

MAREK KUŹNIAK

Uniwersytet Wrocławski
marek.kuzniak@uwr.edu.pl

ELŻBIETA MAŃCZAK-WOHLFELD

Uniwersytet Jagielloński
manczak@uj.edu.pl

Language Planning Activities and Policy – the Case of Poland

ABSTRACT. The paper examines the way and the extent to which language policies have affected the development of the Polish language especially in recent times, since the so-called end of the communist era. The discussion revolves round the Polish Language Act of 1999 which set the rules appropriate to ‘protecting’ Polish from ‘foreign influences’ (English in particular). Subject to examination is the Act’s origins, the government’s motives for it, as well as amendments the Act has undergone since it was first promulgated in 1999 and the justifications for them. Finally, the paper addresses various practical implications stemming from the Act and manifested in a number of more or less spectacular actions taken by the competent bodies and authorities in order to protect the Polish language.

KEYWORDS: language policy and planning; protection; totalitarian era; the Polish Language Act.

1. INTRODUCTION

There are three dimensions to conducting language policy and planning (LPP) in Poland. These relate to the protection of the Polish language as the language of the 98% of the Polish population, the policy towards minority languages or dialects, and finally the policy of promoting the study of other languages (cf. www.rjp.pl). It is primarily the first dimension that this paper is concerned with, although other dimensions seem to naturally combine as is shown below (see particularly section 5.).

In 1989, Cooper offered a program of LPP research by the provision of seven fundamental questions that the researchers in the field are to be confronted with. Similarly, Gajda proposed six problems characteristic of LPP research in 1999 (Wiertlewski 2011: 101). The most significant appears the distinction between the *subject* and *object* of LPP, with the former being confined to governmental authorities of all levels, media, academic centres, influential associations, etc., and the latter to various entities, be it organizations or individuals, who remain subject to the enforcement of policy imposed by the decision-making bodies. In the sections to follow, especially section 5, we focus on the subjects of LPP, and only through this prism do we make considerations about the objects of LPP.

As such Polish LPP was more systematically discussed within the realm of sociolinguistics in the late 70's of the 20th century (Lubaś 1977) – or as part of the so-called cultural-linguistic program, which itself boasts a long tradition of research (Wiertlewski 2011: 100). According to Hornberger 2006 (in Wiertlewski 2011: 100) there are essentially two types of avenues along which LPP normally proceeds; these are explorations of the status of a given language as well as investigations into its formal make-up. We see these aspects to be naturally intertwined, which means that the care for the prestige of a language implicates taking a series of political steps aiming to affect its composition both at its graphemic and semantic-lexical plane. Nevertheless the trigger to change or to conserve comes from the authority equipped with statutory entitlement to interfere. The interference becomes spectacular where discrepancies between the Polish language system and the non-Polish language system appear more than conspicuous. Not infrequently, then, is the grammatical system attempted at being codified, especially in the areas where the influence of foreign element (here English) on Polish is received as particularly unwelcome, e.g., the use of compound nominal constructions, e.g., *Wrocław Stadion*, *Plaza Hotel*, which are received as a direct calque from English. The negative reception of the quoted structures among Polish elites is caused by both external factors (placement of Polish against other more dominant languages), and by internal factors, i.e., the inherently inflection-based (synthetic) nature of Polish grammar where such nominal structures are far from standard (see Miodek 2010: 20–21). This is just one of many examples, but quite an illustrative one of the issues in question.

It may thus be tentatively postulated that the Polish LPP revolves round the “subjects” rather than “objects” as dominant elements of the narrative, at least in the social and media discourse. This practically, and somewhat naturally, entails that the LPP debate focuses on implementing statutory measures of language protection and conservation of Polish rather than promoting it as elastic and dynamically organized system susceptible to

change. All in all, the situation that official bodies and non-governmental organizations rather impede than allow the uncontrollable progression of the language is probably a global tendency rather than the Polish idiosyncrasy.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Certainly, to have some broad understanding how LPP in Poland evolved prior to its recognition as a fully fledged academic field of research, we need to glimpse over some relevant historical facts which somewhat paved the way for the specificity of the contemporary Polish LPP.

The beginnings of Polish history and thus of the Polish language date back to the year 966 when Christianity was introduced to Poland via Czekia. Therefore it is of no surprise that a considerable amount of Roman Catholic terminology of Latin origin entered Polish through the Czech language with *kościół* ('church') serving as an example. Although at that time Polish was the tongue used by the inhabitants of the country, Latin, as in other European countries, was the language of public discourse and so it was used, for instance, in the Church, education, diplomacy, administration or literature. Thus, in the Middle Ages and in the centuries to follow we cannot talk about any language legislation *per se* (Mostowik, Żukowski 2001: 9). As stated on the official website of the Council for the Polish Language (www.rjp.pl) "since the 14th century the inhabitants of Poland have been aware of their linguistic identity – even then, they described themselves as the people of the Polish language (*homines linguae Polonicae*). In 1140, Jakub Paroszkowic, a Professor at the Kraków Academy, compared those people who strove to preserve and improve the language to the knights defending Poland's frontiers. Furthermore, printers in the 16th century claimed that their sole reason for publishing books in Polish was their love of the language."

A significant role in the shaping of the Polish language identity is undoubtedly to be ascribed to Bible translations. Although there might have been some early translations of certain fragments of the Bible by the 13th century, we do not have any evidence of this. There are only some passages saved of a rendition of the Bible dated at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries. The so-called *Queen Sophia's Bible* is the only complete translation of the Bible into Polish, although only certain parts of the manuscript still exist today. In fact, the first printed version of both the Old and New Testaments (*Leopoldita's Bible*) goes back to 1561. The Bible was translated from Latin but the Czech version must have been taken into account as well. However, the only Catholic translation of the Bible directly from Latin by Jakub Wujek

rendered in 1599, was a translation which became the most influential, and indeed, was the only version used until the 19th century.¹

Before the partitions of Poland, which were conducted in three stages (1773, 1793, 1795), the dominant role of Latin was slowly giving way to Polish. During the time when Poland lost its independence (1795–1918) and was occupied by three countries Russia, Prussia and Austria, the status of Polish differed depending on the rulers under which a given region found itself. In the period between 1795–1815 the Polish language was particularly affected by the activities of partitioners. In the Austrian region Polish secondary schools were closed, Lwów University was staffed with the so-called ‘germanized’ intelligentsia, and the Kraków Academy was germanized in 1805. In the same year a special Political School Act was passed which envisaged the command of German by Polish school children at lowest levels of education. In the Prussian region, on the other hand, Polish education was subject to complete liquidation with the non-Polish teachers replacing Polish staff across all institutions. Eventually, in the Russian region, the Polish language was treated as the language of ethnic minority. This meant less severe measures undertaken by Russian authorities with respect to Polish education, which was certainly marginalized but not liquidated. For example, it was the University in Vilnius that became an important centre for cultivating the Polish language on the whole territory of the partitioned Poland.

Although in conformity with the agreement of the Congress of Vienna in 1815 the partitioners were to respect the Polish language, maintain its status both in private and in public life as well as refrain from the assimilation policy, in practice there were many breaches of the regulations. This meant that the Poles were somehow forced to use Russian and German not only in public but occasionally even in private communication (Mostowik, Żukowski 2001: 9). The most stringent regulations were introduced in Prussia with the most spectacular protest organized by Polish schoolchildren in Września in 1901–1902 against the language policy imposed by the authorities that enforced the use of German at schools including the whipping penalty for any instance of infringement of the regulations in question.

Unlike Prussia, the most friendly approach to Polish was observed in the so-called Galicia which was occupied by the Austrians. This may be proved, amongst others, by the fact that at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków the Polish language became a means of academic instruction in the late 1850s. Earlier, i.e., in 1817, by the decree of Austrian emperor Franz I the Ossoliński Library was established in Lwów, which meant some ‘relaxation’ in the policy of germanization at educational level characteristic of the period before

¹ <https://wikipedia.org/wiki/Polskie_Przekłady_Biblii> (ED: February, 2016).

1815. In the Russian region, the situation of the Polish language in the period 1815–1918 was relatively favourable, except for the times when the November Uprising (1830) and January Uprising (1863) burst out, which certainly entailed strengthening anti-Polish policy. On a micro-scale, despite the “marginal” position of Polish as early as the end of the 18th century certain Polish individuals in the literary world criticized the overuse of Gallicisms, thereby manifesting the protectionist attitude in regard to their mother tongue. However, the first grammarian to opt for the purity of Polish was O. Kopczyński, who in his grammar book from 1817 suggested writing a dictionary consisting of Polish equivalents of loanwords.

Another nineteenth-century academic warned that due to the influence of foreign languages Polish might disappear. This purist attitude has since been adopted by a number of nineteenth-century and twentieth-century scholars, including linguists (Mańczak-Wohlfeld 2002: 216). This has marked an important moment in the history of LPP in Poland because purism was no longer regarded as a philosophical-aesthetic standing, but rather as a convenient tool for implementation of language educational policy. This tendency is observed in other countries as well, which was best epitomized in the well-known linguistic metaphor comparing purist (normativist) approaches to the work of gardeners, whereas descriptivist approaches to the work of botanists.²

3. LANGUAGE PLANNING IN THE PRE-COMMUNIST ERA (1918–1939)

Recognition of a particular dialect as a language has always been a matter of political decision. Sometimes the differences between dialects may be sharp, still however, due to political decisions they are decreed to belong to one language. Such is the case of Silesian dialect (see also discussion below), which although hardly understandable by the majority of Polish population is not treated as an officially separate language from Polish. The ‘separatist’ tendencies may be particularly unwelcome in Poland on account of its turbulent history, where preservation of Polish was viewed as one of the most vital exponents of Polish national identity. No wonder, when Poland got its independence after World War I, i.e. in 1918, one of the primary goals set up by the new authorities was to bring order to the language legislation which was extremely complicated at the time. In consequence the mainstream policy during that period was to strive for the unification of Polish as well as to

² <<https://linguistlist.org/issues/5/5-735.html>> (ED: May, 2016).

fight with illiteracy (Mostowik, Żukowski 2001: 12–13; Bugajski 2005: 76). The most significant event, however, with respect to Polish LPP was the establishment of the Polish Academy of Literature, which, as originally projected by S. Żeromski, was to particularly cater for the purity of the Polish language (see Markowski 2009: 73–75).

Another milestone in the creation of LPP was the Act of 24 January 1924 on the national and official language of the state and local administration by the Polish Sejm (Lower Chamber of the Polish Parliament). As can be read on www.rjp.pl, the consequence of the adopted law was that: “the Polish language was the official language of the Republic of Poland. It should be used at all levels of state and local administration, both in State and Foreign Service.” Practically, this was manifested by the strong tendency to eliminate German and Russian borrowings and to replace them with Polish equivalents (Mańczak-Wohlfeld 2002: 216). At that time, although the Poles constituted the majority of inhabitants (69.2% from over 32 million inhabitants), Poland still comprised many ethnic minorities, namely the Ukrainians (14%), Jews (7,8%), Belorussians (3,9%), Germans (3,8%) and others (1,3%). The statistics come from a directory from 1931 based on the declared native language.³ In the interwar period both ethnic and minority rights including the usage of native languages were respected.

4. LANGUAGE POLICY IN THE COMMUNIST ERA (1945–1989)

The situation was changed after the Second World War as a new decree was passed in 1945. It concerned the national language, that is Polish, as the only one used officially by governmental and self-governmental authorities in education, culture, and everyday life. It is true that the number of ethnic minorities decreased to a large extent. The exact numbers of ethnic minorities is not known since during the directory conducted in 1950, 1960, 1970, 1978, 1988 there were no questions concerning one's nationality and first language. It is assumed that around 1950 in Poland lived about 25 million people from which less than around half a million constituted minorities. According to fairly inaccurate data there were 121,500 Germans, 110,000 Belorussians, 100,000 Ukrainians, 50,000 Gipsies, 17,000–18,000 Jews, 18,000 Slovaks, 10,000 Lithuanians, 3,000 Czechs living in Poland (<www.sciesielski.republika.pl/varia/mniejnar.html>). All in all, we can conclude that Poland changed from a multiethnic country to an almost monoethnic society – the state of affairs continuing until now.

³ <https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/II._Rzeczpospolita#Demografia> (ED: March, 2016).

It was also part of communist propaganda to claim that there were only Poles living in Poland. Despite the international ideology put forward by communists, in fact the actual actions bespoke much of nationalist undertone. This was particularly noticeable in the year 1968 when the anti-Jewish campaign was launched by the communist regime, which aimed at apparent eradication of the foreign 'element' from the decision-making process at the government level. In actual fact, the whole situation was the element of the broader Soviet policy envisaged for servile Polish government in view of the complex political situation in Europe and the Near East at the time. All this led to the usage of Polish in all official contexts and consequent disregard for questions concerning nationality while conducting all the ensuing nationwide directories.

In the Polish post-war LPP two periods are generally distinguished: "the first ranging from 1945 through 1970 characterized by a traditional, correctness-oriented model as well as the eradication of regionalisms from standard Polish; the second, from 1971 up to the present, lenient and flexible, focused on variation and cultivation, favouring a descriptive rather than prescriptive approach" (Nettmann-Multanowska 2003: 24). As in the past, post-war linguists were in favour of defending the Polish language from foreign influences. After World War II it mainly concerned Germanisms, although at the same time Polish was very much under the impact of Russian, which was not restricted to the lexical influence but also covered the syntactic impact. It is a well-known fact that the twentieth century saw a steady increase in English loanwords but it was not until the second half of the 20th century that the impact of English became more prominent in Polish.

Fisiak, for example, in his unpublished Ph.D. dissertation from 1961 found over 700 English borrowings and in his 1986 article he mentioned over 1,000 Anglicisms attested by 1985. This together with the impact of other languages, notably, the afore-mentioned influence of Russian, was the reason why many Polish linguists protested against the intrusion of foreign elements and opted for language purity. For instance, Buttler et al.(1976: 22–44) claimed that any innovation should be judged on the basis of five principles of linguistic appropriateness, that is intra-linguistic principle of sufficiency, brevity, and the inter-linguistic principle of usage and distribution, cultural authority, as well as the so-called patriotic criterion.

5. LANGUAGE POLICY AND PLANNING IN THE POST-TOTALITARIAN ERA

After the change in the political system in 1989, the well-known penetration of English has been observed in Polish as well. The impact has for the most part been in the area of lexical borrowings. In standard Polish around

2000 borrowings have been noted (Mańczak-Wohlfeld 2010), which means that hundreds of Anglicisms related to computing, physics or other sciences have been omitted. However, the impact of English is not only restricted to the inflow of English loanwords but also extends to their relatively high frequency of usage, as most of them refer to a modern and capitalist style of life (Mańczak-Wohlfeld 2004). Besides, there is evidence of other types of influence, that is the non-lexical, like occasional introduction of the genitive 's to Polish names; infrequent introduction of the English plural marker -s; usage of English morphemes added to words of Polish or foreign origin, e.g. -(o)holik, -gate, -land, -burger, e-, cyber-, etc.; introduction of clipped names in official language as well as the impact of English on Polish syntax, which is evidenced by the adoption of noun + noun compounds, an hitherto unknown type in Polish (Mańczak-Wohlfeld, Witalisz, forthcoming).

It is worth stressing that the impact of English on Polish has not been as extensive as is claimed by some Polish linguists who often express their concern over it. A number of arguments supporting our conviction has been presented elsewhere (Mańczak-Wohlfeld 2004). Despite this, some Polish linguists since the early 1990s have been lamenting over the decline of the Polish language caused by the 'flood' of British and American English borrowings. However, since the beginning of the 21st century the Polish linguists' attitude towards the 'Anglicization' of the Polish language has changed dramatically. It is believed now that the influence of English makes Polish richer and more globalized (Kołodziejek 2008).

Besides, the present status of English as a *lingua franca* was considered to be a threat to Polish with even the possibility of the extinction of the tongue. This was the reason why the eminent Polish linguist S. Gajda suggested the following goals of the Polish LPP:

1. protecting the system of Polish, preserving its autonomy, vitality, and functionality in all walks of social life;
2. shaping Poles' personality by developing their skills to participate in the act of communication;
3. developing a socio-national speech community (including national and ethnic minorities) capable of peaceful coexistence and development;
4. shaping Poles' desirable language attitudes towards Polish and developing their language skills;
5. taking rational actions of a legal standardizing, and codificational nature;
6. promoting Polish in the world and the knowledge of foreign languages in Poland (after Przygoński 2012: 178).

This concern about language purity must have led to the creation of Rada Języka Polskiego (Council for the Polish Language), working under the auspices of the Polish Academy of Sciences, in 1996. Its aim has been to advise on and describe (rather than prescribe) linguistic behaviours among Polish language users. Although it has to be admitted that as Walczak (1987: 39) claimed: "never in Polish history have we had to deal with extreme linguistic purism on a large scale, widespread, accepted, forming a program of linguistic policy" (after Nettmann-Multanowska 2003: 37), still the above mentioned legislative body caused the Polish Language Act to be passed in 1999. Its purpose, however, has been to protect Polish rather than to purify it, and also to minimize the foreign influences rather than to eradicate them. The most important fragments of the Polish Language Act are as follows:

Chapter 1

General Regulations

Article 1

- 1) The regulation of the Act pertain to the protection, cultivation and usage of the Polish language in public activity and legal transactions on the territory of the Republic of Poland.

Article 3

The protection of the Polish language consists specifically in:

- 1) care for correct usage, improving language users' linguistic skills, and creating the circumstances for the proper development of the language as a tool for interpersonal communication,
- 2) counteracting its vulgarization,
- 3) propagating it and its culture-forming role,
- 4) popularizing respect for regionalism and dialects, and, by extension, counteracting their disappearance,
- 5) promoting the Polish language abroad,
- 6) supporting Polish language teaching in Poland and abroad.

Chapter 2

Legal Protection of the Polish Language in Public Life

Article 5

- 1) Subjects performing public activities on the territory of the Republic of Poland shall conduct all official procedures in the Polish language, unless stated otherwise in the regulations.

Article 7

- 1) The Polish language shall be used in legal transactions on the territory of the Republic of Poland amongst Polish subjects and also when one of the parties is a Polish subject . This pertains specifically to the naming of products and services, advertising, manuals, information about the nature of goods and services, warranty conditions, invoices, checks and receipts.
- 2) The exclusive use of foreign terminology, excluding proper names and trade names in legal transactions on the territory of the Republic of Poland shall be strictly forbidden.
- 3) Description of goods and services in a foreign language, as well as foreign language offers and advertisements introduced into legal transactions described in paragraph 1 must at the same time be accompanied by a Polish-language version.
- 4) Supervision of the duties described in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 is exercised by Trading Standard Officers and the Office for the Protection of Competition and Consumers.

Article 10

- 1) Inscriptions and information in public offices and institutions, including those intended for public reception or placed in public transportation shall be in the Polish language.
- 2) Names and texts in Polish can be accompanied by foreign language translations in instances and within the limits defined by decree issued by a minister whose competence includes public administration.

Article 11

Regulations in articles 5, 7 and 10 do not concern:

- 1) proper names,
- 2) foreign-language newspapers, magazines, books and computer programs, excluding their manuals and instructions,
- 3) educational and scientific activities of higher education facilities, schools and classes with languages of instruction other than Polish, or bilingual classes and schools, language colleges for teachers, as well as the teaching of other subjects, if in accordance with regulations,
- 4) scientific and artistic output,
- 5) accepted scientific and technical terminology,
- 6) trade names and logos, brand names, as well as goods and services marks of origin.

Chapter 4

Penal Regulations

Article 15

- 1) He who in legal transactions on the territory of the Republic of Poland uses exclusively foreign naming of goods and services, tenders, advertisements, manuals, goods and services specifications, warranty conditions, invoices, checks, and receipts, neglecting the Polish language version, shall be fined.
- 2) In the case of penalties for offences described in Article 1, damages may be set to a level of 100,000PLN, to be allocated to the Fund for the Support of Creativity, appointed by Article 111 of the 'Act of February 4, 1994 On Authorship and Related Laws' (Journal of Laws No 24, item 170 and 1997, No 43, item 272 and No 88, item 554) (after Nettmann-Multanowska 2003: 160–161).

5.1. The Polish Language Act in Practice

A few amendments to the above-presented Act were introduced in 2004 and 2005. These appeared to be motivated by the Polish accession to the EU. The wording of the said amendments places an emphasis on the promotion of bilingualism in certain formal communicative contexts and intends to appreciate the role of regional dialects or languages on the Polish territory:

- “the possibility of using a language other than Polish in commerce and in employment contracts (The Amendment to the Polish Language Act of 2 April 2004)
- the possibility of using minority and ethnic languages in local administration in districts in which the users of the regional variant numbers more than 20% (The Ethnic and National Minority Act of 6 January 2005).”

Practical implications of the Act on the Polish language are naturally manifold. They can be discussed both in terms of external actions undertaken by governmental and non-governmental organizations or individuals empowered with relevant prerogatives under the Act in question. And it is this former perspective that we focus on here.⁴

Wiertelwski in his insightful paper on the multi-actor nature of current Polish Language Policy and Planning (2011) discusses various cases where the subjects of LPP undertook specific activities which were to affect the

⁴ See Introduction for “authority” perspective of the Polish LPP.

status-quo of Polish. Wiertelwski (2011: 102–103) quotes, for example, the initiative of 50 deputies of the Polish Lower Chamber of Parliament from across political spectrum, aiming to update the Act on national and ethnic minorities as well as regional languages. The intention behind the newly proposed legislation was to recognize the Silesian dialect of Polish as a separate language. This was met with the negative response from the governmental officials who, supported by the voices of influential Polish linguists, announced that Silesian was one of the four basic varieties of Polish, on a par with Małopolan, Wielkopolan, and Mazovian dialects. It is additionally speculated that the positive decision from the government could have entailed serious financial effects as presumably the case of Silesian might have triggered a chain-like reaction from other dialect communities in Poland. It is to be noted that the Polish territory hosts only one officially recognized regional language (once regarded by linguists as dialect of Polish), that is Kashubian.

Another important practical implication of LPP discussed by Wiertelwski (2011: 103) was the decision of the Polish Lower Chamber of Parliament on the amendment to the Act on radio and television that envisaged the guarantees in regard to the monthly contributions of auditions rendered exclusively in Polish on the radio. The percentage was determined as no lower than 33% of the overall monthly coverage. However, the decisions taken by the decision-making authorities are not only to be viewed as favourable to Polish. Wiertelwski (2011: 103–104) further makes reference to the two cases in which the weakening of Polish rather than its strengthening actually took place. Such was the case of the amendment to the Act on the Polish language from 2009 that in its wording allowed the drafting of civil-law documents in Polish legal transactions in practically any language. Likewise, the decision taken by the Polish Commission of Financial Supervision from 2010 is also to be interpreted as the step towards the promotion of bilingualism. The decision concerned the abandonment of the requirement from the foreigners occupying managerial positions in banks to speak Polish.

Another problem, quite socially sensitive, relates to the marketing strategies adopted by the self-governmental authorities in Poland. For example, many of the promotional practices undertaken by the councils of the biggest Polish cities involved the massive borrowing from English, like the case quoted by Wiertelwski (2011: 105) in which the local railway station in Kraków was marketed as *Kraków Business Park*, the swimming pool in Szczecin was called *Szczecin Floating Arena*, Poznań promoted itself as *POZnań miasto know how*, whereas Szczecin propagated the slogan *Szczecin Floating Garden*. Similarly to the above, Wrocław once launched a campaign promoting the cosmopolitan image of the city, which effectuated *Wrocław – the meeting place* phrase to be locally popularized.

Last but not least, Wiertlewski (2011: 106) rightly pinpoints the significance of the Polish Catholic Church as a highly influential authority in shaping the opinions of a vast majority of Poles when it comes to the necessity of protecting the heritage and the contemporary status-quo of Polish conceived of as an indicator of national identity. Such was the meaning of the letter of the Polish Episcopal Conference in 2010 read out on Sunday January mass services which focused on various threats to the Polish language caused by the uncritical and irresponsible conduct of the mainstream media.

5.1.1. “Subjects” of Polish LPP. Home

Now, a few reflections should also be spared on practical implementation of LPP from the viewpoint of most eminent Polish state and public institutions established to foster particular care for the Polish language and culture – all considered in perspective of the currently binding Act on the Polish language. These involve the aforementioned *Rada Języka Polskiego* (Council for the Polish language), the association “*Wspólnota Polska*” (The Polish Community), *Państwowa Komisja Poświadczania Znajomości Języka Polskiego jako Obcego* (State Commission for the Certification of Proficiency in Polish as a Foreign Language), *Towarzystwo Miłośników Języka Polskiego* (the Association of the Lovers of the Polish Language), *Towarzystwo Kultury Języka* (the Association of Language Culture) as well as Polish academic institutions.

The Council for the Polish Language was established in 1996 as the Task Force Committee of the Praesidium of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN). As is concisely stated on www.rjp.pl: “According to the Polish language Act of 1999, this body is an advisory body concerned with the use of the language. Its responsibilities include:

- presenting a bi-annual report to Parliament on the observance of the Polish Language Act;
- expressing opinions (on its own initiative or by order of Parliament) on the use of the Polish language in the media and commerce;
- establishing the rules of orthography and punctuation;
- in addition, the Council may be asked to give advice on all language issues by all public and social institutions, societies, schools, as well as importers, producers and commercial distributors.”

It is quite telling that the organization, whose tasks and responsibilities are by force of statute focused on the protection and strengthening of the status of the Polish language, admits of the multilingual version of its official website (www.rjp.pl) . This is certainly indicative of the currently noticeable tendency to promote bilingualism among intellectual elites, the tendency, which will also be alluded to later.

As said above, the Council cooperates in advising on the relevant legislation-making process to government as well as is obliged to make bi-annual reports to the Senate on its activities. The Council – being an advisory and opinion-formation authority, makes a number of interventions regarding infringements of the Polish Language Act as well as offers advice on the appropriate use of Polish upon request of various entities acting as petitioners. The examples⁵ of such intervening activity include, on a macro-scale, the evidenced instantiations of the lack of Polish translations on foreign products available on the domestic market. Here the Council advised that any such cases of violating the currently abiding law should be reported to the Trade Inspectorate. Another intervention, on a micro-scale, concerned an opinion with regard to the placement of the English slogan “Sport the right choice” on one of the walls of the buildings in the possession of the Ministry of Sport and Tourism in Gliwice. The Council requested the ministerial department for the statement of grounds why a non-Polish slogan was inscribed on the element of the state infrastructure.

Aside from the advisory role vested in the Act, the Council also actively promotes various events popularizing the Polish language at all levels of territorial self-government. One more intervention on a micro-scale, however with far-reaching social implications, concerned the official name of the airport in Gdańsk, which read: “Gdansk Lech Walesa Airport”. According to Article 10 (1) of the Polish Language Act of October 7th 1999, official names of any public utility in Poland should be primarily rendered in Polish. It is admissible to create foreign language versions but only as secondary (Article 10 (2) of the said Act). The action undertaken by the Praesidium of the Council for the Polish language was spectacular as it referred to one of the most recognized Polish persons in the world whose name was graphically distorted in the English version, and also because the official name of the airport in Gdańsk thereby violated the fundamental rules of the Polish grammatical system. Strangely enough, the request by the Council that the existing name be changed into *Port Lotniczy Gdańsk im. Lecha Wałęsy* met with no response from the management of the Gdańsk airport.

5.1.1.1. Polish Academic Institutions – the Case of Wrocław University

Universities in Poland are generally geared towards internationalization of their research as well as teaching process. This mainly stems from the

⁵ Retrieved from www.rjp.pl (ED: April, 2016).

Polish EU membership and the consequent commitments incurred in relation to integrate academic resources both at the level of staff and research results with the European network of intellectual exchange (HORIZON 2020, EUROPA 2020, including domestic programs of regional development). All this has its consequences when it comes to the promotion of bilingualism in academia. Particular examples come from one University but are tentatively argued as representative of the nationwide tendencies of the development of higher education sector, whether state-owned or public.

The Faculty of Philology of the University of Wrocław issued the document outlining the mission and strategic operations of the Faculty for the years 2014–2020. This reflects the globally sketched strategy of the development of University of Wrocław, as materialized by the Resolution passed by the University Senate of June, 2013. Of interest to us here are the aspects of practically intending to equalize the status of Polish and English as the languages of instruction. This is manifested by the consistent extension of educational offer in the English language along with the collaborations with foreign academic institutions; all with the final view to issuing the so-called ‘joint’ or ‘dual’ diplomas. One of the effects of this international ‘turn’ in the strategic thinking by the executive university boards is the intention to employ highly qualified international academic staff – all in all, a prerequisite being the fluent command of English and, which is significant, the communicative fluency in Polish. This illustrates, quite tellingly though, an aspect of the aforementioned process of equalization of English and Polish as means of communication. Other ‘tangible’ exponents of English-Polish ‘alliance’ are seen in the area of job competition procedure, where the command of English is in the vast majority of cases explicitly laid out as one of the conditions in the competition, not to mention the requirement of producing an English version of the Polish wording of the competition. This applies across the board, regardless of the type of department seeking new staff.

It is also important to note that the requirement of English for Polish applicants pertains not only to academic teachers, but also to administrative personnel. The bilingual operations are also manifested in the requirement of publishing the effects of research in English, at least in the form of the resumé enclosed with the book or academic paper if these are originally composed in the non-English language. The emphasis is also placed on the developing English versions of University websites. This is still in many cases the area where the efforts shall be intensified especially in relation to language departments where English emerges as the third language of communication. However, noteworthy is the tendency as such.

5.1.2. "Subjects" of Polish LPP. Abroad

But the issues of protecting the Polish language extend far beyond the national borders. As can be read on <www.rjp.pl/en>: "With 38 million speakers in Poland, 2 million elsewhere in Europe and around 8 million native speakers outside Europe, the Polish language is one of the 25 most commonly spoken languages of the world. It is one of the 10 most widely spoken languages in Europe and the sixth language of the EU according to the number of native speakers. It is used, with various degrees of fluency, by almost 50 million people. According to *Languages of the World*, Polish is spoken by citizens in 21 countries and is the mother tongue (first language) of 45 million people" (italics ours, MK, EM-W). No wonder, other non-governmental agencies play a very significant role in forming the Polish LPP in relation to the Polish minorities abroad. Here, a special role of "Wspólnota Polska" (The Polish Community) cannot be underestimated, particularly with regard to neighbouring countries as well as maintaining contact with Polish immigration in the US and Canada as well as Great Britain. The statutory role of "Wspólnota Polska" is thus:

- to propagate the Polish culture and Polish language abroad,
- to engage as an intermediary into the settlement of various complicated issues concerning the rights of Polish people,
- to organize Polish schools or to use Polish in public places.

The situation is especially sensitive in Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine (especially its Western parts), where nationalist policies conducted by governments entail discriminatory practices for Polish minorities. No better is the 'linguistic' situation of Poles in Russia, although the problem is not that clearly noticeable on account of the size of the Russian Federation. Still the Polish language can be heard in the areas infamous throughout Polish history like Siberia, or the Far East, where the descendants of Polish war prisoners attempted at preserving Polish by learning the language at courses organized mainly by the Polish catholic church.

In the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the Polish minority enjoys, on the other hand, the relative freedom to organize events promoting Polish culture and language. The situation is particularly tense in the Zaolzie area (the Czech Republic) due to the historical disputes over the rights to ownership of the territory. In any case, the role of the Polish Consulate authorities as well as local cross-border institutions is to be noted for organizing exchange of the youth, thus promoting the lesson of tolerance and raising mutual understanding of the joint complicated past.

Quite interesting is the situation of Poles in Germany, who formally do not cherish any rights as an ethnic minority. This introduces asymmetry in

Polish-German relations in favour of the latter, who enjoy full rights of the minority in Poland, which is best manifested in their having permanent representation in the Polish Parliament. Still, devoid of the status of minority, Polish people in Germany organize themselves into local associations affiliated, e.g., with the so-called Catholic Mission, where they can maintain the contact with Polish culture and language. Due to the stable economic situation of Poles and well-functioning platforms of cooperation between Germany and Poland at the level of educational exchange as additionally supported by the governmental and non-governmental institutions, the problems of Polish minority in Germany are still often indiscernible in media, thereby receiving minimal public attention.

We focused above on the situation of Poles in the adjacent countries. Last but not least, however, the linguistic situation of Poles in Great Britain should be mentioned.⁶ This is due to a significant wave of Polish immigration to the British Isles started upon the accession of Poland to the EU. According to the directory conducted in 2011, Polish is the second most popular language in Great Britain. This is corroborated in the very capital of London where in 7 districts (Barnet, Bromley, Ealing, Lewisham, Merton, Richmond and Wandsworth), the Polish language is the second most often selected means of communication.

There is no place or region in Great Britain that would not host Polish people. No wonder, the great popularity of the so-called Saturday schools in Great Britain is recorded where as many as 20,000 Polish children learn their native language. The operation of schools are supported by local Polish communities with the aid of Polish government. In this perspective, quite spectacular is the negative reception of the decision taken by the British government not to continue with the possibility of taking the Polish language as a foreign on British A-level exam of 2018. This project was met with a decisive reaction from the Polish Ministry of Education and the consequent interventions with its British counterpart as well as interpolations from Polish deputies with the House of Commons.

Meanwhile the Scottish government is considering to include the Polish language on the list of foreign languages to be taught in Scotland with the prospect of A-level exam in Polish. On the other hand, in Northern Ireland the autonomous government decided not to continue with co-financing Polish schools, leaving the interested parties with the option to pursue their activities on condition that they find financial resources for the operation of these institutions.

⁶ The source of information: PAP agency reports retrieved from <<http://stowarzyszenie.wspolnotapolska.org.pl/>> (ED: May, 2016).

Taking all this into account, the role of State Commission for the Certification of Proficiency in Polish as a Foreign Language (<http://www.certyfikatpolski.pl/en/>) is notable. As can be read on the just quoted official page of the institution: "The main aim of state certificate examinations in Polish as a foreign language is to determine candidates' level of proficiency in Polish regardless of institution where they study Polish as a foreign language, and the curriculum, educational materials and methods applied during the learning process. Proficiency in Polish has been defined as the ability to understand contemporary oral and written Polish and the ability to use Polish in speaking and writing. Detailed conditions and procedures concerning the organization of examinations and issuance of certificates, as well as standard requirements for individual proficiency levels are stipulated in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Sports of 15 October 2003 (O.J. no. 191, item 1871)." The role of the institution may be thus viewed as accessory in maintaining the policy of the Polish government involving the 're-installation' of Polish immigrants in their domestic social-economic environment.

Also, we may not ignore the non-governmental institutions such as "Towarzystwo Miłośników Języka Polskiego" (the Association of the Lovers of the Polish Language) as well as "Towarzystwo Kultury Języka" (the Association of Language Culture), both boasting a long tradition of functioning for the sake of conserving the heritage of Polish culture and language. Their operations are certified by the issuance of highly renown journals as well as engagement in numerous activities promoting the Polish language and culture. This practically makes both Associations become one of the most influential centres of opinion-formation about Polish on the nationwide scale.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The Day of the Polish Language is held annually on 21st February on the occasion of worldwide celebrations of the International Mother Day Language established by UNESCO in 1999 in commemoration of the tragic events at the University of Dhaka in Bangladesh when 5 students were killed by the police while clamouring the Bengali to become the official language in their country. 21st January groups numerous events that are organized as those promoting the culture and civic self-awareness of the Polish language (e.g., the 2012 campaign "Ojczysty – dodaj do ulubionych" [Eng. The native – add to favourites]) as well as other socially notable initiatives, e.g. mainstream-media-supported educational action to encourage users to preserve

the use of diacritics in the contemporary electronic forms of communication. The increasing interest in the cultivation of the standard Polish language along with care for Polish regional dialects is a measure of success of the Polish LPP. This is corroborated by the results of the CBOS public opinion agency which conducted the questionnaire among Polish language users who were supposed to answer the question why we should care about the Polish language. The answers along with the percentage are provided in the Table 1 below:

Table 1.

Why, you think, should we care for the Polish language?	
Because the Polish language is a value which brings the nation together, and therefore, we should cater to it.	35,4%
Because I was taught at my family home to care for the Polish language.	19,4%
Because well-mannered people speak correct Polish.	19,5%
Because speaking correctly aids in communication.	12,3%
Because when people speak incorrectly, they are treated as ‘worse’ by others.	4,3%
Just because. I cannot justify it.	8,4%
It is hard to say.	0,6%
Because our language is beautiful.	0,1%

CBOS survey from 2005 (translation ours, EMW/MK).⁷

In sum, the LLP in Poland as regulated by the currently binding domestic legislation is primarily organized around the governmental executive centres, Polish consular authorities and national advisory institutions, e.g., the Council for the Polish language. The nature of Polish LPP is steered by its turbulent historical heritage (partitions of Poland) as well as contemporary history shaped by the Yalta settlements in 1945, which caused Poland to suffer a post-war Soviet domination over its territory until 1989. Upon gaining independence in 1989, the recent LPP oscillates round the policy of raising consciousness of the Polish language among the Polish citizens both at home and abroad, which resulted in the passing of the Act for the Polish language in 1999, a somewhat natural corollary of the adoption of the new Constitution in 1997. Years 2000–present involve crystallizing the LPP as prescribed in the relevant legal provisions as well as seeing a growing en-

⁷ <http://www.rjp.pan.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=96:co-polacy-sdz-o-jzyku-polskim-wyniki-badania-cbos&catid=45&Itemid=55> (ED: May 2016).

gagement of Polish governmental and non-governmental institutions in relation to the observed new waves of economic migration (Great Britain). In addition, the said institutions are also active to resolve *ad hoc* problems of Polish minorities, especially in Lithuania, Belarus and, last but not least, Ukraine where nationalist tendencies have grown with the accumulation of the war-conflict in the Eastern part of the country.

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