc' što mal'ic'sa možna, no ji vot tak'im i puc'om i žyv'om. A daže né znała, žyl'a na dač'e, kak ta letam mne n'ekagda [...] tam y škola že byla atkryvalsa pry kasč'ole. Atkuda ja znała, jes'l'i u mēna né bylo u mēna bl'isk'ix, kat'oryje χaz'il'i, kat'oryje mahl'i patskaz'ac', pat'om už'e kad'a ja uznala, dak né bylo už'e 'etaj školy, dak ja samauč'ka. Tak ja takaja vot. Tak nav'erno ad Boha sužž'en'o, už'e ničev'o né paz'elaješ. A s'ud'a, kahd'a pr-ij'eχala, ja žyla v Mah'il'ov'e sorok let, ustr'ojilas'a na rabotu f'pazž'es" at tr'ec'jem had'u. [...] ja try•cac' starova goda razž'eñija, v marče m'esace v'osēmž'esat. Kañešne, kad'a ja tol'ka pr-ij'eχala s'ud'a, mne oč-eñ χac'elos'a štoby kapl'icu pastr'ojil'i, oč-eñ χac'elos'a. Ja χaz'ita, ja fs'ëχ af'ic'rovala, ja sa fs'em'i razgav'aryvala, mne χac'elos'a tak už'e štop, nu kak pav'ernul'is' l'uz'i g Bohu. No hl'až'u, nič-iv'o né pačuč'ajets'a, česno ja vam havar'u i s'ejč'as ja už'e tak: aj, kak χ'očec'e, no česno ja havar'u, kak χ'očec'e tol'ka i fs'd, patam'u što, nu što bolše s'jimi razhav'aryvac', jes'l'i ničt'o, nu ničto tak 'eta. Nu s'ejč'as nel'z'a skaz'ac'stoby safs'em ničt'o u nas né χaz'il, il'i tam što, čelav'ek z' es'ac' χ'ož'ic' a to možet i bolše. Naša š paraf'ja nazyv'ajetsa Najs'f'ac'ejšej Pa•ny Maryji. No ji vot ješč'•o
- Work as a nurse in Mohilev** né pomnú, kad'a, f'kak'om 'eta had'u pr-ij'eχal'i s'ostry s' 'etava, s' Mah'il'ova s' kasč'ola i vot an'i 'etava, o•dyχal'i, narval'i cv'etoč-kov tam tak'ix 'etava, a my né zna'l'i ničev'o, što 'eta i kak an'o, praz'nik il'i što. A s'evodña š u vas praz'nik, u vas Najs'f'ac'ejšej Pay Maryji praz'nik. A u nas 'etot praz'nik. Ješč'•o kahd'a kasč'ol' byl, u nas byla oč-eñ, k'erm'aš tak'oj, zn'ajec'e, sab'ir'al'is'a l'uz'i
- Religious practices**
- The parish of the Virgin Mary in Fashchivka**
- The parish fair**

pr-ije•žal'i ots'ul', χaz'il'i pěšk'om, kak mama rask'azyvala. Id'uc' bas'ik'om, a pat'om aževajuc' [...] jak'ije už'e byl'i ažoža, perezěv'al'isà i šli f kasč'ot. [...] Nu i n'ačal'i my s 'etava už'e vr-eměni n'ačal'i z'ělac' takoje, prazník [...]. Kak ta snačala mnoga l'uz'ej b'yla, mnoga l'uz'ej b'yla, a pat'om kak ta stala už'e mēnše. A vot fpr'oštom c'i zapr'oštom had'u [...] l'uz'ej kak sabr'ataša, što zn'ajec'e, ja daže i ne d'umala. I nam, jes'l'i p u nas byla sestr'a χacaby il'i ks'onc pastaja•na, štoby on tut byl i č-em to zañimats'a s l'uz'm'i, to u naz by l'uz'i χaz'il'i. U nas kad'a s'ostry byl'i, mnoha χaz'ila, z'ec'ej mnoha χaz'ila, kak'ije to postan'ovočk'i z'elal'i. A pat'om vot načatosa mēnše i mēnše. Čep'er vaapšč'e z'ec'i ne χ'oz'ut. Vaapšč'e z'ec'i ne χ'oz'ut, no kahd'a iz'ot vot prazník kakoj n'ib'uc'. Nu nač.inajut – pr-ixaz'ic'e, prazník u naz bužet, tak pr-ix'oz'ut z'ětk'i, mnoha mala, no χto to tam pr-iz'ot. My z'ev'atnič' atmēč'ajem pa 'ul'ice, altar'y st'av'im. [...]. Čet'yr-e [oltaže]. Fs'o z'elajem tak, kak pa'l'ožena, Tol'ka što mala l'uz'ej byvajet.

- A ks'onc atkuda?

- Sa Škl'ova, ks'onc sa Škl'ova. Sa Škl'ova pr-ije•žajec' i tak'oj akc'ivnyj on u nas, ničev'o ne skažeš, no što, jem'u mnoha že tam raboty. I f Škl'ov'e tam nada že i ješče tam pa z'ěr'ev'nam ješč'o, ješč'o K'nažycy tut kap'l'ica [...] a ranše dak jez'zil'i

v Běl'yničy i Kr'uhloje tam. I što jem'u n'ekada jes'l'i by tud byl, 'imē•no tut ks'onc, kañešne byloby l'ixč'e. Bolše by s nam'i zañimats'a by, bolše by l'uz'i inč'er-esav'al'i by. V'iz'ic'e vot, kad'a r-ešyl'i [budovac' kap'l'icēŭ] no nač'ali fs'e kr-ič-ac', što mnoha pravoslavnyx. I mnoha, patam'u što zn'ajec'e, p'er-ekr-esč'il'i z'ec'ej svaj'ix, pavyxaz'il'i zamuš za pravoslavnyx, a kasč'ola už'e ne byla.

Preparations for the procession

The priest and building the chapel

The beginnings of the church

Mixed marriages

Christening in an Orthodox church

Raz'icel'i havar-il'i, kak i mne, jes'li ne p'er-ekr-esč'iš, ja hl'az'ec' ne budu, a ja dvojnú raz'ila ješč.'o p'ervuju. I mne pr-išlos'a, f cerkv'i p'er-ekr-esč'ila, ližby tol'ka. An'a havar'it, nevažna, ac'ec pravoslavnyj, ničev'o str'ašnovo net. Kr'ešč'il'i, patam'u što nim'a gž'e bolše p'er-ekr-esč'ic', nu i p'er-ekr'ešč'ila. Nu i an'i čep'er' pravast'avnyje, an'i ni tud'a, ni s'ud'a ne χ'oz'ut. Vot mamy pravoslavnyx, to'lko što an'i nazyv'ajuts'a pravost'avnym'i. Cerkv'i net u nas, net y'net. A ja havar-ila, an'i fs'o – my pravast'avnyje. Dak vy zropč'e cerkof', ja budu χaz'ic' u cerkof', ja budu χaz'ic', havar'u, nevažna, što ja katal'ic'ka, havar'u, no ja budu χaz'ic', patam'u što mne fs'o ravn'o nada g Bohu χaz'ic'. Što ješč', to i buž'eš χaz'ic'. Trošk'i tam my gž'e ta na dam'u tam ješč.'o [spotykal'is'my s'eš' na modl'itv'e] byl'i v adn'oj bapki, pot'om u klube dal'i nam mesta. Pat'om asfabaz'ilaša χačupka 'eta m'aleńkaja, nu i r-ešyl'i, to i z'irektor safxoz'a byl. [...] Vy byl'i u n'aševa 'etava kr-est'a, gž'e kašč'oł byl. Ne nada zajc'i snač-ala. Na χarošem m'ešč'e staj'al kašč'oł, 'oč-eń kras'ivyj byl 'oč-eń! Był zn'ajec'e kak'oj [k'edy byl čy•ny] byl kańešne tam ne až'in nav'erno k'sonc byl [...] mama havar'yła [...] kak kašč'oł str'oil'i, što luž'i vot p'er-edaval'i k'irp'ič, p'er-edav'al'i rukam'i p'atna•cac' k'ilam'etraf. I sčeny byl'i tam m'etraf sorok, sčen'a byl'a. Tam až'in pr-ijexal, χacel'i vzarv'ac'. Čev'o

Prayer meetings in people's homes

The church's history

vzarval'i? Z'irektar χačxoz'a byl il'i p'edsed'acel' tagd'a sčyats'a, dak on, zn'ajec'e, jev'o syn lažil, nu tud'a gž'e 'etava, arg'an ihr'ał, na χory tam, tam ješč.'o kud'a ta vyše [...] tołkom ja jev'o [košč'oła] ne pomnu. Pomnu, kak on razv'al'enyj byl, ne rabotał. Nu dak on tud'a lažil i štoby on ne zab'ila, on 'etava, r-eš'yl jev'o vzarv'ac', što on, 'etava, moł p'adajet už'e k'irp'ič [...].

- A vas mama kr'esč'ila f'kasč'ol'e?

- U kasč'ol'e, daaa, kańešńe da, v'etam 'imè•na, daaa. Mama ńe mah'l'a ńe kreščonyx z'ec'ej z'erž'ac', nu što vy. [...] mama havaryła, što kr-esč'onyje my fs'e, ja była pas'l'edńaja, nas č'etv'ero bylo z'ec'ej fs'e kr-esč'•o•nyje, tak što ja kr-esč'•o•naja. U nas m'aleńk'ij leg'ij'on Maryji jesč', tak što my tut ńe safs'em jesč'•o. [...] Vot naša Mač'er. Božja [f'igurka Matk'i Božej Fat'imskej] s Polšy pr-iv'eženaja. Ksònc V'ital'ij il'i Ježy, ńe znaju xto tam pr-iv'os, Boh znajet. Vot oltar. naš, u nas fsò jesč'. U nas p'ac' č-elav'ek tol'ka [v leg'iońe] nu xaz'ila šešč' [...] a vot naš kr-est, 'eta s kasč'•ola, 'eta staryj, 'eta kasč'elnyj kr-est, s n'aševu kasč'•ola. A 'eta naš abr'as, 'eta Mač'er. Božja, no tol'ka 'eta kańešńe k'op'ija a ńe p'odl'i•ńik. 'Eta f'ašč-efskaja 'eta naša f'ašč-efskaja, n'aševa kasč'•ola. [...] była xaraš'o, s'ejč'•as fsò xuže z'el'a apstaj'uc'. [kedyš' bylo tu 7 fs'i katol'ick'ix] suguba kat'oliki: F'ašč'euka, Kn'ažyicy, Čemodany, Slabotka, Kr-ivel', Dubrouka. [teras] daže bapc'isty u nas pajav'il'is'. [...] uč'ilas'a na mets'estr'u, rab'otala mets'estr'oj v Mah'il'ov'e s'orok let.

Bezchynne

The second interview transcribed in Bezchynne was conducted with a married couple. Elements of Belarusian and Russian mix in their language.

[BezchWI53/2011M]

No ja vam rask'azyvaju, ja česno havar'a ńe Pal'ak, ja B'eľar'us, no katol'ik, vot. Maj'a mac', an'a byl'a Pol'ka z z'apadnaj B'eľarus'i, z gr'odńenskaj 'oblasc'i, vot an'a, z novahr'uckaha rajona, na hranice l'idskoho navahr'uckoho rajona. Vot an'a, kagd'a ac'ec moj vajeval', on naš'ol [jõũ] [vracał] naz'at s B'er'l'ina i naš'ol tam mac' v Z'apadnoj B'eľarus'i i zaxvac'it' s'ud'a

Christening**A figure of Our Lady of Fátima****Seven Catholic villages****Work as a nurse****Catholic-Belarusian family's fate**

- Orthodox Christian father,
Catholic mother**
- i pr'ijex'ał sud'a [...] An'a fs'u žyžn' mal'ilas' i ja tak daľek'o byl', byl' daľek'o vot [od Boga]. A pat'om hor'e. Meń'a žyžn' zast'av'ila, ja darohaj praš'oł tam [...] Ac'ec moj byl' tak'oj nu, c'oplyj křešc'jańin, on byl' pravoslavnyj, a mac' byla katolik [...]. Vot maj'a žen'a on'a žyl'a tam tože na hr'odněnščyńe, s toj že samoj žer'evńi, gže žyl'a maj'a eta mac'. Vot i tak paľuč'ilos', što ja tud'a jez'z'il, nu s'ud'a tože jej'o pr'ixvac'il'. [...] Brat z'z'ez' žyv'ot, vot my ftraj'om kat'oliki, m'ol'imsa, očec Hr'ihor'ij padje•žajet. Tak fs'o p'erep'utano v 'etaj žlyžńi, kak kol'ečk'i v 'etam, v zveń'e [...] Ac'ec mój rodod ats'uda, vot s 'etaj žer'evńej, r'adam vot s 'etaj žer'evńej, s Ūack'ev'ič'i, vot 'eta až'in kaľ'os kakby naš, zžes' r'adam. An'i žyl'i da dva•cac' žev'atovo hoda z'žes', pat'om ix raskuľ'ač'il'i, ań'i uj'exal'i v Mah'il'ov. Vot i tak paľuč'ilas' suz'b'a. Ja kak raz sluč'ajno pap'ał naz'at na 'ec'i har'uč'ije žeml'i.
- Wife's origin**
- Grandparents' dekulakisation – departure for Mohilev**
- At'ec rask'azyvał, kak eta byla?**
- Da, rask'azyvał, kańešna, v dva•cac' žev'atom had'u, u nix m'el'ńica byl'a, z'z'ez' byla m'el'ńica, on pr'imerno pak'azyvał gže m'el'ńica. U nix byl'a s'em'ja. S'em'ju dva•cat' četv'ortoho hoda fatahr'af'ija u m'ań'a ješč'. Sčas vam pakaž'u jej'o. Vot 'eto maj'a s'em'ja, maj'i ž'edušk'i, b'abušk'i [...]
- His father's family**
- Father's family's life in the city**
- ot, gže ta moj ac'ec [...] vot v'iz'ic'e, kak'ije l'ica – prastyje, r'usk'ije křešc'jańe byli. Žyl'i vm'esče maľoľi žern'o, vyr'ašč'ival'i. Byľi patrarχ'i r'usk'ije na žeml'e. Spas'iba m'ac'er'i, vot smatr'u i pľač'u, što až'in astaľsa na 'etaj žeml'e – űetu űikam'u pr'itul'i•ca, fs'o razb'ito. [...] bylo žes'ac' žec'ej, žes'ac' ma'ix c'oc'i i ž'až'i, astaľsa až'in moj ž'až'a [...] s'emn'a•catoha goda, dva•cat' četyr'e goda astaľsa i maj'a c'oc'a ješč'e astaľsa s maj'im a•c'om byl'i bl'iz'ńaty, a tak

byla z'es'ac' z'ec'ej, fs'e 'um'erl'i. Žyl'i tol'ka už'e davn'o paum'iral'i rana v v'oZRas'č'e. Az'jin na vajn'e pah'lip, az'jin m'aleńk'ij pah'lip f karjer'e [...] mac' tože um'er'l'a vošem l'et naz'at. 'Eta ne majev'o a•c'a rasku'lač'il'i, rasku'lač'il'i majev'o z'edušku, ac'ec moj m'aleńk'ij byl, jem'u byla tagd'a ješč'o z'ev'ac' l'et tagd'a. Vot maj'u s'em'ju v'yhnal'i, an'i paš'l'i ... nu vopšč'em, fs'o tut ra•s'ypaloš, pat'om z'eduška paj'eħał f S'ib'ir – uz'ir'ał at enkaved'e, a pat'om už'e v Mah'il'of v'ernuša tam, pastrojil, nu pr'il'ep'iš'a k jevr'ejam i vot jevr'eji 'ety pamahl'i jem'u, 'eta s'amaje, nu koje što tam abžy•ca [...]. Tam z'er'evn'a Brad'y u nas pa Mah'il'ov'e, an'a zvalas' Zbros, da, fs'e l'uz'i tak'ije adbrosy kak gavar'i•ca sav'eckaj v'las'ci, vot tud'a ub'eħal'i [...]. Na bałoc'e an'i str'ožil'is' za pr'ež'elam'i Mah'il'ova, vot tam i raz'iš'a [ja]. F sast'af Mah'il'ova vaš'a eta z'er'evn'a. Tam an'a pad Mah'il'ovam byl'a. Ac'ec moj vajeval, praš'of vajn'u, ħac'a rasku'lač'il'i, a fs'o ravn'o vajeval za našu [r'od'inu]. Paš'of tud'a, kud'a nada byla. Maj'i fs'e z'až'i vajeval'i, kat'oryje byl'i dvoje il'i troje tam. [Ja] sluč'ajno tud'a pap'ał i kak ras vot na 'ec'i har'uč'ije z'eml'i.

A kak paľuč'ilas' što vy stal'i katol'ikam

Mac', an'a byl'a kak

havar'i•ca hl'av'envstvujuščaja v rel'ig'ji, u nas an'a byl'a hlav'oj relig'ji. An'a byl'a 'očen' relig'joznaj, an'a byl'a 'očen' sv'ataja. An'a mal'ifaz' z'eń i noč' – za fs'o, za fs'e, vzdaxała z grusč'ju a z'eč'aħ, a s'estraħ i brac'jaħ vot i mal'ifas' s'il'na. No my fs'egd'a atm'eč'al'i Pasħ'i. No my atm'eč'al'i Pasħ'i i pravasl'avnuju i katal'ič'eskuju vm'eš'č'e. Nu bol'se mac' nas vot, kn'ižeč'k'i byl'i, fs'e 'ec'i pravasl'avnyje c'i katal'ič'es'k'ije, ja druh'oj ras i pač'it'ał, m'ne inc'er'esno bylo, ja m'aleńk'ij byl, č'it'ał [ksōũž'ekēũ] i pa pol'sk'i byl'i i pa rusk'i.

Family's dramatic fate

Return to the family village

Catholic upbringing – mother's role

Orthodox and Catholic holidays

Prayer books

Three Polish prayers**Stronger influence of
Belarusian****Polish sisters****Family's Catholic traditions**

No ja mal'itvy znaju, tr'i mal'itvy znaju pa pol'sk'i – „Otče naš”, „Zdrovas' Mar'ija” i „V'eže v Boha „ojca”. Vot tr'i mal'itvy ja znaju pa pol'sk'i. Astal'nyje [...] nu vot na b'elaruskam jazyk'e my č'itajem. Aľe ja žaleju, no pol'sk'ij jaz'yk ja poč'emu to tak i ne v'yuč'il. Maj'i s'ostry – u m'eń'a vot fšev'o tr'i s'ostry. Adn'a tože byl'a č'listaja Paľač'ka [...] an'a um'erl'a m'ołoda, a dv'e s'ostry astaloš, tože adn'a, pravda, zap'isałaš kak Paľač'ka, nu možna była zap'isa•ca na a•cc'a, ac'ec u m'eń'a byl b'elarusk'ij, a mama Pol'ka, vot an'a srazu zap'isałaš na Paľač'ku. Vot an'a to v M'inske žyv'ot. Ftaraja v Mah'il'ov'e žyv'ot, no ań'i fše ispav'edajut katal'ičeskiju v'ery, vot bl'iže katal'ičeskaj v'ery my sta'jim. Mac' nast'ajivala na svaj'e patomstvo. Vot kagd'a pastar'eľa, as'ob'e•no u nas hor'a bylo mnoho f s'em'l'je i u m'eń'a i u m'ac'er'i, vot my fšo v'r'em'a bl'iže g Bohu byl'i. 'Eta trudnyj puc' kańešno. A s'ejč'as vot hody. Hoda tr'i č'etyr'e, nav'erno p'ac', vot ka m'ne p'r'ije•žajet ojč'ec Ježy, katoryj kašč'ol strojit s'v'atovo Antońja, vot my kak ta paznak'om'il'is', stal'i bl'iže, bol'se mal'itf.

Ja rab'otaju z'z'es' f kaľoz'e inžen'eram.

Kak i gž'e mama vas kr'es't'ila?

An'a kr'esč'ila, ja ne znaju, gž'e an'a

Christening**Closing of the church****The first chapel****Church activities****A practising Catholic**

m'eń'a kr'esč'ila, no an'a havar'ila, kšonc kr'esč'it m'eń'a. Kšonc kr'esč'it kahd'a ja m'aleńk'ij byl. Nu vot, nu a pat'om u nas kašč'ola ne bylo v 'etom samom Mah'il'ov'e. U nas tol'ka gž'e ta v z'ev'anostam had'lu pastr'ožil'i kapl'icu tam, na Łazar'enka, tam vot kľ'adb'išč'e tam ješč', p'ol'skaje kľ'adb'išč'e, vot 'eto p'ervaja kapl'ica byla. Pat'om gž'e ta pa m'ojemu v z'ev'anosta p'ervom had'lu kašč'ol sv'atova Stan'islava atkryl'i. Vot inahd'a my χaž'il'i. No kagd'a vazmožnosč' byl'a ja χaž'il' [...].

V bal'ńice lež'ał v 'etom had'u, χaz'il' každyj v'ečer, utro. Vot χaz'il'i my f kasč'oł, doma mac' mal'ilas'. A ja havar'u, vot četyr'e p'ac' let tol'ka ac'ec Ježy pr'ije•žajet s kasč'oła s'vatova Antońia. Mńe nr'av'i•ca v'era katal'ičeskaja, što, no čem an'a mńe nr'av'i•c'a. An'a mńe nr'av'i•ca čem, što s ks'enzami prosta razhav'ar'ivaje•ca na našem jazyk'e, na tak'om jazyk'e, na katorym my žyv'om – na ruskom, b'ałaruskom. Mal'itvy na b'ełaruskom jazyk'e. Vot naž b'ełarusk'ij jaz'lyk vrož'e by tak n'e kras'ivyj, a mal'itvy 'očeń kras'ivo zvuč'at na b'ełaruskom jazyk'e, 'očeń kras'iva, prama s'erce, kak havar'itsa, luč'ik sonca [...]. Naž b'ełarusk'ij jaz'lyk f p'eśnaχ kras'ivyj.

[BezchFI50/2011F]

Ja n'e pomńu kak u nas kr'esč'il'i, no m'al'eńk'im'i kr'esč'il'i. Toš kasč'oła n'e byl'o. F kasč'oł n'e χaz'il'i, no mama fs'egd'a mal'ilas' naša. Nauč'ila nas mal'i•ca, ja tože vot znaju „Zdrovas' Mar'ija” i „Ojče naš”, vot znaju mal'itvy. Vot z' z'ectva kak ta. Ja n'e znaju, a už'o zamuš vyšla za V'ital'ika – mama V'ital'ikava byl'a 'eta vaabšč'e nabožna ž'enščina, i an'a naz zast'avl'ała fs'eχ. My kak ta sab'eromsa fs'e vm'ešč'e kl'eńčym i fs'egd'a s mal'itvaj – jesč'i n'e saz'il'is', pam'ol'ims'a, tagd'a tol'ka s'az'imsa jesč'i. [...] Mama takaja byla u

V'ital'ika. Str'ohaja takaja byla i 'umnaja ž'enščina i an'a f kasč'oł, každyj z'eń f kasč'oł zb'ehała. Bac'ka zl'iša n'emnoška. B'ehała f kasč'oł

A gž'e?

v Mah'il'ov'e, už'e v Mah'il'ov'e, v Mah'il'ov'e už'e. Tam u jix dom svoj josč', da u jix svoj dom v Mah'il'ov'e, a u nas už'e svoj dom. (Na kak'om jazyk'e an'a gavar'ila?) Pa pol'sk'i um'eła, znała jaz'lyk pol'sk'ij, fs'o znała.

The beauty of Belarusian

The respondent's wife's christening

Polish prayers

His mother-in-law's piety

The church in Mohilev, attended daily by his mother-in-law

**Use of Polish in his
mother-in-law's family**

Gavar'ila pa pol'ski i pañimala pa pol'ski. Čytała kn'ižečk'i pa pol'ski. Dočka adn'a pa pol'ski umějet, jaz'yk izučyła. Adn'a izučyła i Toña, pa m'ojemu tože izučyła pol'sk'ij. Až'in V'ital'ik moj ne znajet jazyk'a p'ol'skovo. Da znajuc', džeuk'i znajuc' [...]. Toña znajet pol'sk'ij jaz'yk, V'ital'ik?

[BezchWI53/2011M]

The Polish language

Toña znajet pol'sk'ij i Aña znajet. No kak an'a razhav'aryvajet, lučše pusk'aj an'a mač'it kr'as'iva. Ja znaju pol'sk'ij jaz'yk, ja uč'iša v M'inske. U naz byl'o z'ev'ac' Paľakov v grupě, no ja tak ne im'eľ z jim'i. Añ'i byl'i tak f staronke at nas. No tak boleje m'eñeje č'itaju, neskol'ka pañimaju pol'sk'ij jaz'yk, ne prapaľby, jes'l'i by.

[BezchFI50/2011F]

On pañ'at'l'ivij jaz'yk pol'ski.

[BezchWI53/2011M]

**The respondent's Belarusian-
ness and the Polishness of
his sisters**

Adn'a s'estr'a Pol'koj ščit'ajetsa, kat'oraja u M'inske, a ftaraja ščit'ajetsa beľaruskaj, no an'a tože katol'ik (*A at č'ev'o 'eta zav'is'it'?*) Ja ne znaju, č'esno havar'a, pač'em'u, m'ožet an'a b'ol'se hanar'iva takaja. No Paľak'i vroz'e by 'eta l'uz'i kag by b'ol'eje v'y•šaja kasta šč'it'ajutsa, a my beľarusy už'e, kag by 'eta s'amaje. Vot an'a vroz'e χac'ela b'ol'eje č'istoj byc' raf'in'irovanoj, tak'oj ač'išč'enoj Paľač'koj. A ja, pač'em'u ja [ne] Paľ'ak [...]. no v'ež' ja ščit'aľ – raz'iša

v Beľarus'i, pol'sk'ij jaz'yk ne znaju, patam'u što šesna•cac' let byla [...] fam'il'ija u m'ěn'a r'uskaja beľar'uskaja, 'o•č'estva tože rusk'e beľarusk'e, no kak'oj ja Paľ'ak, H'ospoz'i? Vot i zap'is'aľsa. Ja ne l'ubl'u falš, ja ne l'ubl'u abmana [...] A s'estr'a ma'ja, što ty? Ja Paľačka piš'us' [...] 'Eto č'isto r'uskaja fam'il'ija, korn'i gž'e ta ras'ijsk'ije. J'ur'jev 'eto, J'ur'ij 'eta r'uskaja.

Ot čego ποροζ'í nazv'áníje Běščýně?

Ja dob'ival'sa [najt'i ab'jasn'eńije] no nígz'e nie naš'ol. Ja slyšal vot takoje nazv'áníje Běščýně – tud'a •syłal'i l'uz'ej, kat'oryje, nu praihr'al'i f karty, nu amarał'nyx l'uz'ej, šłaxtu amar'al'nuju, kot'oryje pac'er'al'i obl'ik marał'nyj, vot. Ix •syłal'i s'ud'a i nazval'i z'erěvnu Běšč'íne, to jesč' l'iš'o•nyje č'ina, bēs č'ina. Vot ats'uda pašl'a nazv'áníje Běšč'íne. Vot ań'i fsě 'ec'i, pat'om ań'i kagd'a v abrus'eńije vsěj, 'eta ońi kto p'er'em'azał'sa v rusk'ix, kto safs'em nie znał svaj'ej, 'eta s'amaje nac'ji. A z'z'es' Pał'akov mnogo korń'ej, a vot 'eta [...] fs'a p'ol'skaja 'ul'ica, a xac'a ań'i nie pr'iznaj'ut, tam az'ín dva četav'eka ješč'o možet byc' kak ta pr'iznajut. A tam Tosy roz'ina, kat'oryje – ja prixaž'u – pr'ixaz'ice k nam na mal'itvy, tam kap'leječ'ku daž'ut, no xaz'ic'... Adn'a st'areńkaja ž'enšč'ina k nam pr'ixoz'it. [...] Níkaz'ímavna, on'a pa pol'sk'i možet mal'icsa, znajet, u nej'o mal'itovńik ješč', no an'a mnoha znajet. Z'z'ez' byla mnoha, z'z'es' Pał'akov byla. Fs'a 'eta byla p'ol'skaja z'erěvńa. A pat'om, kagd'a, nu, vajn'a pašl'a, pat'om raskul'ač'ivańje, pat'om ješč'o 'ec'i fsě 'ec'i kupał'a snas'il'i f c'erkvaž, u l'uz'ej v hałava'x tože l'ubaja [...]

'Eta i s'ejč'as l'uz'am trudno, kat'oryje s'v'eraj žyc' [xac'at]. L'uz'am nu kak to skaz'ac', nel'z'a takoje

skaz'ac' slova trudno, no pr'inas'ic' luž'am, nesč'li v'eru, 'oč'ėń trudno, patam'u što vakr'uh p'ľjanstvo, vakr'uh matam ruh'ajutsa. Ja havar'u l'uz'am, nie ruh'ajč'es'a matam, paž'aľ'sta, praš'u vas. E, što nam, no na dv'e m'ínuty, tr'i m'ínuty, a da, nu da, nie budu. Ań'i tut v mašýně 'ec'i ikonk'i pav'es'at, akurkaf nabrasajut i matam ruh'ajutsa. Nu što, ty že B'ožeńku pav'es'il, pačem'u ty ruh'aješ'sa, ja jem'u ab'jas'ńaju [...]

The name of the village of Bezchynne

Poles in the village of Bezchynne

Education

Mac' pa tr'i, četyr'e raza f kasč'ot b'ehała. Učoby u nej'o níkak'oj né bylo, no nam fšem abrazavańje dała i v'y•šeje. An'a havaryła: z'etočki uč'ičes, uč'ičes. [...] Ac'ec u meń'a był rabac'aham, rabotał, on fšo uměl z'z'elac' svajim'i rukam'i. Kahd'a raskuľ'ač'il'i pr'iš'os' [...] i padmašč'er'ivac' i sapah'i šyc' i kurtki i šuby i χaty z'elac' i mašyny, i fšo 'eto u meń'a astałos', ja níč'ev'o né prap'it' i né prahul'ał, χoc' i była trudna žyc' [...] ja, kak gavar'icsa, [ja] tol'ka pa•z'eľka pad a•c'a. I χata tam jev'o staj'it, s'estr'a žyv'ot.

Grodno

The below text is a transcription of an interview conducted in Grodno with a 35-year-old man whose first language was plain speech. At present, the man is attempting to use literary Belarusian consistently in every situation.

.[GrodJW35/2009M]

Belarusian at university

Šmat intel'ih'encyji v'yńiščana u nas u mižvaj'e•nyja čas'y. Heta byl'i l'už'i, jak'ija mah'l'i p adraz'ic'. Kal'i u z'ev'anostyx had'aχ nézaležnasc' atrymała B'eľar'us', znou l'už'i pačal'i za nézaležnasc' - adraž'e•ne vystup'ac'. M'ań'e heta u maľ'ym uzrosc'e zastała, a u škol'e ja na ruskaj mov'e razmaul'au i sm'ajaus'a, kal'i kazal'i: „zaras us'o buž'e pa b'eľarusk'i". Ja pomńu jak nastauńnik pryχoz'iu i pap'arežvau: „zaras us'o buduc' vykľad'ac' na b'eľaruskaj mov'e, vučyc'e b'eľar'uskuju movu". Nu vos' adbyl'is'a prez'id'enck'ija v'ybyary i ušo prajš'lo.

Belarusian and Russian in Belarus

Na toj momant ja pastup'iu va uńiversityt'et, i byl'o šmat intel'ih'encyji, vykľ'a•čykau, praf'esaraŭ, jak'ija né prosta l'ekcyji čytal'i na b'eľaruskaj mov'e, za jak'ija hrošy dadatkov'a dapľ'ačval'i, a jan'y vykaryst'ouval'i u žy•c'i, i tak a•dana star'al'is'a razmaul'ac' na b'eľaruskaj mov'e, što ja d'umaju, heta iχ uklat u toje,

što ja razmaŭ'aju pa beŭarusku. Prajš'oŭ čas, i zaras ŭ nas u Hrodna jošč' Tavarystva beŭaruskaj škoŭy, nu i ŭs'al'aki'ja hurtk'i. Heta, kańešńe, na tak'im uzroŭni, v'el'm'i slabym, i ŭz'eł prymaje v'el'm'i maŭaja kol'kas'c' l'už'ej, aŭe vos' l'už'i, jak'ija heta pravož'ac', v'el'm'i adukav'anyja ŭ svaj'oj sprav'e, im jošč' što skaz'ac' beŭarusam, jošč' što pav'edam'ic'. Moža, kal'i prosta ad uŭady buduc' jak'ija krok'i nasustrač, jan'a pačń'e razum'ec', što beŭaruskas'c' neapχodna, to z'akujučy l'už'am, jak'ija zastal'is'a, beŭaruskas'c' moža adraž'i•ca. Ja d'umaju, jošč' kam'u ja'je adraž'ac'. Tam'u što ŭšo k'iraŭnictva u nas byl'o pryšłana z usχodu, z'e niχt'o ne pryznav'au beŭaruskaj movy. C'ikava zaras pačyt'ac' h'ist'oryju, napryklat, kal'i ŭ p'ac'iz'eš'atyχ had'aχ u nas razmaŭ'au na beŭaruskaj mov'e tol'ki až'in m'ín'istr, ast'atńija niχt'o ne razmaŭ'al'i.

Belarusianness

Belarusian in politics

U nas darečy zaras zjav'iuš'a jašč'e pas'of Šv'ecyji, jon taksama vykaryst'oŭvaje tol'ki beŭar'uskuju movu.

Jan'a χoz'ic' u Farny kasc'oł, z'e kateχ'iz'is pravož'ic' s'astr'a..., jakaja v'edaje tol'ki p'ol'skuju movu. Jan'a pryj'leχała ne tak daŭn'o s Polščy. Aŭe u nas šmat kateχetak, jak'ija ŭžo tut m'asc'ovuju kateχet'yčnuju aduk'acyju atrymal'i.

The language of catechesis

Značyc' takaja infarm'acyja: z'e p'il'hrymk'i astan'auŭ'ivaju•ca ŭ kasc'ole, tam jošč' z've hrupy kateχet'yčnyja – p'ol'sk'ija i beŭar'usk'ija. Što kažuc' l'už'i. Maj'a znaj'omaja, jakaja χoz'ic' u V'išńav'ec, kaža, što z'eč'i razum'ejuč' na beŭaruskaj mov'e. Na pol'skaj staj'ac' – jan'y ničoha ne razum'ejuč', aŭe ž bac'k'i χoz'ac', tam'u što jan'y moža χoćuc', kab z'eč'i v'yvučyl'i χu•č'ej p'ol'skuju movu. Tamu što zrazum'eła, što v'edy pol'skaj movy za sab'oj c'ahnuc' maχčymas'c' pajeχac' u Polšču, šmat maχč'yumas'c'ej, kud'y pajeχac'.

Two catechetical groups: Polish and Belarusian

V'adoma, što heta patštury'ouŭvaje bac'k'ou a•d'ac' z'ac'ej. No tam jos'c' b'elaruski' kateχ'iz'is, m'ėnav'ita b'elaruski'. Ja sam ěe čuŭ, jak tam adbyv'ae•ca, a'ľe jan'a kaža, što na b'elaruskaj mov'e kateχ'iz'is, i dl'a z'ac'ej z'ieck'ija 'imšy adbyv'aju•ca na b'elaruskaj mov'e. No h'etaha ma'la u nas. Ja tol'ki' znaju a z' 'in kasc'o'ľ na V'iš'naŭcy, a a z' 'in kasc'o'ľ

Various linguistic choices

z'e ěe v'edaju jak dl'a z'ac'ej, a'ľe dl'a daroslyχ jos'c'. Heta m'ėrkava•ne toj žančyny, jakaja b'ačy'la z'ac'ej, jak'ija ěe razum'ėjuc' pa pol'sku, a pa b'elarusku dobra razum'ėjuc'. Nu i napryklat takoj'e (m'ėrkava•ne) adnah'o znaj'omaha z'a'k'i i jan'a χoz'ic', jos'c' p'ol'skaja ško'la, i ěe hl'ez'ačy na toje, što jan'a s Polščy, jan'a usv'edaml'aje s'ab'e b'elaruskaj. Jak jon kaža, abav'askova ũ űaz'el'u bu z' 'ic' na b'elar'uskuju imš'u, kaža, ustav'aj, pojz'em na b'elar'uskuju imš'u. Jon m'ėne p'ėrakazvaŭ svaj'o z z' 'iul'e•ne: χoz'ic' u p'ol'skuju ško'lu, a vos' χoča i s'c' 'i na b'elar'uskuju imš'u.

Belarusian in the countryside

Ja p'am'ataju b'elar'uskuju movu (s tyχ čas'ou), kal'i ja znax'oz'iu's'a u babul'i i z'adul'i na v'oscy. Z'e s'c'e jan'lo moža atk'ľ'ala's'a. U škol'e ěiχ't'lo jaj'e asabl'iva ěe vyvuč'au, (kap) navučy•ca havar'yc', ja i z'aras ěedak'ladna v'edaju b'elar'uskuju movu, tam'u što ěe χapaje praktyk'i i ěe pastaja•na űzyvaju jaj'e. ěe v'edaju, čam'u, moža na he'ėetyčnym uzrou'ni jak'im pračyn'aje•ca kal'is'c'i i ty pač'ń'eš razmaŭl'ac'. Tam'u što ěekat'oryja l'uz'i jaj'e čuc' ěikol'i ěe čul'i, űž'o pakal'e•ne prajš'ľ'o. Maj'e bac'k'i, napryklat, m'a'ń'e n'araz'il'i i razmaŭl'al'i űžo na toj momant pa rusku. Moža kal'i na v'osku pryjaž'džal'i, razmaŭl'al'i űžo sa svaim'i pa prostu. Ja ros na ruskaj mov'e, no tym ěe m'ėnš m'a•čyna s'ľova dl'a m'a'ń'e b'elar'uskaje. Ja tak usv'edaml'aju. Nu i l'uz'am c' 'ah'ńe•ca, ěe v'edaju, da svajh'o š c' 'ah'ńe•ca.

Parents' bilingualism. Belarusian in the countryside, Russian in the city

Ale w Polsce jest białoruski w szkołach.

Ja чуу, što bełar'usk'ija školy jos'c'. Ně v'edaju daładna z'e, ałe z'eš'c'i ũ tym reh'ijone. Ja čuju, kali pal'ak s pol'sk'im akcentam razmaŭ'aje na čystaj bełaruskaj mov'e.

Nu adrazu čuc', što heta pal'ak, ałe (razmaŭ'aje) na bełaruskaj mov'e i pav'edaml'aje tak'ija č'ik'avyja h'istar'yčnyja zv'estk'i. V'id'ac', što l'uz'i zańim'aju•ca, i z'eč'i pačynajuc', kal'i raz'ic'eł'i havorac' na bełaruskaj mov'e, razmaŭ'l'ac' na bełaruskaj mov'e. Moža tam u Pol'sčy jos'c', tam z'ejnas'c' bol's, čym u Bełarus'i, tam'u što u nas tut davol'i mała tak'ix.

A na Litv'e, kal'i my χaz'il'i ũ v'osk'i, Ejšyšk'is, i zaras ... jan'y š karyst'aju•ca m'iš sab'oj taksama prostaj movaj, tam'u što heta byŭ naš reh'ij'on da V'il'ni, i V'il'na taksama ũvax'oz'ila. Tol'ki što zaras, ja nie v'edaju čam'u, d'maju, što ũplyvy v'eł'm'i m'ocnyja pal'akaŭ na Litv'e, pal'ak'i m'ajuc' z'ejnas'c' v'eł'm'i b'urnuju – haz'ety, čas'op'isy i školy.

A zaras mus'i heta nepr'av'il'na było p kaz'ac', što h'etyja luz'i – etn'ičnyja pal'ak'i, jak'ija znaχ'oz'a•ca ũ hetyχ v'oskaχ. A tym nie m'eńš jan'y vykaryst'ouvajuc' pol'skuju movu. Mus'i, sprava ũ tym, što słab'ejšaja z'aržava, v'adoma da Ras'iji nie χočuc', jakaja tam bol's m'ocnaja, čym Bełar'us, nu i id'uc' da Pol'sčy, b'liž'ej. Niχt'o z ix nie kaža, što ja bełar'us, nie nazav'e s'ab'e bełarusam. Moža heta kr'yudnaje słowa jakoje, bełar'us. Kal'i p nas nazyval'i l'itv'inam'i, us'ix nas nie p'eřeχresc'ila by Ras'ijskaja imp'eryja ũ svaj'e čas'y, jak jan'a nazvała hety reh'ij'on bełarusy, Bełar'us, znajš'l'a p l'inšaje słowa, to moža i l'uz'i iš'l'i by da h'etaha.

Jakim językiem mówisz na co dzień?

Asab'ista ja pasłuhujus' bol's b'e łarusk'im, c'i pa prauz'e pav'edam'ic', to moža byc' p'a•z'eš'at pracentau

Belarusian language in Poland

Plain speech in Eišiškės, Vilnius region

Polish press and Polish schools in Lithuania

Belarusians and Lithuanians – nation names

Consistent usage of Belarusian

Domination of Russian

na p'a•z'es'at. Zaležyc' at s'itu'acyji: kal'i bol'sas'c' razmaul'aje na ruskaj, to ja v'yumušany p'eraχoz'ic' na beľarusk'i. U nekatoryχ v'ypatkaχ ja zastajus'a na beľaruskaj, ja patkr'esl'ivaju toje, što ja kaž'u na beľaruskaj, tam'u što zaras maľa razmaul'ajuc' na beľaruskaj mov'e. Tak što karyst'ajus'a i toj, i toj. No praktyčna b'olšaja častka nas'el'ničtva karyst'aje•ca zrazum'eľa ruskaj movaj. Pa p'eršaje, heta urat naš abľasn'y, kal'i brac' Hrodna, luž'i us'ul'. Navat ja zaŭvažyŭ, što zaras luž'i ŭžyvajuc' r'usk'ija słovy na v'oscy. Rań'ej jašč'e, moža had'ou z'eš'ac' tam'u, jan'y kazal'i pa beľarusku, bolš padobna mova byľa na beľaruskuju, moža jan'a ne l'itarat'urnaja, aľe heta byľa svaj'a mova, a zaras ŭžo ŭžyvajuc' r'usk'ija słovy. Tak, bolš mešańiny rusk'ix i pol'sk'ix, a beľarusk'i jag by adyχoz'ic'.

“Mixed” language**Na jaką Mszę chodzisz?****Multilingualism during Mass**

Ja χaž'u na l'it'urh'iju, u jak'i čas mne zručń'ej, i časč'ej za us'o ŭ m'ań'e adbyv'aje•ca tak. Ja χaž'u s pl'am'e•ńicaj, s'astr'oŭ na z'eckuju imš'u, i pakol'ki z'eckaja imš'a iz'e na pol'skaj mov'e, kaza•ńi k'ažu•ca na beľaruskaj mov'e, ksionc pyt'aje•ca kaz'ac' na beľaruskaj mov'e, i na ruskaj, i na pol'skaj, i na beľaruskaj mov'e. Darečy sam ks'onc, jak'i v'až'e imš'u, jon ne dakładna v'edaje beľar'uskuju movu, i časč'ej u jah'o nekat'oryja r'uskija słovy huč'ac' z beľarusk'im akcentam. No bolš karyst'aje•ca beľaruskaj. Star'aje•ca.

Nationality, citizenship, denomination

I ŭ m'etryk'e, i ŭ pašporč'e ja zap'isan jak pal'ak. Hety prykľat h'ist'oryk'i tumačac' tak, što ŭ sav'eck'ija čas'y, kal'i my kančatkov'a ŭžo stal'i

Religion that determines nationality

resp'ubl'ikaj Sav'eckaha Sajuza, byl'a p'eršaja p'erap'is' nas'el'ničtva, i vyznač'aľas'a nacyjanal'naš'c'. Vyznač'aľas'a jan'a v'eľ'm'i prosta – u l'už'ej pyt'al'is'a: „Kud'y χoz'iš'?”

Kal'i χo3'iš u carkv'u, značyc' ty buž'eš beľar'us, kal'i χo3'iš u kasc'oľ, značyc' buž'eš pal'ak. Nu a šmat l'u3'ej jašč'e akram'a h'etaha panaj'eχała z usχodu na m'esca pastaj'a•naha žyχarstva, i heta byl'i r'usk'ija, tam'u l'u3'ej ruskaj nacyjn'al'našč'i tut taksama prys'utničaje šmat. Ja i sam dumaŭ né tak dan'o, pa prauž'e, had'ou da dva•cac'i ja l'ič'yu, što ja pal'ak. M'ań'e tak vučyl'i, što ja pal'ak, pak'ul' ja né stau bolš sv'adomy, né stau c'ik'av'i•ca, šuk'ac' praŭdy, i zaras ja usv'edam'l'aju, kańešné, što ja beľar'us. U m'ań'e 'inšaja kul'tura, linšyja trad'ycyji, jak'ija adr'oznívaju•ca at pol'sk'iχ, i ja l'ič'u s'ab'e beľarusam. Al'e š kal'i heta buž'e patrebna, napryklat, ja čuŭ, što Polšča zaras pradastau'l'aje kartu pal'aka, i dl'a h'etaha treba pacv'erz'ic', što ty maješ nacyjanal'našč' pal'ak, to v'adoma, ja ní3'le né budu kaz'ac' pra svaj'e pańa•c'i.

Za kogo się uważasz?

Ja l'ič'u s'ab'e, kańešna, za beľarusa. Al'e, napryklat, p'erakan'ac' šmat 'inšyχ l'u3'ej, navat ma'iχ bl'iskiχ znajomyχ, svajak'ou v'el'm'i c'aška, nastol'k'i jan'y l'ičac' s'ab'e pal'akam'i. I ŭsò, i bolš za im'i ničoha né sta'ic'. Jan'y né šukajuc' atkazaŭ, čam'u ja pal'ak, atk'ul' spałańizavaŭs'a. Kal'i ja tľumaču, što níjakaj eksp'ans'iji né byl'o, s Polščy níχt'o né najazž'au s'ud'y, na h'etyja z'eml'i, jan'y navat né χočuc' i sľuχac', kažuc', što pal'ak. Im moža prosta bl'iž'ej tak.

Napryklat, što da rel'ih'ijnaj kul'tury. U nas na Boža Naraže•né z'im'oj na stol'st'av'i•ca ku•ca. U vas st'av'i•ca ryba, zdaje•ca, c'i linšyja bl'uda.

A ryba na wigilje?

U nas ryby níkol'i né byľo.

Pa p'eršaje, heta fal'kl'or, jak'li zastaŭs'a i zaras né vykaryst'ouvaj'e•ca, heta beľar'usk'ija spēvy i v'eršy tyχ čas'ou.

Ethnic identity

Belarusian identification

Polish identification

Christmas Eve dishes in Belarus

Belarusian folklore

Skąd pochodzą Twoi rodzice?

Sam'i jan'y s pat m'áž'y, z v'osk'i. Zaras, kal'i m'áž'a prajš'á, to iχ v'osk'i néda'loka ad m'áž'y s Pol'sčaj znax'ož'a•ca.

Były tam szlacheckie okolice?

Bac'ka darečy z v'osk'i, jakaja znax'ož'i•ca pam'iš adn'oj i druh'oj v'oskaj, jak'ija jon nazyv'au š'ax'eck'im'i. No ja ničoha š'ax'eckaha u hetyχ v'oskaχ né bačyū, i v'el'm'i dobra u nas u „P'inskaj š'ax'c'e” Duńin-Marc'inkevič ap'is'au našu š'axtu. Prosta nadal'i tytuł sab'e. Ja né v'edaju, jak jan'y jah'o atrymal'i, za jak'ija zasluh'i, a'le jan'y mała čym adr'ozníval'is'a. U toj š'ax'c'e, jakaja zaras u v'oskaχ, ničoha š'ax'eckaha ja apsal'utna né baču.

Darečy, jan'y hetym v'el'm'i hanara•ca, i heta u'ličvaje•ca zaŕsody. I kal'i uzníkaje kanfl'ikt, l'už'i abav'askova patkr'esl'ivajuc': „a, heta š'š'axta.”

Heta jakr'as tyja l'už'i, jak'ija nastol'k'i up'eúneny u tym, što jan'y pal'ak'i, heta l'už'i, jak'iχ né p'ėrakanaješ níj'ak'im'i d'okazam'i, níj'ak'im'i sv'etkam'i h'ist'oryi, što na hetyχ z'eml'ax adbyv'afas'a to to, i značyc', h'etyja z'eml'i l'už'ej b'elarusk'iχ, Kńastva L'it'ouskaje (był'o).

Jan'y prosta trym'aju•ca tah'o, što ja š'axta, značyc' pal'ak. Jan'y z h'etaha ničoha né majuc', prosta dl'a s'ab'e, pakaz'ac' p'ėrat tym'i š kac'apam'i r'uskaha paχ'oža•ńa, b'elar'usam'i, što χož'ac' u carkvu, što my jag by vyš'ejšyja za vas u kulturnym uzrouńi. I uš'o.

Kiedy przeszedłeś na język białoruski w modlitwie?

Ja tol'k'i né tak daun'o p'ėrajš'ou na b'elar'usk'ija mal'itvy na b'elaruskaj mov'e, pryč'ym v'yvučyū (iχ) davol'i χutka, a zaŕsody i bap'ca maj'a, i z'adul'a, i mama, i tata vykaryst'ouvajuc' stand'artnyja typ'ovyja mal'itvy na pol'skaj mov'e.

Lack of differences between nobility and peasantry

The history of Belarus

Pole, meaning nobility

The shift to Belarusian for praying

Czy polskie modlitwy są dla Ciebie zrozumiałe?

Mał'itvy, ja d'umaju, ź'ev'anosta pracentau zrazum'eła, to ješč' v'adoma, što niekat'oryja nie zrazum'eła, ale ja prosta da h'etaha st'auł'uša tak, jak l'už'i rań'ej mał'il'iša na łac'inskaj mov'e. Tam'u što mał'itva – heta nie prosta słowa, nie prosta rozum'e•nie, a moža trošk'i in'akš. Vos' žančyna z Bresta, i jan'a patkr'esł'iła, zhaž'ifas'a sa mnoj, što na b'ełaruskaj mov'e značna lepš mał'itvy, čym na łac'inskaj. Na moj pohł'at, kańeš'nie, heta sprava kasc'oła. U V'ic'epsku, M'insku v'eł'm'i dobra m'ol'a•ca na b'ełaruskaj mov'e, i l'už'i razmauł'ajuc' na b'ełaruskaj mov'e. Vos' ja byu u M'insku, akram'a tah'o, što jan'y chož'ac' jašč'e va us'ak'ija hurtk'i, u spul'noty, i pam'iš sab'oj, nie uš'e, ale vykaryst'ouvajuc' b'ełar'uskuju movu. Za kasc'ołam, χu•č'ej za us'o, karyst'aju•ca ruskaj movaj.

A język rosyjski?

Ńe, nie uvaχoz'ic', ja nie čuu. Moža pa ras'ijsku štošč'i

čyt'aje•ca dla tyχ l'už'ej, χto nie rozum'eje poł'skaj. Pradaju•ca kńišk'i u našaj Hr'odńenskaj dyjac'ez'ii, poł'ska r'usk'ija, m'ėnav'ita r'usk'ija kńišk'i, poł'sk'i tekst s transkr'ypcyjaj ruskaj i z druhoha boku iz'e rusk'i p'erakł'at.

Czy to, że używasz białoruskiego jest typowe?

Xu•č'ej za us'o, što nietypovy. Ja zaras u p'il'hrymk'e sustrakaju l'už'ej, jak'ija lohka p'ėraχoz'ac' na b'ełar'uskuju movu. Ja razmauł'aju na b'ełaruskaj i jan'y dobra razmauł'ajuc' sa mnoj pa b'ełarusku, i niekat'oryja navat karyst'aju•ca i mał'itvam'i b'ełar'usk'im'i. Vos', naprykłat, žančyna, moža užo bołš star'ejšaja, i jaj'e serca, kaža, v'eł'm'i razryv'aje•ca, što b'ełarusy zańadbal'i svaj'u movu, svaj'u kul'turu.

Languages in the churches of Minsk and Vitebsk

Books with Polish text written in Cyrillic

Transferring code from Russian to Belarusian

Polish in the Grodno theological seminary

Ja χ u•č'ej za ũsò netyповy ũ hetym, no ja l'ič'u, što l'uz'i hatovy p'erajs'c'i na b'elar'uskuju movu, dl'a h'etaha prosta pav'iñen šturs'ok jak'i ñebuc' adby•ca. Što datyčyc' kasc'ola, rel'ih'ii, to heta pav'i•ny zrab'ic' ks'anž'y. Darečy ũ nas u Hr'odñenskaj s'ëm'in'aryji vyk'ladajuc' pa pol'sku.

**Religious awareness:
Catholic, i.e. Pole**

A tu na wsi po polsku nie mówią...

V'edaječ'e, prymajuc' p'il'ihrymaŭ zvyčajna l'uz'i, jak'ija, kal'i pa rusku skaz'ac', vacarkau'l'onyja l'uz'i, jan'y časta χ ož'ac' u kasc'ol', časta majuc' kantakty s ks'anžam'i, daj'uc' a χ v'ary i ũz'el'ničajuc' u žy•c'li kasc'ola, aľe š na sva'im uzrouñi. Jan'y i prymajuc' p'il'ihrymaŭ. Ja d'umaju, što na i χ paľañiz'acyja tak mocna ũpľyvaje, što jan'y l'ič'ac', ras katol'ik, to abav'askova pav'iñen byč' paľak. Majh'o pakal'e•ña taksama jos'c' l'uz'i, jak'ija ũvažajuc' s'ab'e za paľakau, i pryč'ym vos' s' s'õ•ñašñ'aj p'il'ihrymk'i jos'c'. Jon navat prosta kaža, što ja ñe χ ač'u byč' b'elarusam, ja pal'ak. Ja jam'u kaž'u: „Jak ty pal'ak? Ty zž'es' naraz'iūs'a, ty tut v'y χ avan, c'ab'e tam ni χ t'o ñe čakaje". A jon kaža: „Ñe, ñe". Darečy, ja z adn'oj žanč'ynaj razmaul'au.

Ethnic awareness

Pajšl'a razmova s tah'o, što čah'o ja razmaul'aju na b'elaruskaj mov'e. Nu ja pratstav'iu svaj'u paz'icyju, jak ja ũsò heta razum'eju, a jan'a navat ñe abhruntavaľa ničoha, a prosta: „Ñe, ja ñe χ ač'u, ja χ ač'u, kap ja byl'a pry Pol'sčy, u mañ'e z vaš'ëm'n'a•cataha pa try•cac' z'ev'aty hot, kal'i tut byl'a teryt'oryja Pol'sčy, ũsò byl'o, ja meľa ũsò, a Sav'ety i kaľxozy ũsò zn'iščyl'i". Fakt v'adomy, i jan'a l'ič'yc', što pry Pol'sčy tut byl'o dobra, a pry Sav'eta χ staľa k'epska, aľe to v'in'a Sav'etaŭ, ñe b'elarusau, čam'u š ty Sav'ety daľučaj'eš. Ras ty b'elar'us, znač'yc' ty kamuñ'ist – takaja sv'adomas'c'.

I znoŭ jan'a nie abhrunt'ouŭvaje ničoha, a prosta kaža, što ja s'ab'e lepš a•čuwała, u m'ań'e byŭ'o bolš hrošaŭ. Jak jan'a v'yraz'ifaša: „ja byŭa pa•na nat panam'i, a jak pryjšl'i Sav'ety zabral'i". Jakas' heta ušo p'erajšl'o na b'elarusau, nie na Sav'etaŭ, a na b'elarusau.

Tut sprava davor'i skład'anaja, tam'u što mova prosta znišč'aje•ca, i znišč'aje•ca jan'a užo nie z z'ev'anostyx had'ou, kal'i Łukašenka pryš'ou, a značna rań'ej. Moža jašč'e horš stan'ov'išča jaj'e byŭ'o, zaras dapusk'aje•ca karysta•ca movaj. Navat ułady p'eražo'ac' zaras. Byŭ tak'i ŭ nas m'ín'istr kul'tury, zaras p'erajš'ou na b'elar'uskuju movu. Łuž'i pačynajuc' heta razum'ec'. Rań'ej pry Sav'etaŭ heta byŭ'o niemahčyma. Navat, kal'i Ľuž'i pryjažžal'i z v'osk'i, (napryklat, maj'a mama) razmaŭlała, jak tad'ly kazal'i, pa v'ask'ovamu, (z jaj'e) smaj'al'is'a. I pastupova movu prosta zniščyl'i. U škołaŭ taksama jaj'e niž'e nie ŭżyval'i. Tam'u kaz'ac', što b'elar'uskuju movu nasaždajuc', prymušajuc' razmaŭlac' na b'elaruskaj mov'e, to heta apsal'utna nie tak. Pa ras'ijsku niŭt'o nie prymušaje (razmaŭlac'), tam'u što Ľuž'i sam'i razmaŭljajuc'.

A szalchta mówi po polsku?

To typ'ovaja naša šłaŭeckaja rysa, vos' pakaz'ac', što ja tak'i šłaŭta, ja ŭm'ēju razmaŭlac' na pol'skaj mov'e,

tam'u što šłaŭta, v'adoma, ŭša pałańizav'ałas'a historyčna. Pałańiz'acyja pajšl'a, jan'a prymała p'ol'skuju kul'turu, tam'u što jan'a m'eła pryv'il'eh'iji v'el'm'i m'ocnyja. I zaras heta muš'i jašč'e ušo c'ahńe•ca. Nekat'oryja sapraud'ly hanara•ca, što ŭ iŭ nap'isana, što jon pal'ak. Tak atrym'ałas'a, što jon hetym moža hanary•ca i lič'lyc' s'ab'e vyš'ej, tam'u što 'inšaja kultura, zaŭ'odnaja. Kal'i ty pal'ak, značyc' ty užo zaŭodní. Zaras, ja d'umaju, što sc'ir'aju•ca hrańicy ŭš'e.

The disappearance of plain speech

The Polish of the petty nobility

Quoted Interviewees

The references to the respondents listed below contain the first syllable of the village, town or city in which the interview was conducted, the interlocutor's age at the time of the interview, the year in which it was done and the respondent's age. All of the conversations were conducted by Ewa Golachowska. Dr Małgorzata Ostrówka also participated in the conversations that took place in Bezchynne, Chavusy, Mohilev and Prodvino.

- BezchFI50/2011F – Bezchynne, Minsk-Mohilev diocese, female, 50 years old.
- BezchMN84/2012F – Bezchynne, Minsk-Mohilev diocese, female 84 years old.
- BezchWI53/2011M – Bezchynne, Minsk-Mohilev diocese, male, 53 years old.
- ChavGF66/2011M – Chavusy, Minsk-Mohilev diocese, male, 66 years old.
- FashchMN78/2011F – Fashchivka, Minsk-Mohilev diocese, female, 78 years old.
- GrodAB26/2009M – Grodno, Grodno diocese, male, 26 years old.
- GrodAK17/2010F – Grodno, Grodno diocese, female, 17 years old.
- GrodAW35/2010M – Grodno, Grodno diocese, male, 35 years old.
- GrodFG24/2010M – Grodno, Grodno diocese, male, 24 years old.
- GrodHM32/2010F – Grodno, Grodno diocese, female, 32 years old.
- GrodIC40/2010F – Grodno, Grodno diocese, female, 40 years old.
- GrodJW35/2009M – Grodno, Grodno diocese, male, 35 years old.
- GrodKJ26/2010M – Grodno, Grodno diocese, male, 26 years old.
- GrodKL25/2010M – Grodno, Grodno diocese, male, 25 years old.
- GrodKP32/2010M – Grodno, Grodno diocese, male, 32 years old.
- GrodKS38/2010M – Grodno, Grodno diocese, male, 38 years old.
- GrodKT43/2010F – Grodno, Grodno diocese, female, 43 years old.
- GrodME65/2010F – Grodno, Grodno diocese, female, 65 years old.
- GrodMT77/2009F – Grodno, Grodno diocese, female, 77 years old.
- GrodNR30/2009F – Grodno, Grodno diocese, female, 30 years old.
- GrodWB38/2010M – Grodno, Grodno diocese, male, 38 years old.
- GrodWT40/2010F – Grodno, Grodno diocese, female, 40 years old.
- HanAN92/2010F – Hantsevice, Grodno diocese, female, 92 years old.
- HanIB67/2010F – Hantsevice, Grodno diocese, female, 67 years old.
- LidIK87/2010F – Lida, Grodno diocese, female, 87 years old.

- LidMK76/2010F – Lida, Grodno diocese, female, 76 years old.
LukAH80/2010F – Lukavets, Grodno diocese, female, 80 years old.
LukMS90/2011F – Lukavets, Grodno diocese, female, 90 years old.
MinAP93/2010F – Minsk, Minsk-Mohilev diocese, female, 93 years old.
MinAS21/2010F – Minsk, Minsk-Mohilev diocese, female, 21 years old.
MinKL54/2010F – Minsk, Minsk-Mohilev diocese, female, 54 years old.
MinOS20/2011F – Minsk, Minsk-Mohilev diocese, female, 20 years old.
MohJB91/2011F – Mohilev, Minsk-Mohilev diocese, female, 91 years old.
MohKM55/2011M – Mohilev, Minsk-Mohilev diocese, male, 55 years old.
MohSK82/2011F – Mohilev, Minsk-Mohilev diocese, female, 82 years old.
MohWG55/2011M – Mohilev, Minsk-Mohilev diocese, male, 55 years old.
NovrIM50/2010F – Nova Ruda, Grodno diocese, female, 50 years old.
NovrMK72/2010F – Nova Ruda, Grodno diocese, female, 72 years old.
PorzUT35/2010F – Porzecze, female, 35 years old.
PostOS20/2011F – Postavy, Vitebsk diocese, female 20 years old.
ProdFŽ75/2010F – Prodvino, Minsk-Mohilev diocese, female, 75 years old.
RubIP22/2010F – Rubiazhevichi, Minsk-Mohilev diocese, female,
22 years old.
SviAM20/2011M – Svir, Minsk-Mohilev diocese, male, 20 years old.
SviBM44/2012M – Svir, Minsk-Mohilev diocese, male, 44 years old.
SviMJ87/2011F – Svir, Minsk-Mohilev diocese, female, 87 years old.

Рэзюмэ

На працягу трох гадоў (2009–2012) я даследавала мову каталіцкага насельніцтва Заходняй і Усходняй Беларусі. У Заходняй Беларусі абшарам вывучэння была Гродзеншчына. Даследаванні праводзіліся ў Гродне, Лідзе, Парэччы, а таксама ў Радуні, Адверніках, Новым Двары, Хадзілонях, Забалоцці, Прэважы, Каргоўдзе, Клайшах, Азёрах, Путрышках, Вярцелішахах, Стрыеўцы, Вавёрцы, Ганцавічах. Некалькі тыдняў (шэсць паездак працягласцю ад пяці дзён да двух тыдняў) я правяла ў Мінску.

На Міншчыне даследаванні праводзіліся ў Радашковічах, Лукаўцы, Нясвіжы і Свіры. На Віцебшчыне разам са мной працавала доктар Вольга Гушчава з Беларускага дзяржаўнага ўніверсітэта. Таксама нам дапамагалі студэнты з Мінска і некалькіх польскіх універсітэтаў, дзякуючы чаму можна было правесці шмат размоваў з каталіцкім насельніцтвам гэтага рэгіёну.

Даследаванні закранулі Паставы, Лынтупы, Раманішкі, Поразава, Камаі, Цябуты, Ігнацішкі. Экспедыцыі ва Усходнюю Беларусь я ажыццяўляла разам з доктарам Малгажатай Аструўкай з Інстытута славістыкі Польскай Акадэміі навук. Разам мы праводзілі даследаванні ў Магілёве і Бабруйску, а таксама ў Бясячынні, Чавусах, Фашчоўцы, Прадвінні, Ізюмаве і Даманаве.

У цэнтры даследчай увагі апынуліся статус і дыяпазон функцыянавання польскай мовы ў каталіцкіх асяродках Беларусі. Мы спрабавалі зразумець, што змянілася ў выніку пашырэння выкарыстання ў літургіі каталіцкага Касцёла беларускай мовы, а таксама ў якой ступені гэтыя перамены паўплывалі на нацыянальную ідэнтыфікацыю каталікоў Беларусі. Выбар даследчай праблемы таксама быў абумоўлены фактам этналагічных даследаванняў сярод каталікоў Беларусі, якія праводзіліся ў другой палове 1990-х гадоў [Engelking 1995, Engelking 1996, Kabzińska 1999]. Іх вынікам былі шматлікія працы, якія

паказалі сувязь паміж каталіцызмам і польскай ідэнтыфікацыяй, хоць пры гэтым польскасць магла быць зразуметая па-рознаму і часта азначала хутэй прыналежнасць да каталіцкага Касцёла, чым нацыянальную ідэнтыфікацыю.

Для маладога беларускага Касцёла амаль дваццаць гадоў – гэта вельмі доўгі перыяд, таму варта разгледзець, якія змены адбыліся за гэты час.

Праведзеныя інтэрв’ю пацвердзілі слушнасьць абранай даследчай тэмы. Яны засведчылі, што нацыянальная ідэнтыфікацыя каталікоў Беларусі, нават паблізу яе заходняй мяжы, перажывае трансфармацыю, і толькі найстарэйшае пакаленне каталікоў атаясамлівае каталіцызм з польскасцю. Для асобаў сярэдняга і малодшага пакалення сувязь нацыянальнасці і веравызнання ўжо не з’яўляецца відавочнай, паколькі прыналежнасьць да каталіцкай канфесіі невыключае беларускай нацыянальнай самасвядомасці. Прыналежнасьць да каталіцкага Касцёла вызначаецца хрышчэннем паводле каталіцкага абраду, у той час як нацыянальная ідэнтыфікацыя вызначаецца рознымі фактарамі і можа нават змяняцца ў выніку жыццёвага досведу. Каталіцызм з’яўляецца катэгорыяй менш дыскусійнай і больш трывалай, чым нацыянальнасць. У кнізе я ўжыла азначэнне “каталікі”, а не “палякі”, бо першае паняцце больш ёмістае і ахоплівае як каталікоў, што атаясамліваюць каталіцызм з польскасцю, так і тых, якія заяўляюць пра польскія карані або маюць падвойную ідэнтычнасць (польскую і беларускую), што асабліва часта здараецца сярод моладзі, а таксама асобаў з выразнай беларускай ідэнтыфікацыяй.

Даследаванні праводзіліся метадам інтэрв’ю, якія мелі адкрыты і нестандартызаваны характар. Я старалася звяртацца як да лідэраў лакальных каталіцкіх асяродкаў, так і да святароў (мясцовых і тых, што паходзяць з Польшчы), а таксама да іншых вернікаў, размовы з якімі часта пацвярджалі, але часам таксама верыфікавалі інфармацыю, атрыманую ад дзеячаў. Кожная з размоваў мела іншую формулу, дапасаваную да характару кантакту і чаканняў інфарманта. Паколькі найважнейшай задачай было заслужыць давер суразмоўцы і забяспечыць яму камфорт у кантакце з даследчыкам, не ўсе размовы былі запісаныя на дыктафон, бо не ўсе суразмоўцы на гэта пагаджаліся. Вельмі часта я мусіла задаволіцца ўважлівым слуханнем, назіраннем, аналізам кантэкстаў расповеду. Такая практыка спрыяла павольнаму і аўтэнтычнаму адкрыццю даследаванай рэчаіснасці.

Надзвычай важным метадам верыфікацыі інфармацыі, атрыманай падчас размоваў, і звестак, якія ўтрымліваліся ў заявах суразмоўцаў, было ўключанае назіранне, якое палягала на ўваходжанні ў натуральнае асяроддзе інфармантаў. Не запісаныя на дыктафон размовы, што вяліся ў дамах маіх гаспадароў, абмен жартамі, які сведчылі пра зараджэнне прыязных стасункаў, назіранне, якім чынам інфарманты звяртаюцца да дзяцей і ўнукаў, на якой мове размаўляюць па тэлефоне, а на якой з прадаўшчыцай у краме, дазвалялі ацаніць фактычную функцыянальную дыстрыбуцыю асобных моваў

у асяроддзі беларускіх каталікоў.

Падчас побыту на Беларусі я старалася ўдзельнічаць ва ўсіх рэлігійных падзеях і ўрачыстасцях: прыходзіла на святаы імшы і іншыя набажэнствы, прымала ўдзел у рэлігійных спатканнях моладзі, у пілігрымцы да Вострай Браны, якая праходзіць праз тэрыторыю Гродзенскай дыяцэзіі, а таксама ў малітвах у прыватных дамах.

.Для мовазнаўцы, які даследуе мову як элемент культуры, надзвычай важна ўсвядоміць важнасць метаду ўключанага назірання. Гэты метада збору матэрыялу асабліва істотны для сацыялінгвістыкі, паколькі для яе прыняццёвае значэнне мае назіранне за ўсімі пазамоўнымі фактарамі (сацыяльнымі і культурнымі), якія ўплываюць на форму выказвання. У шматмоўных супольнасцях ён дазваляе даследаваць фактычны дыяпазон функцыянавання асобных моваў.

Падыходзячы да такой важнай і складанай тэмы, якая выклікае шмат эмоцыяў, трэба памятаць пра тое, што каталікі на ўсім абшары Беларусі знаходзяцца ў сітуацыі культурнага памежжа. І хоць у прыяццёвае ў сваіх даследаваннях я не звяртаюся да паняцця “крэсаў” і памежжа, аднак, на пачатку варта сфармуляваць уласны пункт гледжання, паколькі ён абумоўлівае як навуковы падыход, так і вынікі даследавання.

Тэрыторыя сучаснай Беларусі часта разглядаецца як даўнейшыя польскія “Паўночна-Усходнія крэсы”. Такі погляд, які прынялі многія польскія даследчыкі пасля 1989 г., прыводзіць да засяроджвання на нацыянальных пытаннях і разгляду іх праз прызму моўных і рэлігійных праблемаў.

Даследаванні мовы былі зазвычай даследаваннямі перыферыянага дыялекту польскай мовы (*polszczyzna kresowa*), а іншыя мовы толькі служылі дапаўненнем камунікатыўнай сітуацыі, у якой функцыянуе польская мова/

Асабліваасць майго навуковага падыходу ў тым, што я аспісваю і інтэрпрэтую моўныя працэсы ў каталіцкім Касцёле Беларусі, не ацэньваючы іх. Я не пішу ні пра “страту польскай мовы”, ні пра “элімінацыю польскай мовы з касцёлаў”, паколькі гэтыя азначэнні ўтрымліваюць ацэнку.

Праводзячы даследаванні, я старалася ставіцца з эмпатыяй і разуменнем да інфармантаў і іх праблемаў, аднак на этапе аналізу і інтэрпрэтацыі матэрыялу я падыходжу да яго з неабходнай інтэлектуальнай дыстанцыяй. Я спадзяюся, што такі падыход дазволіць даволі аб’ектыўна апісаць няпростыя пытанні

связі мовы і рэлігіі ў сучасным каталіцкім Касцёле Беларусі.

Назіранні, зробленыя падчас даследаванняў, пацвярджаюць апісаную даследчыкамі з’яву “дэпаланізацыі” каталіцкага Касцёла Беларусі. Аднак я лічу, што гэтая з’ява значна больш складаная, чым гэта вынікае з многіх працаў, прысвечаных гэтым пытанням, і што яе нельга разглядаць выключна ў катэгорыях страты “польскасці” каталікамі. Яна звязаная як з пераўтварэннямі мадэлі рэлігійнасці, так і разуменнем (выбарам) уласнай рэлігійнай і нацыянальнай ідэнтыфікацыі асобамі маладога пакалення. Рэлігія становіцца свядомым выбарам, а не наступствам нараджэння ў каталіцкай сям’і. Гэта датычыць як вернікаў, што паходзяць з каталіцкага асяроддзя, так і асобаў са змешаных або рэлігійна аб’якавых сем’яў. Касцёл, які стварае маладое пакаленне каталікоў, мае ўжо іншае аблічча ў параўнанні з тым, які перажыў найцяжэйшыя гады, захоўваючы польскасць. Для маладых людзей ён ужо з’яўляецца носьбітам не рэлігійных і нацыянальных узораў, а толькі рэлігійных. У ім ёсць месца і для паляка, і для беларуса. З выказванняў маіх інфармантаў выразна відаць, што польскасць і беларускасць не выключаюць, а ўзаемадапаўняюць і ўзбагачаюць адна адну, так як чаргаванне малітвы па-польску і па-беларуску. З прааналізаваных выказванняў вынікае, што ў выпадку маладых асобаў няма антаганізму паміж польскай і беларускай мовай, а таксама польскай і беларускай нацыянальнасцю, што дае магчымасць свядома будаваць уласную тоеснасць на розных узроўнях, якія чэрпаюць з абедзвюх традыцый: польскай і беларускай.

Моўныя пытанні, якія ўзмацняюць альбо стрымліваюць пераўтварэнні нацыянальнай тоеснасці каталікоў Беларусі, насамрэч не з’яўляюцца такімі істотнымі, як гэта магло б здавацца. Па-першае, магчымая сітуацыя, калі сферу сакрум абслугоўвае беларуская мова і паралельна захоўваецца польская ідэнтыфікацыя асобы. Па-другое, тое, што беларуская мова замацавалася ў Касцёле, не з’яўляецца ізаляваным фактам. Гэта элемент іншых пераўтварэнняў, распчатых у 90-я гады. Пасля трох гадоў інтэнсіўных даследаванняў я не магу з упэўненасцю сцвярджаць, што дзякуючы таму, што беларуская мова ўвайшла ў літургію, узрос яе прэстыж. З той жа ўпэўненасцю я магла б напісаць, што беларуская мова ўвайшла ў Касцёл, бо беларускае Адраджэнне 90-х гадоў падняло яе прэстыж і разбурыла перакананне многіх ў тым, што гэтая мова ніжэйшага культурнага ўзроўня. Нягледзячы на складаную палітычную сітуацыю ў Беларусі, шматгадовае старанні беларускіх дзеячаў адрадыць беларускую мову і культуру прыносіць плады цяпер, калі падрасло пакаленне, народжанае ў 80-я гады. У каталіцкім асяроддзі гэтая вельмі добра відаць.

Хуткі пераход на беларускую мову моладзі ў касцёле звязаны таксама са знікненнем перадачы рэлігіі і польскай мовы ў сям’і. Перадача рэлігійнай адукацыі манахіям, катэхетам і святарам вельмі часта прыводзіць да таго, што яна адбываецца без пасярэдніцтва польскай мовы.

Шмат гадоў у савецкай Беларусі каталіцкі Касцёл быў апораю польскасці і польскай мовы. Менавіта таму факт, што ў цяперашні час польская мова адыходзіць з гэтай сферы ўспрымаецца эмацыйна і з пачуццём крыўды і выклікае міжвольнае абурэнне каталікоў з польскай нацыянальнай ідэнтыфікацыяй. Я хачу мрцна падкрэсліць, што палякі і беларусы павінны мець магчымасць удзельнічаць у польскамоўных набажэнствах, слухаць польскія казані, спяваць польскія песні, здзяйсняць па-польску сакрамэнт пакуты. Але прысутнасць польскай мовы ў Касцёле не заменіць ні навучання польскай мове, ні яе прысутнасці ў доме. Магчымасці моўнай адукацыі дзяцей, моладзі і дарослых існуюць на тэрыторыі Беларусі перадусім дзякуючы дзейнасці Польскай Школьнай Мацежы (Polska Macierz Szkolna), а таксама іншых курсаў, якія часта ўзнікаюць спантанна.

Іншы час прыносіць іншыя стратэгіі захавання польскасці і іншыя мадэлі і механізмы яе будавання. Абарона польскасці Касцёлам і кансервацыя яе “народнай” мадэлі была стратэгіяй на найцяжэйшыя савецкія часы. Здаецца, што сёння, хоць часы для палякаў на Беларусі таксама не простыя, неабходныя іншыя дзеянні. Імі павінны быць падтрымка польскамоўнай асветы, адукацыя польскай інтэлігенцыі, а таксама падтрымка ўсеагульнага і адкрытага каталіцкага Касцёла, які б аб’ядноўваў і палякаў, і беларусаў.

Дадзеная праца складаецца з дзвюх частак. Першая частка – гэта Шматмоўнасць каталікоў на Беларусі на мяжы XX і XXI стагоддзяў. Справа здача з палявых даследаванняў 2009 – 2012. У ёй апісанія і інтэрпрэтаваны назіранні, зробленыя падчас даследаванняў. У сувязі з тым, што кніга ў вялікай ступені паўставала на аснове інтэрв’ю, іх фрагменты змешчаны ў гэтай частцы. Запіс не з’яўляецца аднастайным, паколькі маім галоўным клопам было прадставіць іх такім чынам, каб спрасціць успрыняцце любому чытачу. Спосаб запісу кожнага выказвання дапасаваны да яго моўнай спецыфікі. Гэта значыць, што беларускія тэксты запісаныя ў адпаведнасці з арфаграфічнай нормай, падобна як кароткія выказванні па-руску. У польскіх выказваннях я захавала напярэдаграфічны запіс, які паказвае найбольш характэрныя рысы мовы. Толькі ў інтэрв’ю, якія ўтрымлівалі вельмі шмат кампанентаў, чужых для літаратурнай нормы, я выкарыстоўвала элементы фанетычнага запісу.

Другая частка кнігі Шматмоўнасць каталікоў на Беларусі на мяжы XX і XXI стагоддзяў. Справаздачи сведкаў гісторыі ўтрымлівае працяглыя і найцікавейшыя ўрыўкі тэкстаў, запісаных падчас даследаванняў. У ёй змешчаныя размовы з маладымі людзьмі, а таксама з прадстаўнікамі сярэдняга, старэйшага і найстарэйшага пакалення. Мае суразмоўцы карыстаюцца як польскай мовай, так і беларускай у яе літаратурнай (маладыя) або дыялектнай (старэйшыя) версіі. Паколькі гэтыя тэксты могуць быць матэрыялам для разнастайных даследаванняў, у тым ліку мовазнаўчых, іх запіс быў уніфікаваны.

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Photographs

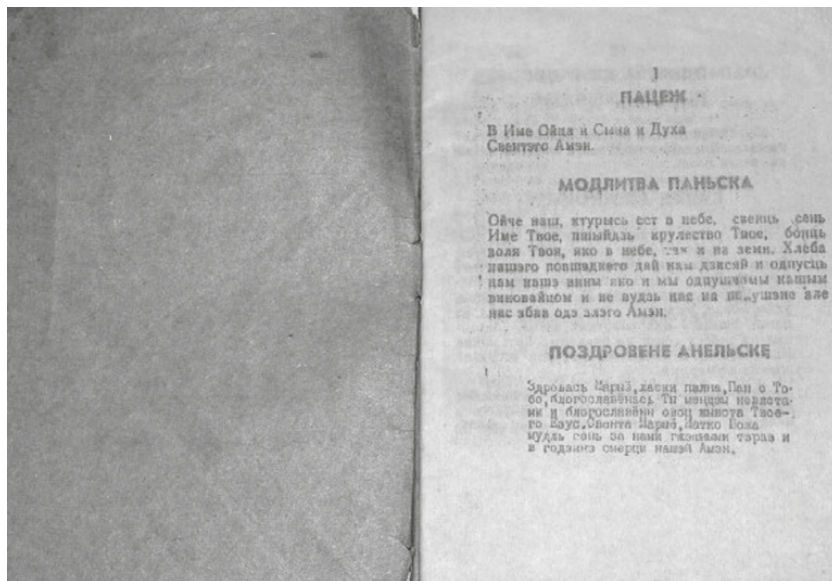


Photo 1: Catechism written in Cyrillic with the Polish texts of prayers, early 1990s (photo by E. Golachowska)

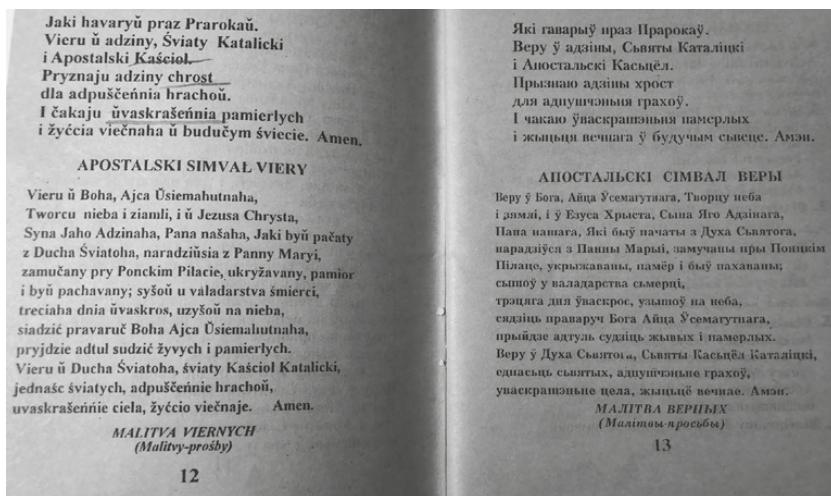


Photo 2: Belarusian text of Holy Mass. On the following page, Latin and Cyrillic transcriptions, published 1995 in Minsk in the Church of Holy Simeon and Helena (photo by E. Golachowska)



Photo 3: New church under the denomination of the Holy Mary Mother of the Church, Chavusy, Minsk-Mohilev Diocese, Mshchislav Deanery (photo by M. Ostrówka)



Photo 4: Built-up façade and main entrance to the Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Holiest Virgin Mary in Bobruisk (photo by M. Ostrówka)



Photo 5: View of the main aisle and apse of the Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Holiest Virgin Mary in Bobruisk (photo by M. Ostrówka)



Photo 6: Virgin Mary of Fashchivka. Picture hanging in the temporary chapel in Fashchivka. Minsk-Mohilev Diocese, Mohilev Deanery (photo by M. Ostrówka)

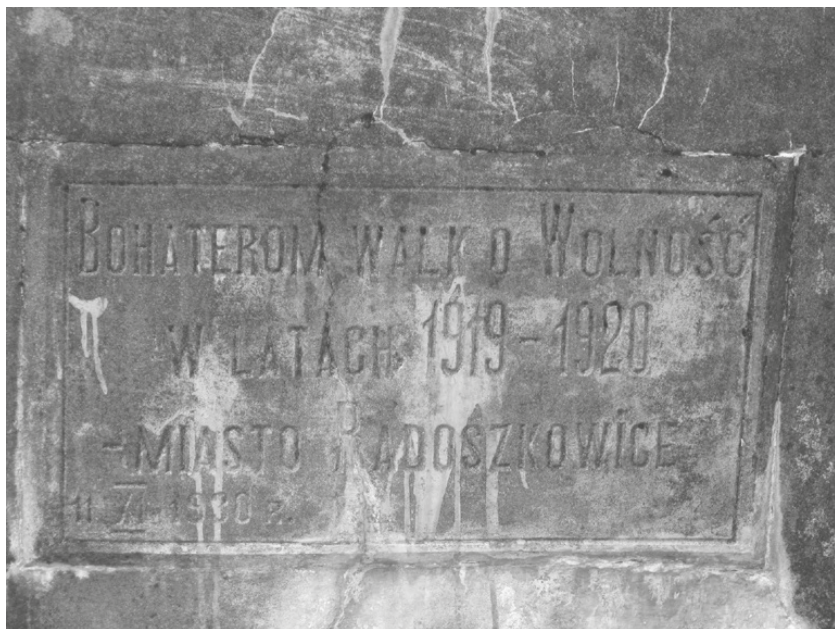


Photo 7: Monument dedicated to the soldiers of the Polish-Bolshevik War. Radoszkowice, Minsk Oblast (photo by I. Steger)

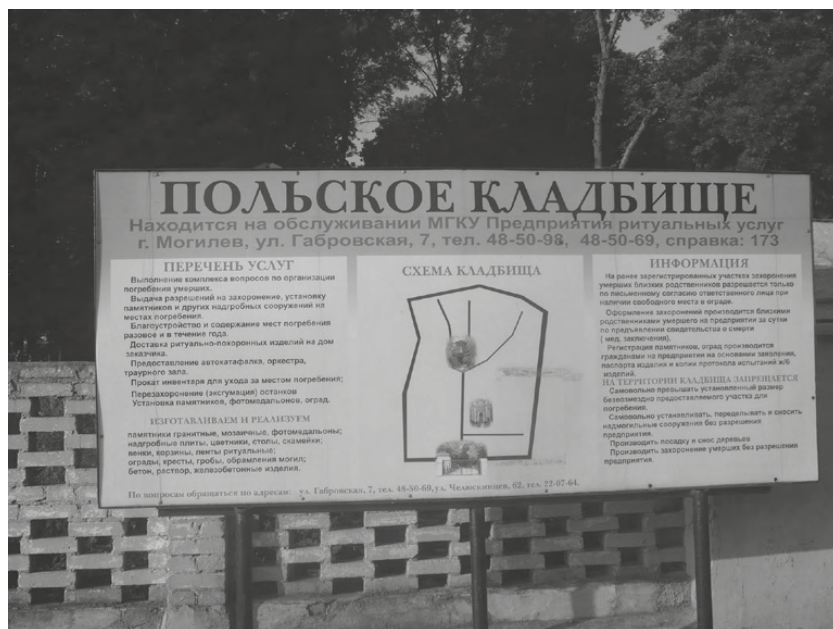
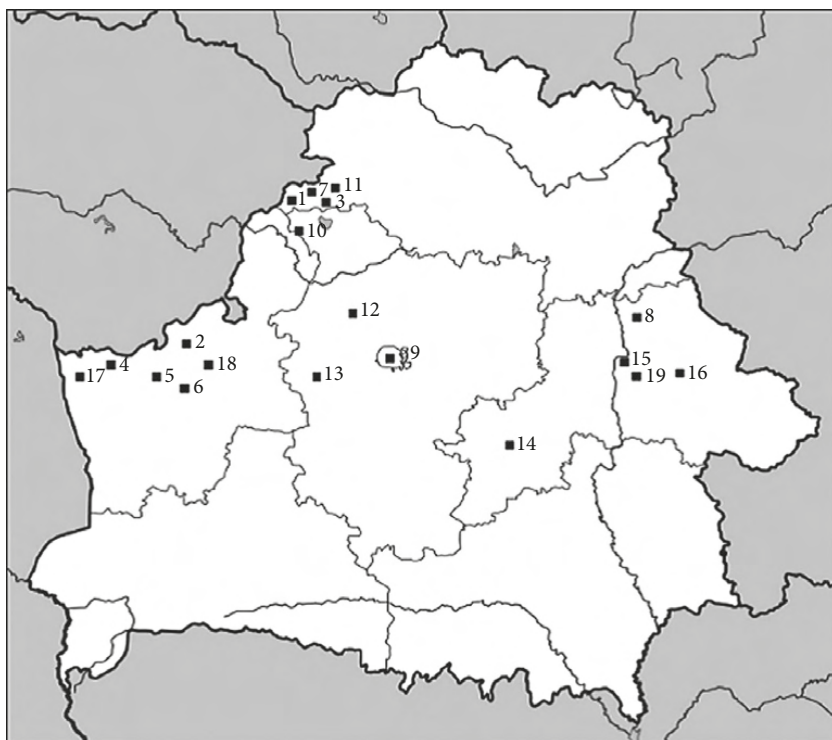


Photo 8: Polish cemetery in Mihilev (photo by M. Ostrówka)



Photo 9: Saint Stanislas Church in Mohilev – view from the street (photo by M. Ostrówka)



1 - Lyntupy, 2 - Raduń, 3 - Komaje, 4 - Porzecze, 5 - Nowa Ruda, 6 - Wawiórka, 7 - Polesie, 8 - Faszczówka, 9 - Mińsk, 10 - Świr, 11 - Postawy, 12 - Radoszkowicze, 13 - Rubieżewicze, 14 - Bobrujsk, 15 - Mohylew, 16 - Czausy, 17 - Grodno, 18 - Lida, 19 - Bezczynie

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