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The language of Polish emigration in the world: research methods and sources

History

Polish diaspora communities in different countries of settlement have a different history, a different social composition and a different chronology of formation as separate communities. Their history can be divided into several sub-periods: 1) 1st half of the 19th century; 2) 2nd half of the 19th century; 3) the period 1900 – 1914; 4) the inter-war period (1919 – 1939); 5) the period 1939 – 1949 – 1956; 6) 1956 – 1980; 7) after 1980 – 1989 – 2004; 8) migrations after Poland's accession to the European Union.

It should be noted here that this is only an approximate periodisation, treating the communities as a whole, as the most important and numerous Polish diaspora communities and group emerged at different times. Currently, the largest number of Poles and people of Polish ancestry reside in the United States of America, Canada, Brazil, the United Kingdom, Ireland, France and Germany.

Research of changes in the Polish language

The process of changes in the Polish language in emigrant communities was first noticed through the example of the language used in the Polish diaspora in America: however, systematic research into the changes in the Polish language in countries of emigration under the influence of the dominant languages dates back to the 1980s.

Publications focusing on the language of Polish diaspora communities in various countries of Polish diaspora settlement were focused on the following issues:

a) interference at different levels of the language and mechanisms of acquiring foreign lexemes:

quotations: *rozpoczynala się prosperity; jestem seif* (ang. save);

adapted words, including different types of adaptation: phonetic, inflectional, word-formation adaptation, e.g.: *jechalim karą po high-wayu* (ang. car ‘samochód osobowy; high-way ‘autostrada’); *ciężkie troki wyjechały na strite, a potem na tyn bridż* (ang. truck ‘ciężarówka’ (ang. street ‘ulica’, ang. bridge ‘most’); *w Chicago jest 13 polonijnych aldermanów* (ang. alderman ‘radny miejski’);

new word-formations created by the Polish diaspora, e.g.: *zamiataczka ‘odkurzacz’* (ang. vacuum cleaner); *podatkowiec ‘podatnik’* (ang. tax-payer);

word-formation replicas, phraseological replicas (structural, semantic): *uprzyjemniacz* (ang. entertainer); *pokój do prania* (ang. laundry room); *market owocowy* (ang. fruit market); *koszula „dres”* (ang. dress shirt); *być ileś lat starym* ‘mieć ileś lat’ (ang. to be x years old);

phraseologisms created by the Polish diaspora: *egzaminacja lekarska/doktorska* ‘badanie lekarskie’ (ang. examination), ; *interes groseryjny* ‘sklep spożywczy’(ang. grocery), *szukać dziabu, za dziabem* ‘poszukiwać pracy’(ang. job); *brać kogoś na bort* ‘zapewnić komuś wyżywienie we własnym domu za określoną opłatą (ang. bort);

syntactic replicas: *grać piano* ‘grać na fortepianie’ (to play the piano); *odjechać kogo* ‘odjechać od kogo’ (ang. to leave somebody), *używać język* ‘posługiwać się językiem’ (ang. to use a language); *drzewo od sosny* ‘drewno sosnowe’ (ang. wood from the pine tree);

words with modified grammatical categories and functions (so-called morphological calques), e.g.. neutralisation of the category of voice, aspect, gender: *był urodzony* ‘urodził się’ (ang. to be born); *czuję się dumna być Polką* ‘że jestem Polką’(ang. I’m proud to be Polish) ; *byłem zamieszkały* ‘mieszkalem’(ang. I was living) ;

redundant personal, demonstrative and possessive pronouns, e.g.: *muj ojciec przyjechał z moim dziadziusem* (ang. my father come with my grandfather); *moja curka luna nawincy po polsku gadala* , (ang. my daughter she has spoken polish most often);

giving a pronominal function to the numeral "one": *zajmowało jedną godzinę, ang. it took one hour*; *po upływie jednego miesiąca zostałem powołany na powrót do pracy, ang. after one month*;

b) lexical interference in word fields – lexical borrowings were grouped into semantic groups; the researcher illustrated the process of foreign and native vocabulary functioning on the example of selected semantic groups: financial matters and kitchen equipment are addressed with foreign words, while in the groups of body parts and pet names, family relations, church, rituals, native words predominate;

c) the language of a selected Polish diaspora community, e.g.: Chicago; Canada; the Ruhr Valley; Brazil; Great Britain; the settlement "Panna Maria" in Texas; Argentina; northern France;

d) stylistic functions of the Polish diaspora dialect (most often only AngloPolish, PortuguesePolish vocabulary) in literature;

e) the native language as an element of ethnic identity, taking into account changes in its function in the process of assimilation of particular generations: emigrants themselves and subsequent generations of Polish diasporas; this type of research requires access to written sources (memoirs), interview opportunities, participatory observation. Depending on the theory adopted, researchers distinguish between different types of ethnic identification by analysing an individual's attitudes towards cultural values such as: knowledge and use of the Polish language – both spoken and written; participation in Polish ethnic organisations; choice of friends and acquaintances; passing on the language to the next generations; the extent to which close family ties and maintained, as

well as the choice of a future marriage partner; attitudes towards the country of origin and the people living there.

In parallel with the empirical research, there were discussions around the terms used and their definitions. They addressed, in particular, such issues as the understanding of the *quotation* and its linguistic status, the definition of a *Polish diaspora word*, the distinction between generations of emigration and those of the Polish diaspora, the definition of the code used in Polish diaspora communities: dialect/Polish diaspora language/Polish language of the Polish diaspora in France, Belgium/ contact dialect, *inherited language*; naming Polish communities in emigration countries: *Poles abroad, Polonia, Polish diaspora etc.*

Sources

The development of the Polish diaspora language research was determined not only by the introduction of new linguistic methods, but also by access to sources.

In fact, in the beginning, mainly written texts were used: letters, memoirs, occasional prints, newspapers. Letters dating from the late 19th century are included in the edition of *Listy emigrantów z Brazylii i Stanów Zjednoczonych 1890-1891 [Letters of emigrants from Brazil and the United States 1890-1891]*. Today we have a number of published volumes of emigrant epistolography; it is primarily an area of research by historians and literary scholars; the letters of emigrants were discussed from the point of view of the multilingualism.

An important stage in Polish diaspora studies began with access to recordings of spoken language: this made it possible not only to provide linguistic descriptions, but also to address sociological issues, namely to identify changes in the language within environmental and generational compartments. The opportunities for direct research in the emigration environment – using identity questionnaires, conducting participatory observation, interviews – were the impetus for the use of sociological and anthropological methods. Polish diaspora studies began to enter the interdisciplinary field, which was associated both with access to sources and with changes in the linguistic approach to language processes.

At present, there is a new opportunity to collect research material, namely to analyse websites created by Poles living abroad. The Internet increases the accessibility of Polish content, enables more frequent contact with family and peers in Poland, and it is no less important to learn the language of peers in Poland and the language of professional groups.

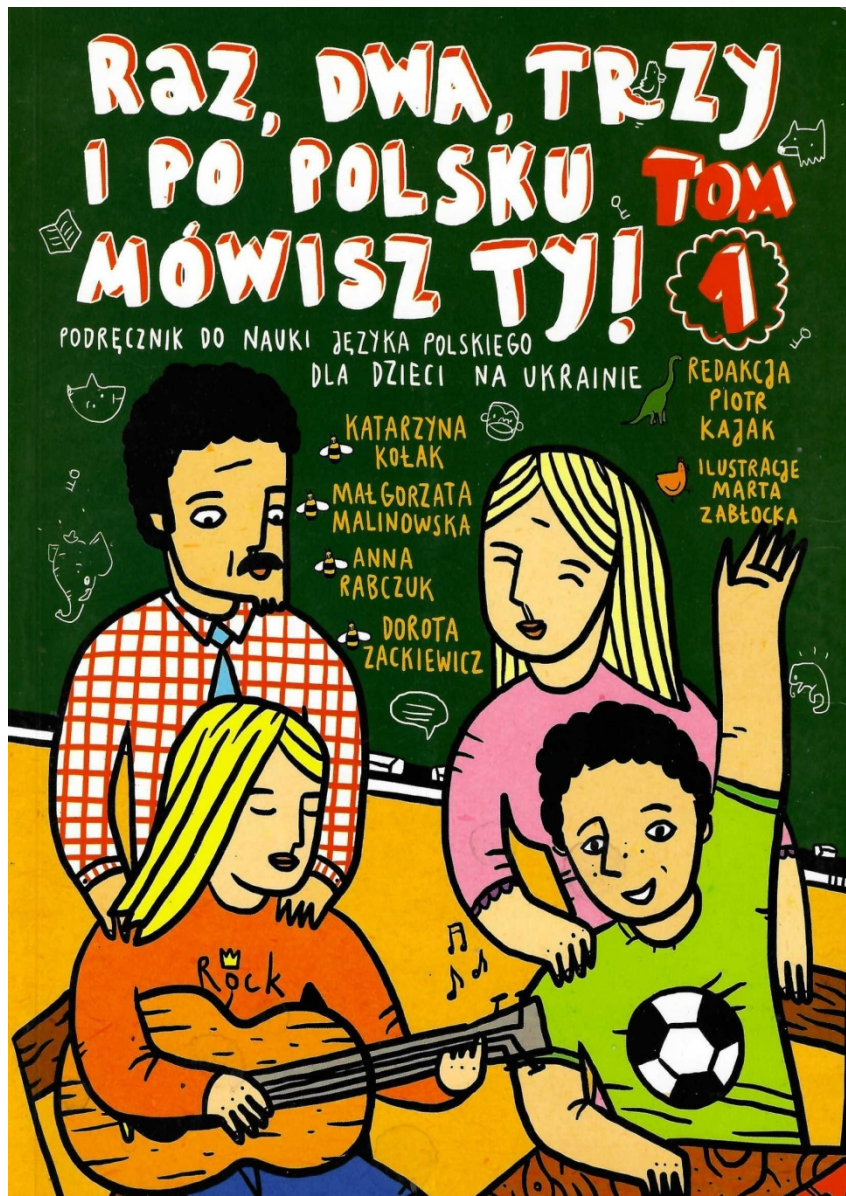
The availability of different source types determines the scope of the research, as well as the choice of the method of description. The latter is conditioned by methodological developments in linguistics and related sciences.

Problems of teaching Ukrainian refugees

In many studies one can find the opinion that Poland was an emigration country since at least the second half of the 19th century, but in recent years Poland has been changing into an immigration

country. In fact, approximately 1.3 million Ukrainians have settled in Poland since 2014, driven by the war in eastern Ukraine and economic factors. After the outbreak of war on 24 February 2022, more than 4 million Ukrainians left their country; approximately 3.3-3.5 million stayed in Poland. This number of refugees includes about 700,000 children.

In the field of education, questions arise as to how to ensure access to school at an appropriate level at different stages of education, how to provide linguistic support to students who need it (some were already learning Polish in Ukraine and are now in a better situation), how to reduce segregation in classes (the core curriculum is different, the education system is also different in Ukraine). Certainly, Polish teachers face the challenge of how to teach Polish, which textbooks to use. An important task is to search for Ukrainian teachers among the refugees, to find out about already existing materials for teaching Polish in the Ukrainian environment (for example, *Raz, dwa, trzy i po polsku mówisz Ty! Podręcznik do nauki języka polskiego dla dzieci na Ukrainie* [One, two, three and you speak Polish! A handbook for teaching Polish to children in Ukraine], published by the University of Warsaw Press).



The achievements of Polish language glottodidactics, the results of research in the field of Polish-foreign bilingualism, the experience of running Polish schools in many countries of the world and, above all, the many specialists who work in units teaching Polish as a foreign language are of invaluable help here.

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