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1. The identity

1.1. The name

In the 10th century, individual West Slavic languages were differentiated from the western group, Polish among others. The name of the language comes from the name of a tribe of Polans (*Polanie*) who inhabited the midlands of the river Warta around Gniezno and Poznań, and whose tribal state later became the germ of the Polish state. Etymologically, *Polanie* means ‘the inhabitants of fields’. The Latin sources provide also other forms of the word: *Polanii*, *Polonii*, *Poloni* (at the turn of the 10th and 11th century king Bolesław Chrobry was referred to as *dux Poloniorum* in *The Life of St. Adalbert* [*Żywot św. Wojciecha*]) (cf. Klemensiewicz : 1961-1972).

1.2. The family affiliation

1.2.1. Origin

The Polish language is most closely related to the extinct Polabian-Pomeranian dialects (whose only live representative is Kashubian) and together with them is classified by Slavists into the West Lechitic subgroup of the Slavic languages. It is less closely related to the remaining West Slavic languages, i.e. Slovak, Czech and High- and Low Sorbian, and still less closely to the East and

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South Slavic languages. The Slavic languages, beside Roman, Celtic, Baltic and others, belong to the large Indo-European family.

Great migrations of Slavs, starting in the 6th-7th century, accelerated the disintegration of Proto-Slavic. In 8th-9th century, the Proto-Slavic language community was replaced by three groups of dialects: West, East, and South Slavic (cf. Bednarczuk, ed. : 1986-1988).

1.3. The distinctive features

1.3.1. Phonology ⁽²⁾

Polish has a moderately large ⁽³⁾ system of consonants (31 as shown in the table below) and rich consonantal phonotactics. Complex clusters are tolerated in all positions, up to 4 consonants word-initially (|vzgl-| *względny* ‘relative’, |zdźbw-|, *źdźbło* ‘blade of grass’) and 5 consonants word-finally (|-mpstf| *przestępstw* ‘crime’ [Gen. Pl.]). In phonological words even 5 consonants initially may arise (|vzdźbl-| *w źdźble* ‘in a blade of grass’). Geminate consonants are also possible word-initially (|ss-| *ssak* ‘mammal’, |d̥d̥z-| *d̥d̥żu* ‘drizzle’ [Gen.]). There is a clear-cut voiced / voiceless opposition in obstruents which becomes neutralized in word-final position (*Auslautverhärtung*). Polish has three voiced / voiceless pairs of affricates which are clearly in opposition to stop+fricative sequences.

	Labial	Labio-dental	(Post) dental	Alveolar	Alveolo-palatal	Palatal	Velar
Plosive	p b		t d			c ɟ	k g
Fricative		f v	s z	ʃ ʒ	ç ʒ		x
Affricate			ts dz	tʃ dʒ	tɕ tʂ		
Nasal	m		n		ɲ		ŋ
Lateral			l				
Flap / Trill				r			
	Front			Back			
Approximant	j (j̃)			w (w̃)			

A table of Polish consonants (Jassem : 2003, p. 103)

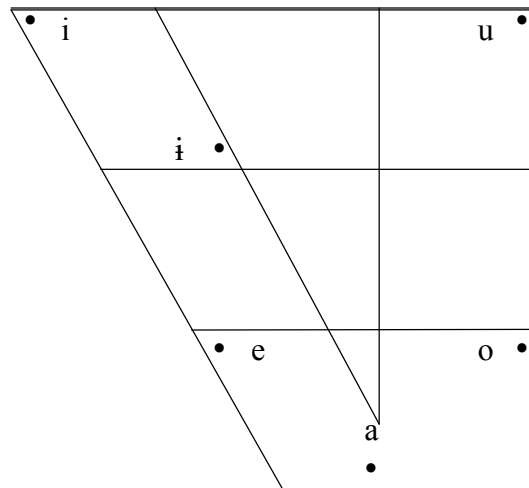
Polish has an almost prototypical 6-vowel system, i.e. an average inventory ⁽⁴⁾ (cf. a quadrilateral below). Front mid-lowered vowel |e| and its back

(2) First hand sources which provide a phonetic / phonological description of Polish are, among others, Jassem : 2003, Dukiewicz and Sawicka : 1995, and Wierzchowska : 1980; cf. also WALS and *Ethnologue*.

(3) 26 to 33 consonants according to Maddieson (in WALS).

(4) 5-6 vowels according to Maddieson (in WALS).

correspondent [o] have nasalized variants, best interpreted as nasal diphthongs, in word-final position (*tę, tą* ‘this one’ [Acc. Fem.]) and before fricatives (*kęs* ‘bite’, *wąs* ‘moustache’).



An IPA quadrilateral with Polish vowels (Jassem : 2003, p. 105)

Lexical stress in Polish falls on the penultimate beat. Exceptions with antepenultimate stress concern borrowings from Classical languages (e.g. *'fizyka* ‘physics’, *fo'netyka* ‘phonetics’) and some native exceptions. They tend to regularize, however, in present-day Polish. Secondary stress in longer words (four beats and more) falls on the initial beat, and this includes also proclitics (e.g. *na wykł'adzie* ‘in the lecture’). Secondary stress becomes upgraded under emphasis. Additionally, there is an upcoming tendency for initial primary stress with no emphatic function.

Rhythmically Polish exhibits both the properties of syllable-timing and stress-timing. In phonology, the dichotomous treatment of rhythm has rightly been replaced by a scalar approach which classifies languages as more or less prototypical representatives of either type depending on the rhythm-related features they demonstrate (cf. e.g. Bertinetto : 1988). Dziubalska-Kołaczyk (2002) distinguished four major types of rhythm, of which Polish seems to belong to non-prototypical stress-timed languages, due to its following features: elision rather than reduction to schwa of unstressed vowels, rich consonantal clusters, lexical (quantity-insensitive) stress, and no tone, among others. In casual speech, a preference for a trochee is strengthened, and syllabic consonants appear. Polish has trochaic rhythm⁽⁵⁾, as demonstrated e.g. in *rozpr`awa* ‘trial’ [Nom.], *r`ozpraw* [Gen. Pl.], *rozpraw`ami* [Instr. Pl.]. Also, due to extended vowel deletions, new marked clusters arise (cf. Dressler, Dziubalska-Kołaczyk and Spina : 2001).

(5) According to Goedemans and van der Hulst (cf. WALS) ; in trochaic rhythm left-hand syllable in the foot is strong.

In comparison to other Slavic languages, Polish is the only one with penultimate stress, nasalized vowels, and abundance of palatal consonants.

1.3.2. Morphology ⁽⁶⁾

Polish is an inflectional language ⁽⁷⁾ with a high degree of syncretism in the nominal inflection (e.g. *pan-i* ‘Mrs.’ [Nom.=Gen.=Dat.=Loc.=Voc.]; cf. e.g. Strutyński : 1996, p. 176) and some suppletion (e.g. *rok* ‘year’ [Sg.], *lata* ‘year’ [Pl.], cf. e.g. Strutyński : 1996, p. 175). Nominal categories are those of case (7 cases), number (2 numbers), and gender (3 genders, within the masculine — animate and inanimate). The unmarked categories are Nominative, Singular and Masculine (and the animate). Of the three genders, Feminine is most marked. Verbal categories include person (3 persons), number (2 numbers), tense (2 synthetic, 1 analytic), aspect (2 aspects), mood (2 moods), voice, 3 participles, infinitive, as well as, partially, gender (3 genders in Past). The unmarked verbal categories are 3rd Person, Singular, Present, Indicative and Masculine. Polish inflection and derivation are rich in consonantal and vocalic alternations which characterize particular forms along with affixes (e.g. a vowel-zero alternation in *kotek* ‘cat’ [Nom.] — *kotk-a* [Gen.], *lew* ‘lion’ [Nom.] — *lw-a* [Gen.], or velar softening in *Bóg* ‘God’ [Nom.] — *Boż-e* [Voc.], *wspólnik* ‘associate’ [Nom.] — *wspólnic-y* [Nom. Pl.]. The richness and complexity of Polish morphonology, among others, stood behind Baudouin de Courtenay’s and Mikołaj Kruszewski’s original and groundbreaking theories of morphonology (cf. Baudouin : 1895). In modern linguistics, it also contributed to the model of morphonology by Dressler (1985) ⁽⁸⁾. Apart from the strictly historical ones, Polish morphological alternations are productive (except for the vocalic ones) and as such apply to borrowings and neologisms.

The notion of inflectional productivity is essential in morphology, since the main function of morphology — morphosemantic and morphotactic motivation — can be served only by productive morphological rules (cf. Dressler and Dziubalska-Kołaczyk : 1997, p. 96). Polish, thanks to its three genders, has numerous nominal (4) and verbal (4) inflectional macroclasses, which split into a substantial number of subclasses and microclasses, of which many are productive ⁽⁹⁾.

(6) Basic descriptive sources on Polish morphology and syntax are, among others: Nagórko : 1996, Strutyński : 1996, Saloni and Świdziński : 1985, Grzegorzczkowska, Laskowski and Wróbel : 1984; cf. also WALS.

(7) With both synthetic and analytic inflection; an inflecting-fusional type (Dressler et al. : 1997, p. 99), with strongly suffixing inflectional morphology (cf. WALS).

(8) In recent years there has been a renewed interest among linguists in the relation between phonology and morphology and the status of “the interface” : morpho(pho)nology (e.g. Gussmann : 2007).

(9) For a detailed analysis of Polish noun and verb inflection from the point of view of productivity see Dressler and Dziubalska-Kołaczyk, in coll. with Fabiszak : 1997.

Diminutives and hypocoristics are versatile in Polish (cf. Dressler and Merlini-Barbaresi : 1994, Szpyra : 1995). Animate numeral inflection is too complex even for the native speakers, and tends to simplify.

1.3.3. Syntax ⁽¹⁰⁾

Polish is an SVO language. There is no dominant order of Subject and Verb. Order of Verb and Object is VO. Adpositions to Noun Phrase are prepositions. Other orders are the following: Noun-Genitive, Adjective-Noun, Demonstrative-Noun, Numeral-Noun, Noun-Relative clause, Degree word-Adjective. Further, Polish exhibits the initial position of polar question particles and interrogative phrases.

1.3.4. Alphabet and spelling system

Polish orthography established itself in its fundamental shape during the 16th century. Changes were introduced in the 19th century and then also in 1936. Modern spelling system is governed by four major principles. The phonetic principle allows to spell according to pronunciation, e.g. *dom* 'house', *matka* 'mother', *woda* 'water', *znak* 'sign', etc. The morphological principle preserves a morphological link among forms in spelling, despite different pronunciation, e.g. *rób|p|* 'do' [Imp. Sg.], *rób|p|cie* 'do' [Imp. Pl.], since *rob|b|ić* 'do' [Inf.]. The historical principle preserves old spelling which no longer has basis in pronunciation, e.g. *córka* 'daughter' despite |u|, *hart* and *chart* despite identical pronunciation of the initial consonant |x|. Finally, the conventional principle rules when all the other do not apply. This principle controls the use of capital letters and hyphenated spelling. The morphological and historical principles prevail. Consequently, Polish spelling system quite substantially diverges from pronunciation. The many-to-many letter-to-sound orthoepic relationship stirs occasional discussions about change of the system, however, so far Polish orthography remains conservative (cf. Jodłowski : 1979).

1.3.5. Substrata, adstrata, superstrata ⁽¹¹⁾

One can distinguish three genetic layers in the Polish lexicon: Proto-Slavic heritage, indigenous Polish vocabulary derived by the native word-formation system and loanwords. There are a few thousand words inherited from Proto-Slavic. The majority of them have survived, with changed phonetics, till today. They encompass basic function words like prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, numerals, etc. as well as vocabulary from fundamental lexical sets denoting basic activities, names describing animate and inanimate objects of nature, and concepts from human life. Importantly, essential morphological formants were inherited

(10) The description below is based on WALS.

(11) Cf. Klemensiewicz : 1961-1972, Walczak : ²1999.

from Proto-Slavic, both suffixes (e.g., *-ek*, *-dło*, *-nia*, *-ca*, etc.) and prefixes (e.g., *na-*, *do-*, *z-*, *u-*, *w-*, *wy-*, etc.). Most of them not only remain productive but their number even grows when the old formants absorb parts of roots (e.g., *-ik* in *podróżnik* ‘traveller’ → *-nik* → *górnik* ‘miner’).

Thousands of loanwords came to Polish from foreign languages throughout its thousand-year-old history. Consecutive language fashions which pervaded Polish lexical landscape ranged from Czech (15-16th c.), Latin (16-half 18th c.), Italian (16-17th c.), French (17-half 19th c.) and English (from 20th c. onwards) (12).

1.3.6. Language variation

Polish, as any other language, exhibits social and vocational variation, expressed by sociolects and professional registers, functional-stylistic variation, expressed by a variety of styles (usually divided into colloquial, artistic, academic, official, and the style used by the mass media), and age and gender related variation, expressed by age-related registers on the one hand, and linguistic sexism favouring masculine gender on the other. For the lack of space to discuss the above issues, selected sources will be recommended for further reference: Bartmiński : 2001, Grabias : 1997, Karwatowska and Szpyra-Kozłowska : 2005, Madelska : 2005, Urbańczyk : 1991.

2. The history (13)

2.1. The emergence

Two major historical events dawn the origin of the Polish language: the rise of the state and the introduction of Christianity. The rise of the Polish state had a decisive role in the differentiation of the Polish language from other related West-Slavonic dialects. Setting the borders of Mieszko’s and Bolesław Chrobry’s state created a territorial frame for the development of the language. Subsequent changes concerned the language on the whole area of the Polish state, in this way setting it apart from the neighbouring languages.

Polish proper names (place names, names of tribes and kings) appeared already in the 10th and 11th century in foreign sources, and then in Latin sources originated in Poland. The first significant document in this respect was *Bulla gnieźnieńska*, a papal bull of Innocent II, confirming the endowment of the archbishop of Gniezno. The draft of the bull was written in Gniezno and included over 400 place names and proper names.

The following passes as the first ever written Polish sentence: “Daj, ac ja pobruczę, a ty pocztywaj”, in contemporary Polish “Daj, niech ja pomiele, a ty

(12) Cf. section 2 for more details

(13) Cf. Klemensiewicz : 1961-1972, Walczak : 1999.

odpoczywaj” (“Give it to me, let me mill, and you rest”), said a husband, a cloister servant, to his wife. The sentence was noted down by the abbot of a Cistercian monastery in Henryków in Silesia in 1270 in the so-called *Księga henrykowska* ‘Henryków book’ (a history of the monastery). Possibly, however, the first two stanzas of *Bogurodzica*, the oldest Polish religious song, appeared earlier (dated between 11th and 14th century).

2.2. The periodization of Polish

In the following sections the external history of the language will be presented, accompanied by a brief description of the major system-internal changes which affected Polish in the respective periods of history. The Old Polish period is assumed to have terminated in 1543 with the publication of all the bills of a parliamentary session for the first time in Polish. Thus, the year 1543 marks the introduction of Polish as an official language of documents beside Latin. Additionally, it was in the same year that the first popular literary piece written in Polish was published. It was *Krótką rozprawą między trzema osobami: Panem, Wójtem i Plebanem* (“a short debate among three persons: a lord, a commune head and a pastor”), by Mikołaj Rej, who was the first Polish Renaissance writer writing exclusively in Polish. Middle Polish lasted till 1765 — the election year of king Stanislaus August Poniatowski and symbolic beginning of the period of Enlightenment. The outbreak of the World War II marks the end of the New Polish period and beginning of Modern Polish.

2.2.1. Old Polish (till 1543)

Isolated from its Slavonic background, initially Polish served an every day communicative function and as a medium of folklore poetry. The long process of its intellectualisation and development of multifunctionality began with the dawn of Christianity. Christianity brought Latin orthography which was gradually adapted to Polish phonetics, while the clerical writings contributed to the creation of a literary language. Latin provided syntactic patterns and vocabulary related to the new religion (adopted predominantly via Czech) and to high culture (e.g. *atrament* ‘ink’, *data* ‘date’, *litera* ‘letter’, *pergamin* ‘parchment’, *statut* ‘statute’, *suma* ‘sum’, *szkoła* ‘school’, etc.). The range of vocabulary covering social life, municipal organization, as well as material culture (e.g., *browar* ‘brewery’, *burmistrz* ‘mayor’, *cegła* ‘brick’, *dach* ‘roof’, *gmach* ‘edifice’, *koszt* ‘cost’, *kuchnia* ‘kitchen’, *mur* ‘wall’, *plac* ‘square’, *ratusz* ‘town hall’, *rynek* ‘market’, *żołnierz* ‘soldier’, etc.) was imported from German, since its content came together with the German settlers of the 13th-15th century in Silesia, Małopolska (Little Poland), Wielkopolska (Great Poland) and the Teutonic state.

Still, the most important driving force behind the development and refinement of Polish was literature. Although, admittedly, Latin was first the only and later the main literary medium in Poland, it was known to and understood by a

sparse intellectual elite of the time. Consequently, Polish was used as an auxiliary language of literature, since it was known to the wide majority of the nation. Not all literary pieces of the Middle Ages survived the turmoils of wars, especially that in the times of handwriting often they were just single manuscripts. However, among the survived manuscripts we find the translations of the Bible (Psalters: *floriański, puławski*; Queen Sophia's Bible), sermons (*świętokrzyskie, gnieźnieńskie*), religious songs with the oldest and most famous *Bogurodzica* 'mother of god', legal texts, poetic texts (legends about saints, e.g. *Dialog mistrza Polikarpa ze śmiercią* "a dialogue of master Polikarp with death"), apocrypha (*Rozmyślanie przemyskie* [*przemyskie* 'meditation']), prayers, glossaries, calendars, etc.

Momentous changes were brought by the Renaissance. The invention of print revolutionised the availability and popularity of texts. The Polish printed book (since the 20's of the 16th century in Cracow's publishing houses) substantially accelerated the establishment of Polish orthography and of the norms of the literary language. The range of social functioning of Polish widened greatly in comparison to the Middle Ages.

Grammatical changes:

- 8-10th c., $\epsilon \rightarrow a$, $\epsilon \rightarrow \text{ɔ}$ before dental consonants t, d, s, z, n, r, l, e.g. *bielić* ~ *biały* 'to whiten ~ white', *żenić się* ~ *żona* 'to marry ~ wife', etc.
- 8-10th c., vocalization of liquids r, l, e.g. *kark* 'nape' vs. Czech *krk*, *śmirć* (*śmierć*) 'death' vs. Czech *smrt*, etc.
- 10-11th c., decline and vocalization of yers, e.g. *leb* ~ *lba* 'pate' [Nom. ~ Gen.], *dzień* ~ *dnia* 'day' [Nom. ~ Gen.], etc.
- 9-14th c., smoothing to a long vowel of VjV sequence, e.g. *dobrajego* → *dobręgo* 'good' [adj. Gen.], *młodaja* → *młodā* 'young' [Fem.], *znaje* → *znā* 'know' [3rd Per. Sg.], etc.
- 12th c., further palatalization of palatalized t, d, r into *ć*, *ź*, *ź*
- 13th c., a change of stress assignment from free to initial
- 15-16th c., depalatalization of the so-called soft consonants
- 15-16th c., decline of vowel quantity
- 15-16th c., a change of stress assignment from initial to penultimate
- 9-15th c., restructuring of nominal inflection from the stem-based one to the gender-based one
- 15th c., decline of two simple past tenses inherited from the protolanguage: aorist and imperfective.

2.2.2. Middle Polish (1543-1765)

The use of Latin in artistic writing started to be gradually reduced under the influence of the renaissance wave of emancipation of ethnic languages. Due to Reformation the Polish language entered the area of denominational disputes and religious propaganda. Thanks to the so-called enforcement movement (i.e. the

nobility's struggle for a new form of government) Polish actually became the official written language⁽¹⁴⁾ and the language of political, social and legal media. Scientific works written in Polish started to appear as well (in the area of history, economics, pedagogy, mathematics, construction, medicine, natural history, military science, etc.). The available sources inform us also about the development of various branches of communal and professional vocabulary (e.g., of the thieves, hunters, rafters, etc.). In this way functional and stylistic variation of the Polish literary language began.

New vocabulary was mainly derived from foreign languages. Numerous Italian loanwords came into Polish due to the influence of Italian culture, study journeys to Bologna and Padova, and marriage of king Sigismund the Old with the Italian princess Bona Sforza (e.g., *bank* 'bank', *bankiet* 'banquet', *fontanna* 'fountain', *marcepan* 'marzipan', *pałac* 'palace', *sztylet* 'dagger', and the names of vegetables: *brokuły* 'broccoli', *kalafior* 'cauliflower', *kalarepa* 'kohlrabi', *karczoch* 'artichoke', *sałata* 'lettuce', *szparagi* 'asparagus', *szpinak* 'spinach', etc.). Enormous popularity of education, firstly among rich middle classes, later also among nobility, led to the development of educational system, and to its monopolization by the end of the 16th century by the Jesuits. Monastic school popularized the knowledge of Latin, which in turn resulted in numerous Latin borrowings (e.g. *akt* 'act', *decyzja* 'decision', *dokument* 'document', *edukacja* 'education', *elekcja* 'election', *forma* 'form', *fortuna* 'fortune', *komisja* 'committee', *medytować* 'meditate', *natura* 'nature', *opinia* 'opinion', *reguła* 'rule', *respekt* 'respect', *sens* 'sens', *sukces* 'success', and hundreds more). Finally, many Ruthenian and oriental loanwords entered Polish due to the advancing process of unification of the Kingdom of Poland and the Great Lithuanian Principality, finalized with the Lublin Union in 1569 (e.g., *car* 'tsar', *duży* 'big', *hałas* 'noise', *hołota* 'the mob', *odzież* 'clothes', *wertepy* 'rough terrain', *bazar* 'bazaar', *bohater* 'hero', *dżuma* 'plague', *kotara* 'curtain', *torba* 'bag', etc.).

Theoretical reflection about Polish was more profound in the Renaissance. Major achievements in the area were the great renaissance Latin-Polish dictionary by Jan Mączyński (1564), the first Polish theory of language culture by Łukasz Górnicki (1566) and the first Polish grammar by Piotr Statorius (1568). The 17th century (i.e. the Saxon period) contributed much less to the history of Polish than its predecessor. The country was devastated and depopulated by wars. Disastrous decline of the cities (decimated by 50 to 90 percent), failure of the reforms programme proposed by nobility, lack of competition with Jesuit schools, all this had a detrimental influence on the language culture. The growing role of Latin had also an adverse effect of the use of macaronicisms, which was stopped only by the Enlightenment.

(14) It has functioned officially as a spoken language from the earliest times.

A new influence of the 17th and first half of the 18th century was French which became fashionable at court thanks to the French queens, Maria Ludwika Gonzaga (wife of king Władysław IV and Jan Kazimierz) and Maria Kazimiera Sobieska. Hence, the new borrowings, e.g. *artyleria* ‘artillery’, *dama* ‘dame’, *fort* ‘fort’, *gorset* ‘corset’, *komplement* ‘complement’, *menuet* ‘minuet’, *metresa* ‘mistress’, *peruka* ‘wig’, *pistolet* ‘pistol’, *serweta* ‘table cloth’, etc. The French influence intensified in the 18th century which signified the domination of the French language and culture in the whole of Europe.

Grammatical changes:

- 16th c., a change in the articulation of *l* from apico-dental to nonsyllabic [w]
- second quarter of the 18th century, decline of the so-called “raised a” after the decline of long a
- half 18th c., depalatalization of labials word-finally, e.g. *paw* ‘peacock’ [Nom.] but *pawia* [Gen.], *karp* ‘carp’ [Nom.] but *karpia* [Gen.], *gołąb* ‘pigeon’ [Nom.] but *gołębia* [Gen.], etc.
- 16-17th c., development of the virile gender (masculine personal as opposed to other masculine, feminine and neuter)
- establishment of common suffixes across genders in plural for the following cases: dative *-om* (16-17th c.), instrumental *-ami* (16-18th c.), locative *-ach* (16-18th c.)
- until 18th c., restructuring of the numeral inflection.

2.2.3. New Polish (1765-1939)

The cultural decline of the Saxon times was brought to an end by the Enlightenment. The first Polish public library was opened in Warsaw in 1747. The struggle for the revival of the Polish language was started by king Stanislaus August by means of modern journalism, literature and theatre. Most importantly though, the world’s first ministry of education was created: *Komisja Edukacji Narodowej* “National Education Committee” (1773). The school system was developed in which Polish became the language of instruction and a separate subject. Handbooks of Polish grammar were written, the best at the time and used in schools authored by a priest (Onufry Kopczyński).

The Enlightenment played a very significant role in the history of the Polish language. Polish started to serve all the functions in the life of the nation and as such became the only tool of its culture. Unfortunately, this revival did not happen everywhere in Poland and did not last for long. The loss of independence and the partition of Poland by the three neighbours introduced new restrictions into the use of Polish. The languages of the partitioning powers, Russian and German, exerted a great impact especially on popular Polish, local varieties, as well as official and scientific registers. The loans included direct calques of words and phrases, e.g. from German *Zeitschrift* → *czasopismo*, *Seelsorger* → *duszpasterz*, *Blutumlauf* → *krwioobieg*, *vorlegen* → *przedłożyć*, *einen Schluss ziehen* → *wyciągnąć wniosek*,

statthalben → *mieć miejsce*. The literary language of poetry and prose, however, remained largely immune to this influence. Polish literature was in its prime in the works of the great romanticists (Mickiewicz, Słowacki, Krasicki, Norwid) and realists (Orzeszkowa, Prus, Sienkiewicz) of the 19th century.

In 1918, together with independence, Polish regained its full national language function. The general use of the literary language by all social groups was facilitated by the introduction of the school duty and conscription, substantial progress in the elimination of illiteracy (33 percent in 1921 — 23 percent in 1931) and the development of mass media, especially the radio.

Grammatical changes:

- 19th c., decline of the so-called “raised e” after the decline of long e
- 19th c., temporary expansion of the genetically Latin plural suffix *-a*, e.g. *grunta* ‘lands’, *koszta* ‘costs’, *interesa* ‘businesses’, *okręta* ‘ships’, *urzęda* ‘offices’, etc.

2.2.4. Modern Polish (since 1939) ⁽¹⁵⁾

World War II constituted a short episode in the thousand years’ history of the Polish language. Some characteristic Germanisms connected with the hated reality of the occupation remained in the language, e.g. *ausweis*, *esesman*, *folksdojcz*, *fürer*, *gestapo*, *kapo*, *konkarta*, *oflag*, etc. The after-war political, social and cultural transformations had a great impact on the history of Polish, resulting in a number of substantial changes in the language.

First of all, there has been a huge increase of new vocabulary and phraseology. The estimated number of over 40 thousand new lexical items has enriched Polish since the war. This number concerns only the vocabulary of general use, while the number of new terms of all sorts amounts roughly to a few hundred thousand. There are three major sources of the new words. The most obvious way to introduce new items is via the native morphology, i.e. derivation and compounding. Words formed in this manner refer to the spheres of economy (e.g. new machines: *koparka* ‘excavator’ or production rooms: *montażownia* ‘editing room’), social life (e.g. describing people as members of groups), or everyday life (e.g. describing people in a situation: *spacerowicz* ‘sb who takes a walk’). Another source of new words are borrowings due to contacts with other nations and cultures. In the post-war period Polish has been importing words mainly from English ⁽¹⁶⁾ (e.g. *bestseller*, *dżinsy*, *fan*, *folder*, *hot-dog*, *jeep*, *keczup*, *komputer*, *laser*, *prezenter*, *show*, *slajd*, *trend*, etc.), Russian (e.g. *aparacznyk* ‘employee of the party apparatus’, *barachło* ‘rif-raff’, *dacza* ‘cottage’, *pepesza* ‘pepesha’, etc.), and, to a lesser extent, French (e.g., *bagietka* ‘baguette’, *kaskader* ‘stuntman’, *makabra* ‘nightmare’, *szmizjerka* ‘chemise’, *woltaż* ‘voltage’, etc.).

(15) Cf. Bajerowa : 2003.

(16) Cf. Mańczak-Wohlfeld : 2006 and Mańczak-Wohlfeld, ed. : 2010 for the newest account.

The majority of the post-war borrowings, however, constitute the so-called artificial borrowings, i.e. words formed from Latin and Greek material (e.g. *dyktafon* ‘dictaphone’, *indoktrynacja* ‘indoctrination’, *informatyka* ‘information science’, *kserokopia* ‘photocopy’, *logopedia* ‘speech therapy’, etc.). Finally, new words have entered Polish via neosemantization, i.e. establishing new meanings of the existent items (e.g. *szczyt* ‘summit’).

Modern Polish, as any other language, is not homogenous. The most characteristic feature of the *PRL* ⁽¹⁷⁾ Polish was its split into two divergent varieties: the official register and the private-colloquial one. The former was created by the official media spreading political and ideological propaganda. It contained characteristic dry, routine formulaic phrases which were devoid of content, e.g. *na bazie* ‘be on the basis’, *po linii* ‘be according to the line’, *wychodzić do ludzi* ‘meet the people’, *podejmować aktywne działania* ‘undertake active activities’, etc. The unofficial register expressed the attitude to the official *nowomowa* ‘new speech’ via derogatory vocabulary, e.g. *mowa-trawa* ‘speech-grass, saying nothing’, *nasiadówka* ‘a long, boring and unnecessary meeting’, *oficjalna* ‘a pompous, ideologically coloured ceremony’, *zamordyzm* ‘despotism, bullying’, etc.

The official *PRL* Polish routines spread easily, since the supporters of the system declared their loyalty by multiplying them. The totalitarian regime communicated with the society by means of the fabricated, hypocritical language which not only avoided some uncomfortable notions, like strike (rendered as ‘breaks in work’) or crisis (‘temporary economic problems’), but also deformed the meanings of important concepts, like democracy, capitalism, liberalism, pacifism, revolution and counterrevolution. Such techniques imposed a false view of the world on the nation as well as effectively disturbed communicativeness of the language. Although *PRL* is gone, some aspects of linguistic manipulation are still present both in the Polish political and social reality as well as in advertising.

In summary, Modern Polish is rich in subtly differentiated vocabulary and uses a wide variety of social and professional registers and of functional styles.

Grammatical changes:

- a tendency to pronounce nasal vowels *ę* and *ą* with a labial glide instead of nasalization [ew], [ow]
- a tendency towards emphatic initial stress
- a tendency to reduce inflection

3. The geography

Polish is the official language of the Republic of Poland. There are over 36 million native speakers of the language in Poland. Polish predominates over the

(17) *PRL* = *Polska Republika Ludowa* ‘People’s Republic of Poland’, the name of the state in the communist times.

whole area of the country: native speakers constitute 93-94 percent of the population (the latter amounts to almost 39 million). The most numerous minorities (see below section 3.1.2.), which however never outnumber the speakers of Polish, are situated in the north-east (*Białostoczczyzna*): the Belarusian minority, and in Silesia: the German minority. The Ukrainian minority has spread over the whole country due to post-war displacements, with relatively largest clusters in the west and north of the country.

3.1. The languages of the insiders

3.1.1. Local dialects ⁽¹⁸⁾

Historical differentiation of Polish over the ages has led to the formation of five main territorial varieties: *wielkopolski* (Great Polish) dialect, *małopolski* (Little Polish) dialect, Silesian dialect, Mazovian dialect and Kashubian (which was recognized as a separate regional language in Poland in 2005 and in Europe in 2009; cf. Obracht-Prondzyński and Wicherkiewicz [in press]; see also section 3.1.3.). Here are some of the characteristic features of the above five varieties.

(a) **Wielkopolski**

Non-Mazovian pronunciation, i.e. retaining of |s, z, tʂ, dʂ|, word final voicing of obstruents (*bra[d]ojca*), tendency to diphthongal pronunciation of some vowels (*koza* [kɔɛza]).

(b) **Małopolski**

Mazovian pronunciation, word final voicing, substitution of |k| for final |x| (*w rękak* for *w rękach*).

(c) **Silesian**

Mazovian pronunciation in the north, non-Mazovian in the south, word final voicing, open pronunciation of final -ę, i.e. |a|.

(d) **Mazovian**

Mazovian pronunciation, word final devoicing, velarized *l* before |i|, palatal pronunciation of labial consonants.

(e) **the Kashubian language**

Substitution of |s z ʂ dʂ| for |ç z ʦ dʒ|, word final devoicing, suffixes -k, -c (*domk* instead of *domek*, *krawc* instead of *krawiec*).

3.1.2. The literary language ⁽¹⁹⁾

A literary language is the most important variety of a national language from the social perspective. The Polish literary language is a creation of national culture and the tool of social communication on the official level. It is used in offices,

(18) Cf. Dejna : 1973.

(19) Cf. Walczak : ²1999.

judiciary and mass media, it is taught at schools and described in grammars and dictionaries. It is also a colloquial language of educated people.

In the 14th century the kingdom of Poland consisted of two major provinces: Great Poland (*Wielkopolska*) and Little Poland (*Małopolska*). The linguistic features of those two regions shaped the literary language in its oldest form, stabilized in the 16th century in first Polish printed works. The following features entered the literary language from the Great Poland dialect: the non-Mazovian pronunciation of sibilants, the $-\epsilon$ [ɛw] pronunciation of the front nasal vowel, preservation of $-ch$ [x] in the final position, preservation of *chwała*, *chwila* type of pronunciation, conjunction *iż* ‘that’. The features from the Little Poland dialect were: a cluster *ow* after a soft consonant, contracted forms of verbs *bać się* (from *bojeć się*), *gra* (from *graje*), clusters *ra-* and *ja-* in the initial position, suffixes *-ek*, *-ec*, as well as *-ast(y)*, *-ist(y)* (instead of *-at(y)*, *-it(y)*).

When in the 16th century king Sigismund III moved the capital from Cracow to Warsaw, the dialect of *Mazowsze* (Mazovian) started to influence the literary Polish. The following features can be enumerated: pronunciation *świeca*, *grzech* instead of *świca*, *grzych*, pronunciation *środa*, *źródło*, instead of *śrzoda*, *źródło*, prefix *naj-* (instead of *na-*) as the superlative of adjectives and adverbs, verbal suffixes *-ywać*, *-iwać* instead of *-ować*, *-awać*.

Finally, the frontier Polish played its role in the formation of the literary language starting with the end of the 16th century. On the area of the Great Lithuanian Principality as well as in the south-east Crown districts, the elite was Polonized, which created a channel of influence of frontier Polish on educated Polish. The features concerned were: the open vowel *pan*, *raz* for *pon*, *roz*, Ruthenian *królewicz* for Polish *królewic*, *depcze* for *depce*, prefix *prze-* as in *przepiękny*, diminutive suffixes *-eńki*, *-eńka*, *-eńko*.

Some of the Mazovian and frontier features became established in literary Polish quite late, i.e. at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. In the 20th century, however, the language did not undergo any major changes (with the exception of vocabulary).

3.1.3. Other languages ⁽²⁰⁾

Although language minorities in Poland constitute merely 6-7 percent of the population, still they are highly varied. There are at least 20 minorities on the area of the country, which situates Poland in the third place in Europe ⁽²¹⁾ in this respect (after Serbia and Montenegro, and Romania). The most important minority languages spoken in Poland are shortly described below.

(a) Kashubian

Kashubians inhabit *Mierzeja Helska* (‘Hel’s Spit’) on the Baltic Sea, the area around Puck, Wejherowo, Kartuzy, Kościerzyna and Bytów (in the past the

(20) Cf. Maciejewski : 1999.

(21) Excluding Russia.

Kashubian area reached much further south and west). They are most often treated as (and consider themselves to be, too) a regional community. Their ethnolect has for a long time been recognized as a separate language by Slavicists outside Poland. In Poland, till the 70's of the last century it was considered to be a dialect of Polish. Presently most Polish scholars agree to its separate language status (cf. section 3.1.1). Kashubian undergoes the process of standardization via the publication of dictionaries, grammars and spelling rules. The Bible has been translated into Kashubian. To a limited extent it is also a school subject. The estimated number of speakers is 500 thousand.

(b) Belarusian

Belarusian is an East-Slavonic ethnic language of the nonrussified Belarusians, an official language of the Republic of Belarus (beside Russian). In Poland there is a minority of 250-300 thousand, constituting ca 30 percent of the population of the *białostockie* province (north *Podlasie*, north-east of Poland). The Belarusian Socio-Cultural Society is active, Belarusian is taught at schools at the primary and secondary level, in some high schools Belarusian is the language of instruction. The most distinguished contemporary Belarusian writer, Sokrat Janowicz, lives in the area (in *Krynki*).

(c) Ukrainian

Ukrainian is an East-Slavonic ethnic language of Ukrainians, the official language in Ukraine. The 300-400 thousand minority in Poland is scattered around the country due to the post-war displacements (especially in the north and west). There is an active Association of Ukrainians in Poland. The language is taught in 54 primary schools and in three high schools (in Legnica in Silesia, in Biały Bór in Pomerania and in Górowo Iławeckie in Masuria).

(d) Rusyn (*łemkowski, rusiński, rusnacki*)

Until the 70's of the last century Rusyn (*Łemkowski*) was considered to be a dialect of Ukrainian. Originally from *Beskid Niski* (south of Poland), *Łemkowie* were displaced to Silesia, *Ziemia Lubuska* and Pomerania in 1947, but some of them came back after 1956 to their land. The estimated number of speakers is 100-150 thousand. Standardization is under way, dictionaries and grammars get published.

(e) Lithuanian

Lithuanian belongs to the Baltic family (closest to the Slavic languages) and is the official language in the Republic of Lithuania. The minority of ca 20-30 thousand inhabits the north-east of the *Suwałki* region (in the north-east of Poland). There is an active Association of Lithuanians in Poland. Lithuanian is a school subject in five primary schools and the language of instruction in another five as well as in one high school.

(f) German

German is a Germanic language from the Western group, the official language in the Federal Republic of Germany. The estimated 500-550 thousand

minority lives in Silesia (*Śląsk Opolski* and Upper Silesia). There are 58 local societies assembled in the Association of German Socio-Cultural Societies in Poland. German is a school subject and the language of instruction in 184 primary schools, 20 high schools, and 14 vocational schools.

(g) Other

The following other minorities live in Poland: Jews (ca 15 thousand, mainly in big cities) who use Hebrew for liturgical purposes, Roms (scattered) who use genetically Indic Romani ethnolects, Slovaks (in *Spisz* and *Orawa*, ca 20-25 thousand) who speak a dialect of Slovak, Armenians (scattered) who use Old Armenian for liturgical purposes, Karaites (2 documented speakers, Henryk Jankowski p.c.), Tatars (in east *Podlasie*) who use Arabic for liturgical purposes, as well as sparse Czechs, Russians, Greeks, Macedonians, who all speak their respective national languages.

3.2. The native speakers abroad ⁽²²⁾

There are two large groups of Poles abroad: those who live in the areas which are no longer incorporated into the area of Poland within its present borders, and those who have emigrated to other countries and have created Polish communities abroad.

The first group are the settlers along the borderland of the country, the lands referred to as *Kresy* ('frontiers'), which are ethnically mixed and interspersed with the Polish language islands. The inhabitants of *Kresy* have been separated from Poland due to various historical circumstances by the state border in the south (the Czech and Slovak border in *Śląsk Cieszyński*, *Czadeckie*, *Orawa* and *Spisz*) and in the east (in the area of Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania and partly Latvia — former Polish Inflants). A separate subgroup is constituted by Poles exiled in the WWII and pre-war period to Russia and then the Soviet Union (including Kazakhstan).

The most numerous (ca. 2 million speakers) are Poles on the Polish eastern frontier. They speak the so-called 'frontier Polish' (*polszczyzna kresowa*) which dates back to the 15th century. The specific characteristics of this regional variety stem from its weak contacts with ethnic Polish on the one hand (which results in maintaining archaisms), and first of all from the influence of local linguistic background (Ruthenian and Lithuanian). The following are the most characteristic features of frontier Polish: a strong dynamic stress, a tendency to reduce unstressed mid vowels |e| and |o|, difficulties with the pronunciation of nasal vowels which leads to their asynchronic pronunciation before fricatives (e.g. *kęs* |kens| 'a bite', *kąsać* |konsatɕ| 'to bite') and to the complete loss of nasality in the word final position (e.g. *oni idą z matką* |oni ido z matko| 'they go with mother'), front articulation of |w|=|ɸ|, palatal articulation of |j|, voiced articulation of |x|, harder |ç, z, ʦ, dʒ|, as well as numerous inflectional, derivational and syntactic features.

(22) Cf. Dubisz : 1997, Miodunka : 1990, Bartmiński : 1990.

The large Polish diaspora abroad (estimated 8 million speakers) originated due to economic and political emigration at various points in history. The Polish diaspora is scattered all over the world, with the largest communities in the United States, Canada, South America (esp. Brazil and Argentina), Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium and Australia. Poles abroad use a variety of registers, ranging from a literary Polish through to the so-called *polszczyzna polonijna* (Polish of the Polish community abroad). The former is characteristic of educated Poles active in politics, science or art (e.g., Zbigniew Brzeziński, Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, Gustaw Herling-Grudziński, Czesław Miłosz, or political emigration to Great Britain), while the latter is strongly influenced by local languages (borrowings of all kinds, phonetic and syntactic interference, etc.).

4. The auxiliaries

4.1. Institutions and language planning

4.1.1. The Polish Language Council

The Polish Language Council of the Polish Academy of Sciences is the head institution authorized to adjudicate upon language correctness issues and to coordinate language policy of the state. The board consists of 38 members, mainly professors of linguistics from Polish universities and the Academy, as well as representatives of other disciplines (e.g. cultural studies, history, philosophy, theology, law, medicine, information science), writers, journalists, actors, teachers etc. The Council organizes annual conferences devoted to language culture and policy issues.

4.1.2. The Linguistics Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences and its commissions

The Linguistics Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences is an elected body of distinguished Polish linguists which provides a scholarly backup to the Language Council. The Committee works directly and in commissions whose members come also from outside of the Committee. Language Culture Commission, which is instrumental in the issues of language policy, drafted a bill of the present Law of the Polish Language.

4.1.3. Language culture societies

The oldest and most deserving society is *Towarzystwo Miłośników Języka Polskiego* (Society of Polish Language Lovers) founded in Kraków in 1920 whose organ has been a bimonthly journal *Język Polski* (The Polish Language), published since 1913. The aim of the Society is to propagate reasonable love for the native

language. The Society has branches in all major cities in Poland (apart from Warsaw).

Towarzystwo Kultury Języka (Society of Language Culture) founded originally in Warsaw in 1930 publishes *Poradnik Językowy* (Language Guide), appearing since 1901. A territorial range of the Society is much smaller.

Regional societies for research or culture often have committees active in propagating language culture and linguistic knowledge of Polish. It is especially worth to mention *Komisja Kultury Słowa* (Committee for Word Culture) by *Warszawskie Towarzystwo Naukowe* (Warsaw Scholarly Society).

Issues of language culture are quite popular in Poland and there are numerous linguists who deal with them on a regular basis, among others: Irena Bajerowa, Stanisław Bąba, Jerzy Bralczyk, Aleksandra Cieślíkowa, Bogusław Dunaj, Antoni Furdal, Stanisław Gajda, Bogusław Kreja, Marian Kucała, Andrzej Markowski, Jan Miodek, Walery Pisarek, Jerzy Podracki, Jadwiga Puzynina, Halina Satkiewicz, Stanisław Urbańczyk, Bogdan Walczak, Halina Zgólkowa, and others. Polish has now probably the best conditions for development in its thousand-year-old history.

4.2. Linguistic resources

4.2.1. Conventional resources

Conventional language resources include dictionaries and grammars. These forms of publications have a long and rich history in Poland. Polish lexicography dates back to the Middle Ages. The oldest lexicographic forms were Polish glosses in Latin texts. The oldest mini-dictionary — a Latin-Polish *Wokabularz trydencki* from 1424 — contained 500 entries. The first great Latin-Polish dictionary by Jan Mączyński appeared in 1564 and contained 20 thousand Polish entries. A breakthrough of Polish lexicography was a monumental 6-volume dictionary by Samuel Bogumił Linde: *Słownik Języka Polskiego* (1807-1814), with over 60 thousand entries, which was the first Polish historical dictionary (cf. Matuszczyk : 2006).

Modern lexicography provides a wide range of types of dictionaries (cf. Żmigrodzki : 2003, Bartmiński : 1990, Piotrowski : 1994).

(a) General dictionaries

In the Modern Polish period one great general dictionary appeared, compiled by Witold Doroszewski: *Słownik Języka Polskiego* (1958-1969) containing 125 thousand entries in 11 volumes. It was based on 3,200 published texts. A drawback of the dictionary was its highly normative attitude. At least six other, smaller, general dictionaries have been published, recently *Uniwersalny słownik języka polskiego* (Dubisz, ed. : 2003), containing ca 100 thousand entries in 4 volumes.

(b) Historical dictionaries

Of the three great historical dictionaries only one has been completed: *Słownik staropolski* (Urbańczyk, ed. : 1953-2002) which registers vocabulary relics up to 1500. *Słownik polszczyzny XVI wieku* (Mayerowa, ed. : 1966-2004) at the moment concludes at the letter ‘p’ and consists of 32 volumes. It reports in a profound and innovative manner on the 16th century Polish. It is also the first dictionary which provides statistics. *Słownik języka polskiego XVII i I. połowy XVIII wieku* (Siekierska, ed. : 1996-2001) has just started to appear.

(c) Etymological dictionaries

Brückner’s *Słownik etymologiczny* (1927) was the first etymological dictionary of a single Slavic language. A number of other dictionaries were started but never completed. One of the new etymological dictionaries, by Wiesław Boryś (2005) is excellent but contains only 4,600 entries.

(d) Writers’ language dictionaries

There are two completed publications of this kind: *Słownik języka Jana Chryzostoma Paska* (Koneczna and Doroszewski, eds. : 1965-1973) documenting the language of the most distinguished 17th century diarist, and *Słownik języka Adama Mickiewicza* (Górski and Hrabiec, eds. : 1962-1983), a great romantic poet. *Słownik języka Jana Kochanowskiego* (Kucala, ed.) is in the final stage. Accounts of the language of Cyprian Kamil Norwid (Puzynina, ed.) and Stefan Żeromski (Handke, ed.), originally planned in the form of dictionaries, have appeared as a series of monographs.

(e) Dictionaries of foreign words

This type of a dictionary is characteristic of the Polish lexicographic tradition. Foreign words dictionaries contain the newly borrowed items as well as the less assimilated ones, which potentially could present a comprehension difficulty to a common speaker. The tradition dates back to the 19th century (cf. a 33 thousand-items dictionary by Aret (1893)). Three post-war dictionaries are worth mentioning: Rysiewicz (1954), Kopaliński (1967) and Tokarski (1971). In the lexicographic boom following the year 1989, numerous new dictionaries of diverse quality were produced.

(f) Other types of dictionaries

Modern Polish lexicography offers a versatile choice of dictionaries of many kinds. Normative (orthoepic) dictionaries are well represented, initiated by Szober’s (1937) *Słownik ortoepiczny. Jak mówić i pisać po polsku*, reprinted after WWII as *Słownik poprawnej polszczyzny*. A new updated and extended edition was published in 1973 (Doroszewski and Kurkowska, eds.), the newest, entitled *Nowy słownik poprawnej polszczyzny* (Markowski, ed.) in 1999. Among normative dictionaries, orthographic dictionaries have become traditional since the beginning of the 20th century. The largest ones contain tens of thousands of entries, e.g. *Nowy słownik ortograficzny PWN* (Polański, ed. : 1996).

Phraseological dictionaries constitute another type: the oldest and largest is *Słownik frazeologiczny języka polskiego* by Skorupka (1967-1968), a newer one is *Słownik frazeologiczny współczesnej polszczyzny* by Bąba and Liberek (2002). Among numerous synonyms and antonyms dictionaries, the most well known is *Słownik wyrazów bliskoznacznych* (Skorupka : 1957). The most important frequency dictionary was prepared by a group of authors (Kurcz, Lewicki, Sambor, Szafran and Woronczak : 1990): *Słownik frekwencyjny polszczyzny współczesnej*. Index *a tergo* accompanies a few dictionaries: Linde's dictionary, the language of Pasek dictionary, Doroszewski's dictionary, and, most recently, *Uniwersalny słownik* by Dubisz.

Finally, Polish lexicography boasts a very prolific branch of onomastic and, especially, dialectal and generally "sociolectal" dictionaries. *Słownik gwar polskich* by Karłowicz (1900-1911) was the first of this type in Slavic lexicography. This group encompasses dictionaries of local and professional registers, slang, colloquial Polish, swearwords and vulgarisms, etc. Among them there is a dictionary of Poznań⁽²³⁾ dialect, coedited by the second author of the present contribution (Gruchmanowa and Walczak : 1997).

Since 1989 Polish lexicography has literally exploded with dictionaries, especially bilingual and orthographic ones. Revised and updated editions are published much more regularly.

The first actual grammatical description of the Polish language, *Polonicae grammatices institutio* by Piotr Statorius-Stojeński, was published in 1568 in Kraków. 17th and 18th century abounded in grammar handbooks for the Germans learning Polish in Pomerania (almost hundred handbooks) and Silesia, written mostly in Latin, and sometimes in German and Polish. Enlightenment brought the first grammar handbooks in Polish and for Poles. *Gramatyka dla szkół narodowych* (1778-1783), one of many handbooks by Onufry Kopczyński, was the first grammar approved by the National Board of Education to be used in the reformed state schools. Another grammar, *Pierwsze zasady gramatyki języka polskiego* (1824) by Józef Mroziński, superseded Kopczyński's works by its research value. Stanisław Szober's *Gramatyka języka polskiego* (1914-1916) has been used by students of Polish for almost a century now.

Numerous modern descriptive grammars of Polish have already been referred to in the present paper, among others: Grzegorzczkova et al. : 1984, Nagórko : 2003, Strutyński : 2002, Saloni and Świdziński : 1998, Dukiewicz and Sawicka : 1995, Wierzchowska : 1980. Others include for instance Ostaszewska and Tambor : 2000, Tokarski : 2001, Grzegorzczkova : 1996, Bańko : 2002, Wiśniewski : 2001, and Szpyra-Kozłowska : 2002.

(23) Both authors of this paper come from and live and work in Poznań, the capital of Great Poland (*Wielkopolska*).

4.2.2. Electronic

Electronic resources accompany and / or replace conventional linguistic media used both for pedagogical and research purposes.

(a) Electronic dictionaries

At least four of the printed dictionaries received an electronic version. These are: Kopaliński's *Słownik wyrazów obcych*, *Słownik komputerowy języka polskiego PWN*, Doroszewski's *Słownik języka polskiego*, and *Uniwersalny słownik języka polskiego* by Dubisz.

(b) Language corpora

Polish language corpora are being collected for various purposes mainly by linguists and computer scientists at the universities and the Polish Academy of Sciences. Browsing through websites searching for the Polish language corpora brings us a result of ca 20 various corpus linguistics projects which resulted in a measurable and reliable (though not necessarily available for general use) corpus. Some of them function under abbreviated names, e.g. CORPORA, BABEL, PELCRA, SpeechDat-E, PoInt, IPI PAN corpus, PWN corpus, PLT corpus, or PELT corpus⁽²⁴⁾.

4.3. Literature and culture

Literary masterpieces in the Polish language were written already in the Middle Ages, notably *Bogurodzica* (11-14th c.) or *Kazania świętokrzyskie* (14th c.). In the golden age of the last Jagiellonians (Sigismund the Old and Sigismund August), which was the climax of the Polish renaissance, Polish literature flourished for the first time. Jan Kochanowski (1530-1583) was the greatest Slavic poet of the time. Baroque poets and writers were many (among others, Mikołaj Sep Szarzyński 1550-1581, Waław Potocki 1621-1698, or the famous diarist Jan Chryzostom Pasek 1636-1701) but remained largely unknown due to the cultural isolation of Poland in Europe in that period. During Enlightenment Polish literature returned to its splendour with the works of such authors as a poet Ignacy Krasicki (1735-1801), publicists Hugo Kołłątaj (1750-1812) and Stanisław Staszic (1755-1826), comedy writers Franciszek Zabłocki (1752-1821) and Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz (1758-1841). Polish poetry reached its culminating point in the romantic period with such famous poets as Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855), Juliusz Słowacki (1809-1849), Zygmunt Krasiński (1812-1859) and Cyprian Kamil Norwid (1821-1883). The climax of prose came after the January uprising (1863): Eliza Orzeszkowa, a contender for the Nobel Prize (1841-1910), Bolesław Prus (1847-1912), Henryk Sienkiewicz, the first Polish Nobel Prize laureate (1846-1916), Stefan Żeromski, another contender for the Nobel Prize (1864-1925), and Stanisław Reymont, another laureate (1867-1925).

(24) The latter two corpora have been collected by a team at the Center for Speech and Language Processing at Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, headed by the first author of this contribution.

In recent years two more poets received the Nobel Prize: Czesław Miłosz (1911-2004) and Wisława Szymborska (born 1923). Numerous 20th century authors, mainly representing new avant-garde, gained international recognition: Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz “Witkacy” (1885-1939), Bruno Schulz (1892-1942), Witold Gombrowicz (1904-1969), another two contenders for the prize, Tadeusz Różewicz and Zbigniew Herbert (1924-1998), as well as Sławomir Mrożek (born 1930), Stanisław Barańczak (born 1946) and others.

Baptised in 966, Poland entered the circle of Christian Latin culture of western and central Europe. In the Middle Ages Poland mainly relied on the European cultural achievements. Already at the beginning of the 15th century, however, it started to make its own contributions in the form of the national rights theory by Paweł Włodkowic (at the Council of Constance 1414-1418), the groundbreaking astronomic discoveries of Mikołaj Kopernik, the sociological works of Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski and the poetry of Jan Kochanowski. The latter wrote already in Polish. Importantly, at least until half of the 17th century Poland, as a country without stakes, was a paragon of religious tolerance.

In the modern times, Poland’s primary contribution to European heritage consisted in introducing fundamental values of political thought, such as the ideas of the republican and federation state, the concept of civil rights, the first European constitution of the year 1791 (known as *Konstytucja 3 Maja* ‘the 3rd of May Constitution’) and the idea of the national liberation movement under the heading “Za naszą i waszą wolność” (‘for our and your freedom’).

5. Present and future role of Polish ⁽²⁵⁾

The most important criterion deciding about the existence and future of a language is the number of its speakers. Polish is ca the twentieth among the languages of the world with respect to the number of users and is thus very far from the status of an endangered language. There is no other nation that would consider Polish as its ethnic language, Polish is a national and codified language, its written variety is 600 years old, the language has functional, social and territorial variants and it is the official language in Poland.

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(25) Cf. Maciejewski : 1999.

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