RECENZJE — COMPTES RENDUS DE LECTURE

Rocznik Slawistyczny, t. LXVIII, 2019
ISSN 0080-3588
DOI: 10.24425/rslaw.2019.130019

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Out of the woodwork or, the vicissitudes of the Polish language

Review: Leszek B e d n a r c z u k, **Początki i pogranicza polszczyzny**. – Kraków: LEXIS, 2018. – 212 p.

Leszek Bednarczuk is a renowned Slavic scholar who authored scores of books on Indo-European and Slavic linguistics, as well as hundreds of articles dealing with a wide array of topics ranging from Celtic to Belarusian and different borderland varieties of Polish viewed from the times of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth onward. I would not be exaggerating to say that Bednarczuk is today one of the most prolific Polish linguists whose insightful studies are concerned practically with all the disciplines of linguistics enterprise in Poland and other Slavic countries.

Devoted to the beginnings and borderlands of the Polish language, this is a substantial volume extending to well over 200 pages. Although the author does not mention this in the introduction, the book is in fact a collection of his previously published studies. To take chapter 7 dealing with the vicissitudes of the Polish word *pan* 'lord' (pp. 94–123) as an example, different aspects of its changes were previously discussed by Bednarczuk in six studies published from 2001 to 2016 (e.g., Bednarczuk 2005). One can also easily ascertain some reiteration in chapter

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8 dealing with the borderlands of Polish. For instance, northeastern borderland Polish was examined by Bednarczuk in volume 55 of "Rozprawy Komisji Językowej ŁTN" and his book of 2010 (Bednarczuk 2010a: 74–99; Bednarczuk 2010b). It comes as a surprise to find a "publishing note" at the very end of the book with a list of publication outlets where the corresponding studies previously appeared. Based on the dates of their publications, the volume summarizes largely the author's research stretching over the last 15 years.

The book under consideration is structured into eight chapters followed by a bibliography, a list of abbreviations, a "publishing note" and an English-language summary. Unfortunately, there is no index whatsoever to be found in the book, a shortcoming typical of Slavic publications, in general. Moreover, the serious reader is left wishing for conclusions placed at the end of the book pinpointing the topics discussed by the author.

In a very short preface, Bednarczuk outlines the content of his book covering at least two millennia of the external and internal history of the Polish language viewed in its contacts with neighboring languages and cultures (pp. 7–8). Adopting a chronological approach, this book has the following chapters: (1) the Indo-European (IE) inheritance in Polish, (2) language contacts in prehistoric East-Central Europe, (3) pre-Slavic hydronyms in the Polish lands, (4) Polish tribal names in the Slavic derivational system, (5) the linguistic vicissitudes of the Christianization of Poland, (6) the oldest Polish words and expressions, (7) the historic changes of the Polish word *pan* 'lord, master', (8) the borderlands of Polish.

Bednarczuk deftly weaves a concise and even terse narrative, while dwelling on those details which are intimately connected with the history of Polish and its varieties. Leaning on Franciszek Sławski, Jerzy Kuryłowicz, Holger Pedersen, Vladislav Illič-Svitič, and even Franz Bopp, the author offers a masterful exposé of the IE grammar in its relation to modern Polish, including its vocabulary inherited from IE (p. 9–22). In some cases, however, Bednarczuk is prone to transfer the modern Polish situation to its IE antecedent. Thus, according to Bednarczuk, the Slavic aspect is not inherited from IE and cannot prove an IE aspect (p. 15). However, to claim that the late Common Slavic aspect could refer to events conceived of as "complete" vs. "incomplete" ("dokonany" vs. "niedokonany") (p. 15) looks achronological, even more so without mentioning the presence of the category of "procedural" (cf. Russian "степени длительности"'degrees of [multiplicative] action' in the theory of Oleksandr Potebnja and other East Slavic linguists in the 19th century) which in Balto-Slavic anteceded the qualitative (aspectual) perception of action in modern Slavic. The category of procedural can be exemplified with the help of such Polish lexemes as *chodzić*, *chadzać*, *chodziwać*, *pochodzić*, *pochadzić*, *po-pochodzić* and the like (Karłowicz et

al. 1900: 289; 1908: 301, 655); also Ukrainian *по-походити*, Belarusian *па-паходзіць*, Russian *по-походить*, and Lithuanian *pa-ėj-éti* 'to walk a little bit'. Most interesting here is the "degree" with the (doubled) prefix which in Lithuanian is accompanied by the lengthened (iconic) grade as in dialectal *pa-pa--riñkti* (= *suránkioti*) 'to choose, pick [one by one]'; in Baltic it conveys a twofold quantifying procedural of a particular action (in respect of its quantity) that may be conceived as multiplicative with a certain degree of intensity but not "completed" (in respect of its quality) in the modern Slavic aspect sense (Danylenko 2015: 536–537).

A similar transference is observed in Bednarczuk's treatment of the perfect tense (*perfectum*) which in IE indicated allegedly the present relevance of a previously competed action ("czynność dokonana") (p. 16). The formation of perfect in IE and its historical dialects has been explored by Drinka (2017); I can add here only that the position of the perfect is now quite different. Whereas in the historical languages it shows fundamentally a relationship with the past (even when merely the result in the present is being considered), it was formerly simply a present.

Chapter 2 examines language contact in prehistoric East-Central Europe as reflected in lexical and grammatical convergences (p. 23–38). Bednarczuk looks into the prehistory of northern IE dialects, represented by Slavic, Germanic, Celtic and Albanian (p. 23–25). Then he proceeds to discuss Balto-Slavic with its convergences in phonology, morphology, syntax and vocabulary (p. 26–30). Following Jerzy Kuryłowicz, the author maintains that the correlation of palatalization emerged in Balto-Slavic, although, I believe, it would be possible to treat the palatalization itself as a universal IE phenomenon and see the palatalization (i.e., satemization) as a characteristic of the *satem* languages; it must then be regarded as having carried out in each of the *satem* languages independently (Szemerényi 1996: 147). Speaking about the Finno-Ugric and Balto-Slavic contacts, Bednarczuk lists six grammatical convergences which are the following: (1) the symmetric correlation of front and back of vowels which reminds of vocal harmony, (2) palatalization and spirantization, (3) voicing and unvoicing of root-initial consonants, (4) a tendency to agglutination, (5) the use of the predicative instrumental, (6) lack of the verb 'to have' and the use of the possessor in a prepositional phrase like *u mnie jest* (p. 34).

The above list is not complete since one may add here, for instance, the resultatives in *-no*/*-to*. Commonly viewed as an obvious product of Finno-Ugric interference in North Slavic and Baltic they nevertheless can serve as a promising candidate for language-internal development. In contrast to the agentive bare genitive in Lithuanian *jo*-him.GEN *buta*-be.PPP.N.SG 'he has been' and the Slavic "location schema" using the preposition *u* 'at' to denote the agent-salient participant, dating back to the prehistoric period, roughly from the 300 to the 900 A.D., one

finds a variety of case marking patterns in North Slavic. I can name the nominative case, the preposition *om* 'from' + genitive, the instrumental case, the dative case and the bare genitive case, as well as Belarusian/Ukrainian *через*(*ь*) and Polish *przez* + accusative marking the agent-salient participant in similar constructions. In the process of internal grammaticalization, some of the participants might have acquired more agentive-salient features, although, they have remained adverbial modifiers which tend to characterize the nominal (participial) predicate from different perspectives of the same semantic value "non-agent" (see Danylenko 2005). The fact that all bare case marking became less productive in this function was a result of the strengthening of the internallyinduced nominative-accusative structural alignment; this process in IE has been accompanied by the ramification of prepositional phrases instead of the 'base' IE cases.

With regard to lexical borrowings, Bednarczuk points out, and rightly so, that nobody disputes the presence of Ugro-Finnic loanwords in Baltic and Slavic – the problem lies in their number and nature (p. 35). In other words, while there is no doubt about the prehistoric contacts between Baltic and Finnic speakers, which are evidenced by hundreds of Baltic lexical ingredients in the Finnic languages, there is no comparable evidence of prehistoric contact between Slavic and Finnic speakers (Andersen 2003: 68).

Chapter 3, concerned with the pre-Slavic hydronyms attested in the Polish lands, is aimed at the reevaluation of some hydronyms which are not motivated by Slavic names. The author tries to delimit groups of such names based on the geography of the respective formants, thus ascertaining the connection of pre-Slavic hydronyms with some ethnic entities (p. 39). In addition to their reconstruction, Bednarczuk masterfully employs attestations of the respective names in different sources, including Jordanes and Herodot. Irrespective as they might appear at first blush, some additional attestations can be found in medieval Arabic sources likewise. Suffice it to mention here al-Idrīsī's *Kitāb Rujār* (Liber Rogerii, 1138/39–53) where one comes across *F*(*i*)*ṣlū* from **Vislū* or **Vislō* (Lewicki 1954: 200–201).

In chapter 4, dealing with Polish tribal names (patrials), Bednarczuk offers a sweeping picture of major Polish tribal names (and their derivatives) going back to the following reconstructed forms: **slověne*, **slově/inci*, **poljane*, **lędjane*, **lędiţji*, **visljane*, **slęzjane*, **mazovьšane*, **pomorjane*, and **pomorьci* (pp. 52–55). The most interesting, to be sure, is the form **slověne* which was explained by Leszek Moszyński as 'kindred in a language' ("pobratymcy w języku"), an etymology adopted by Bednarczuk (p. 53). In addition to the derivational patterns discussed by Bednarczuk in pages 55–58, it would be useful to build a semantic taxonomy of such patrials. Thus, one should distinguish patrials, derived from appellatives such as **poljane* 'plains people' and **pomorjane* 'sea-board people',

from more specific patrials. The bases of the latter patrials can refer to a named location like in **lęditji* (from *Lędzice*), or to any area by a named river (or lake) like **visljane* and **slęzjane*, or a named region as found in **mazovьšane*. Remarkably, the form **slověne* arose undoubtedly in discourse to capture situations of mutual (un)intelligibility like 'Those people don't understand a word. Clearly, they aren't *slovo* people'; it became an ethnonym only with time like **poljane* and some other forms (Andersen 2017: 33).

In chapter 5 Bednarczuk discusses the linguistic vicissitudes of the Christianization of Poland (pp. 60–80). The author gives a survey of the Christianization of different Slavic lands and looks into the Old Polish religious terminology. The analysis of religious terms is fine-grained and meticulous, thus distinguishing even forms borrowed from the Ukrainian recension of Church Slavonic ("zapożyczenia cerkiewnoruskie, […] niektóre z fonetyką ukraińską") like *монастир* 'monastary', *чернець* 'monk' and some others (p. 80).

The oldest Polish words and expressions attested in Latin-language texts, beginning with a sentence found in *Liber fundationis clausti S. Mariae Virginis in Heinrichow* (1270), are in the focus of chapter 6. Bednarczuk examines the earliest attestations of the Polish language from different points of view, providing eventually both chronological and alphabetical indices of almost 340 word-forms (pp. 87–93). Trying to expand the scope of such attestations, the author added 4 lexemes, *istba*, *mex*, *špak*, *tetrev'* 'blackcock' as found in a travel account of Ibrāhīm Ibn Ya'qūb who visited Emperor Otto in Magdeburg in 965 and the Slavic lands of Bulgaria, Poland, Bohemia, and the kingdom of Nakon of Obodrites. Bednarczuk does not identify the Polish orientalist Tadeusz Kowalski as the editor of the publication of the work of this 10th-century Jewish traveller from Tortosa in Spain, whose account of the natural riches of Poland and practicality of Mieszko's reign was preserved by later authors, in particular by al-Bakrī, an Andalusian Arab historian, in his *Kitāb al-masālik wa-l-mamālik* (Liber viarum et regnorum, AD 1068). This is why it would be useful to check some other medieval Arabic texts containing transcriptions of Slavic appellatives. Incidentally, Kowalski's edition contains one of the rare cases of the linguistic analysis of Arabic transcriptions, that is, Kazimierz Nitsch's one-page "Slavic Linguistic Commentary" added to the study of the travel account of Ibrāhīm Ibn Ya'qūb (see Kowalski 1946: 136–137). Additionally, to make the introduction of the four reconstructed lexemes more compelling and reliable, Bednarczuk could test them against the paleographic particularities in the transmission and reading of Arabic transcriptions of Slavic words, in particular in the account of Ibrāhīm Ibn Ya'qūb.

The historic changes of the Polish word *pan* 'lord, master' are reconstructed in chapter 7 (pp. 94–123). Bednarczuk gives an exemplary analysis of the aforementioned word viewed from the etymological, stylistic, idiomatic, and

derivational perspectives. Of interest is a look into the vagaries of this word beyond the borders of the Polish language, that is, in Lithuania, Belarus', Ukraine, Moldova, Russia, and Germany. Remarkably, the author also traced this word and its derivatives in Swedish, Danish, French, and Yiddish (p. 123).

The most informative, from the linguistic point of view, is chapter 8, *The Borderlands of the Polish Language*, whose three sections cover, correspondingly, the northeastern, southeastern, and the southern borderland varieties of the language (pp. 124–154, 154–178, 178–186). In general, this chapter constitutes the most exhaustive description of phonetic, morphological, derivational, inflectional, and syntactic features of the aforementioned regional (non-standard) varieties and their sub-varieties ("odmiany") of Polish and can be used as a wonderful reference source for students of the historical dialectology of Polish. For instance, the Polissian variety of northeastern borderland Polish falls into the West Polissian sub-variety, used by Maria Rodziewiczówna in her literary output, and the Central Polissian sub-variety characterized by a lack of mazuration (*mazurzenie*) and narrow (*pochylone*) vowels as well as heavy Belarusian and Ukrainian influence (p. 144). As a separate sub-variety Bednarczuk treats the so-called *Pogańskie gwary z Narewu* (p. 143). The manuscript text (a glossary) is known to contain about 200 Polish words with correspondences in a presumed peripheral Baltic dialect which is viewed as either Yatvingian (e.g., Zinkevičius 1985) or Lithuanian with a strong Yiddish influence (Schmid 1986). Among the regional (Belarusian) forms in the Polish column of the glossary (p. 143) one can name *biely*, *buśiel*, *lisa* in place of *biały*, *bocian* and *lis* (Dini 1997: 215; 2016: 305).

Arresting of attention is an introductory section in this chapter (pp. 124–131). The author provides the so-called calendar of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL), from the 1009 mission of Bruno of Querfurt to the Reciprocal Guarantee of Two Nations (Poland and Lithuania) in 1791 (pp. 124–125). He also reintroduces the concept of communicative (speech) community ("wspólnota komunikatywna") which emerged in the GDL. The existence of this community, according to Bednarczuk, determined the formation of Lithuanian and Belarusian, northeastern borderland Polish, the languages of the Lithuanian Tatars, Karaites, and Jews, the dialects of the Narew river; one can add here the local variety of Roma which Bednarczuk mentioned in other studies but omitted in this book. The author cites four phonological and morphosyntactic affinities which allegedly attest to the existence of the postulated speech community: (1) mutual and multifaceted lexical borrowings, (2) similar derivational models, (3) convergent phonetic substitutions in personal and geographical names as well as appellatives, (4) grammatical innovations, in particular the formation of palatalization, the use of similar derivational patterns, syntactic calques and phraseological correspondences (p. 126). The list does not look complete, especially if one recalls that previously

Bednarczuk (1994: 118–119) used to mention at least eight phonological and morphosyntactic features. More solid is the list of common features ascribed to northeastern borderland Polish, although some of them, as I showed elsewhere, look less convincing on closer inspection (Danylenko 2017: 37–40). To take Bednarczuk's syntactic convergences only, they are the following: (1) deviations in declensions; the use of *dla* + genitive construction; the lack of vocative, (2) tendency to omit copulae, (3) the possessive construction with *u* + genitive, (4) the use of the past active anteriority participles in resultative constructions (p. 131) (see Danylenko 2018).

Surprisingly, Bednarczuk does not mention the Ruthenian language (*простая* or *руськая мова*) as a member of the speech community postulated for the GDL. Naming en passant the "western Rusian language" ("zachodnioruski") as a language of administration before its status was taken over by Polish (p. 126), the author discusses both Lithuanian and Belarusian as two major languages of the aforementioned speech community (pp. 127–129). What is disconcerting in this respect is the fact that Bednarczuk disregards Ukrainian or any of its (sub-standard) varieties used throughout the GDL. Although there is no need to open a new discussion, it should be borne in mind that long before being ousted by Polish, Ruthenian was viewed as a common language irrespective of the ratio of its dialectal (Belarusian or Ukrainian) components. As early as 1935, Stang (1935: 163) argued that chancellery Ruthenian could hardly be completely identified with (Middle) Belarusian. According to Zinkevičius (1987: 117–119), Ruthenian as used in the ducal and even royal chanceries, roughly between the 1385 Act of Krėva and 1480, was greatly influenced by South Ukrainian, a missing chain in the argumentation of most of the Belarusian scholars who label this language (Middle) Belarusian (see Danylenko 2017).

Simultaneously, alongside the southern Ukrainian influence, another trend began emerging in the texts copied by scribes whose spoken language originated in the Volhynja region with its center in Luc'k, intermittently under the GDL control from 1239 to 1563. Later still, in the middle of the 16th century (the time of Sigismund Augustus) chancellery Ruthenian again changed significantly, since gradually the characteristics of South Belarusian/North Ukrainian disappeared. Instead, the linguistic traits of central Belarusian dialects became more pronounced, thus making the chancellery language look thoroughly "Belarusianized"; it was this variety of Ruthenian that was ultimately ousted by Polish in 1697.

In other words, when dealing with a speech community in the GDL, one should speak not about Belarusian (or Ukrainian) but about Ruthenian as one common secular vernacular standard for both Belarusians and Ukrainians just as Church Slavonic was their common standard ecclesiastical language. Shevelov (1974: 149) was right to argue that in the histories of the Belarusian and Ukrainian

literary languages Ruthenian should be considered as one language, the one shaped in North Belarus'. This is why, if a student of this period speaks about a Belarusian (or Ukrainian) language in the GDL, he employs an ambiguous term and takes a biased position. One should speak, instead, of Ruthenianas employed by Belarusians and Ukrainians. Thus, to call Ruthenian, a secular (vernacular) standard used in the GDL, Belarusian as practiced by Bednarczuk and many Polish and Lithuanian scholars is historically inaccurate (see Ragauskienė 2013).

Bednarczuk postulates, however, the presence of Ukrainian in southeastern borderland Polish in connection with Ukrainian-Belarusian contacts (p. 156–158). In this respect, the author mentions the earliest "western Rusian" innovations like (1) spirantization *g* > *h* as in Czech, Slovak and Upper Sorbian, (2) the alternation *u* / *u̯* / *v* and the alternation *i* / *i̯* / *j* as in Slovak and Slovene, (3) dispalatalization similar to that in South Slavic as well as Czech, Slovak, and Polish (p. 156). According to Bednarczuk, major East Slavic phonetic innovations developed in the 10–13th centuries during the period of Kyivan Rus' when theses territories were divided into the archaic southeastern area and the innovative southwestern area; Ukrainian, Belarusian and southern Russian dialects developed in the latter area (p. 157).

Although listed correctly, these features need some chronological and areal clarification. First, spirantization *g* > γ > *h* is shared also by proto-Belarusian dialects (where the choice of γ or *h* is optional and probably depends on the dialectal background of speakers) and southern proto-Russian dialects where typically γ is retained unchanged. The spirantization of *g* in Ukrainian should be placed in the late 12th century, while a similar change in Czech and Slovak took place before the loss of *jers*. According to Shevelov (1979: 355–356), there were several independent areas of the spirantization of *g*, at least three: Czech/Slovak, Ukrainian/Belarusian/South Russian and Upper Sorbian. One should also bear in mind that the alternation *u* / *u̯* / *v* developed as a result of the loss of *jers* in those adjacent Slavic languages which had at that time *v* = [w], that is, in proto-Belarusian dialects and southern proto-Russian dialects, with occasional instances in Middle Bulgarian, but not in East Slovak and Polish (Shevelov 1979: 300). Feature (3) cannot be regarded as fully proved either. Suffice it to state that the overwhelming majority of Ukrainian dialects have consistently non-palatalized consonants before the reflexes of *e*, *i* and strong *ь*; only in border areas with Belarusian, Polish, and Slovak palatalization of consonants before these vowels is found (see Shevelov 1979: 171–188).

Notwithstanding some foibles inevitable in a scholarly work of this caliber, the author covers a great deal of ground and discusses the selected topics with insightfulness and perspicacity. The reader can easily notice that even the more basic presentation of material as chosen by Bednarczuk for this book, in fact

a collection of minor studies, contains many novel twists. There is something, of real interest on every page – so many pertinent issues in the history of Polish are skillfully framed within traditional grammatical and philological theorizing. All this makes Bednarczuk's book an important read for linguists and ethnic studies specialists.

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Summary

Out of the woodwork or, the vicissitudes of the Polish language

The author reviews the latest book by Leszek Bednarczuk devoted to the beginnings and the borderlands of the Polish language. The book under review deals with a wide array of topics related to the prehistory and history of Polish taken in its relation to Indo-European and the neighboring languages, the borderland varieties of Polish, and the linguistic vicissitudes of the Christianization of Poland.

***Keywords**:* Indo-European, Polish, Belarusian, language contact, tribal names, borderland Polish.