10 Studying Historical Multilingualism in Everyday Life: The Case of the Habsburg Monarchy in the Nineteenth Century

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A Frenchman speaks French, naturally (cf. Weber, 1976). It almost seems a truism. In fact, however, it required wide-ranging political and social engineering to turn peasants into, say, Frenchmen who speak French. National projects, at least in their European manifestation, typically aimed at monolingual societies and individuals as the dominant pattern. We may deplore modern nationalism, and the brutalities it led to since its arrival on the political scene in the nineteenth century, but the movement had a progressive agenda as well. The rise of modern life required efficient communication across large populations and areas without recourse to an elitist lingua franca. It also needed new symbols for supra-regional forms of collective identity. One of the era's most successful tools toward these ends was to select and validate preexisting monoglot communities, and to extend their reach. At the same time, this engendered a tunnel vision of linguistic identity in the service of the extralinguistic cause of national exclusivity. As Evans (2004) put it, "linguistic self-ascriptions quickly became subsumed in national ones, to which they continued to add a cutting edge" (p. 14).

The Habsburg Monarchy has long been identified as a prime example for the study of the rise of ethnolinguistic nationalism (cf. Kann, 1950; Wandruszka & Urbanitsch, 1980, to refer to just two influential surveys). On the eve of its demise, the empire stretched from the Carpathian Mountains in the east to Lake Constance in the west, and from the Central Bohemian Uplands in the north to Dalmatia in the south. These vast Central European lands were home to a highly linguistically diverse population. In speech, there were Hungarian and German varieties, Yiddish, the better part of all existing Slavonic languages and dialects, Italian, Romanian, and further Romance dialects, to name just the larger linguistic groups. In the constitutional era, heralded shortly after the revolution of 1848, and then gradually reintroduced on a firmer footing following the monarchy's defeat in Upper Italy in 1859, the imperial authorities funneled this diversity into a fixed selection of officially recognized languages. To refer to Evans (2006) again, "once the choices were made, linguistic practice hardened, [and] national cultural edifices came under rapid construction" (p. 111).

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A crucial ingredient was the politicization of the Romantic notion that a nation is defined by its language. As Josef Jungmann (2007 [1806], p. 107), one of the leading figures of the Czech National Revival, put it, "one could not imagine … a nation without its own language" (for the Czech original, see Vodička, 1948, p. 34). Intense language planning was necessary to elevate a particular dialect, or blend of dialects, to a literary, standard, and, ultimately, national language. It was aimed at creating "a form of decontextualised, neutral, widely accessible and learnable language," which often also meant that "the users of standard national languages were intended to be (or become) monolingual" (Costa et al., 2017, pp. 5, 12). These normative aspirations posed challenges to the linguistic reality in the late Habsburg Monarchy. In many areas people were not monolingual. They switched between languages and mixed dialects. The reasons for this varied. It could be a necessity or a deliberate choice. It could be due to indifference or poor literacy. At any rate, in the late monarchy and the successor states, there was an ever-increasing pressure on people to subscribe to one language and, by extension, to the eponymous nation (Judson, 2006; Moritsch, 1991; Stourzh, 1994). Those who did not, or could not, came to be called names, like 'amphibians' (Zahra, 2008).

Still, hybrid and multilingual practices remained an important aspect of everyday life in many areas. They pose a great methodological challenge because, unlike contemporary settings, they cannot be subject to direct observation and elicitation techniques. To meet this challenge, we must find the right sources and analyze them in a way that is adequate in sociolinguistic and in historical terms. The purpose of the present chapter is to address this task. The first section discusses sources that allow us to reconstruct multilingualism at the societal level. These are the late monarchy's well-known census data, ethnographic maps, and language laws. The second section then turns to the arguably more interesting question of how multilingualism worked in daily life. It proposes less obvious sources that may grant privileged glimpses into what happened on the ground, when people had direct dealings with each other, at their workplace, in commercial transactions, during leisure activities, within their private circles. The conclusion then summarizes what we can and what we cannot learn from the two types of sources under consideration about multilingualism in parts of late-imperial Central Europe.

10.1 Ethnographic Maps, Census Data, and Language Laws

This section critically assesses the sources that may offer insights into the workings of societal multilingualism in the Habsburg Monarchy in the nineteenth century. They allow us to reconstruct the large-scale distribution of the empire's languages in different geographical areas and their populations, and

in the key public domains of the modern state, notably in education, administration, the judiciary, military, and in religious affairs. We will see the two main caveats that pertain to these sources. One is that they offer a bird's eye view only, without elucidating what actually happened on the ground, in the streets, inns, houses, flats, workshops, fields, offices, regiments, and stores of the many multilingual communities. The other, arguably more serious one, is that they impose the ideological framework of the time. As has been frequently observed before (e.g., Stergar & Scheer, 2018), they privilege a picture of increasingly strict linguistic compartmentalization aimed at managing national aspirations, rather than reflecting actual linguistic practice in daily life.

Vested interest in the regional and social organization of multilingualism in the Habsburg dominions was not a novelty of the nineteenth century. It had started to preoccupy the monarchy's elites much earlier (cf. Fischer, 2001, on Slovene, German, and Latin in early modern Carniola, southern Carinthia, and Styria). However, there was a noticeable shift since the Josephinian decade of 1780 to 1790 in particular. It heralded the era of a centralizing state that described, measured, catalogued, and registered all corners of the realm, its populations, and languages. The six-volume *Geographical Handbook of the Austrian State* of 1790–1792 by the lawyer and geographer Ignaz de Luca is a pertinent example. Josephinism also gave rise to the beginnings of some of the monarchy's modern national movements, such as the Czech National Revival. In their infancy, they may have held the potential of complementing the modernization of Habsburg statecraft through vernacular democratization (Evans, 1990), as long as this did not impede implementation of German as the main official language. However, this prospect soon faded, and the national movements imbued linguistic categorization with new and powerful symbolism.

Unitary glossonyms, such as 'German,' 'Slovene,' 'Czech,' became key descriptive as well as normative terms. A highlight of their comprehensive application to the Habsburg Monarchy was Czoernig's *Ethnographic Map of the Austrian Monarchy* of 1855/56. In the first volume, Czoernig (1857, vol. 1, pp. 23–74) reported in detail on the languages that were spoken in particular localities. Despite the various shortcomings of Czoernig's collection method (cf. Deák, 2001; Labbé, 2010), his comprehensive account still allows us to identify the monarchy's bi- and multilingual areas in a way that no earlier source does. However, it does so on the taxonomic terms of the times. For example, Czoernig (1857, vol. 1, p. 32) has the western part of Austrian Silesia divided by a 'German-(Upper) Moravian border,' with 'Czech' as a synonym for '(Upper) Moravian.' He also makes allowance for 'mixed' areas. Even though all this was predominantly based on linguistic observations, it was meant to map ethnicities, rather than languages. As a consequence, the mapping remained oblivious to two crucial facts: many individuals were bilingual

in one form or another and the linguistic varieties they used in speech were not actually 'German' and 'Czech.' They were, rather, the Middle German dialect of the eastern Sudetes with strong Slavonic influence and a Lach or Silesian-Moravian dialect of Czech with some transitional features reminiscent of Polish. Neither of them would have been readily intelligible to a notional 'German' or 'Czech' speaker elsewhere.

Czoernig's ethnographic approach was soon superseded by demographic statistics as a strictly quantitative discipline (cf. Brix, 1982). From 1880, the Central Commission for Statistics conducted decennial censuses in the Austrian half of the monarchy. Each individual was asked to declare their 'everyday language' (*Umgangssprache*) from a closed list of nine options: 'German,' 'Czech-Moravian-Slovak,' 'Hungarian,' 'Italian-Ladin,' 'Polish,' 'Romanian,' 'Ruthenian' (i.e. Ukrainian), 'Serbian-Croatian,' or 'Slovene.' This will have put many intent on providing a genuine answer in a difficult position. For instance, for the western part of Austrian Silesia, the census of 1890 recorded 239,841 respondents opting for 'German,' 55,917 for 'Czech-Moravian-Slovak' (mainly in the provincial capital Opava (Troppau) and the surrounding district), 696 for 'Polish,' and 13 for other languages (K. K. Statistische Central-Commission, 1892, p. 162). However, the alleged 'German' speakers were, in actuality, predominantly Catholic Austrian subjects and citizens who were native in a distinct Silesian dialect. In a similar vein, many of the alleged 'Czech-Moravian-Slovak' speakers still saw themselves as speaking *po našemu* [in our way] – a term common in Teschen Silesia (Holub, 2011, p. 225) – rather than in 'Moravian,' let alone 'Czech.' At the time, a pejorative variant of the term 'Moravian' – *Moravci* – typically referred to the Lach speakers across the border in Prussia. In fact, 'Moravian' was altogether ill-suited for the Lach speakers of the historically non-Moravian Principality of Opava.

The difficulties of choosing from a closed list of nine languages in the Austrian censuses did not stop there. The Yiddish-speaking Jews of Austrian Silesia and elsewhere did not find their everyday language listed at all. Worst of all perhaps, if, in one form or another, one conversed in both 'Czech' and 'German' in everyday life, what should have been one's 'everyday language'? The reason for these shortcomings was that the census rubric effectively became a proxy for nationality, that is, an ethnolinguistic attribution that had to be classificatory and exclusive. This is why the Austrian statistical bureau had initially sought to avoid language as a census rubric altogether, until internal pressure and international standards made this stance untenable (Brix, 1982). We will see in the next section that, interestingly, imperial authorities, such as the courts, continued to ignore the language issue and did not classify people in that way.

The corresponding decennial censuses in Hungary had respondents declare their 'mother tongue,' and whether they spoke any other language of the country, which encompassed Hungary, Fiume, and Croatia-Slavonia. In practice, the languages that were registered for each country were 'Hungarian,' 'German,' 'Romanian,' 'Slovak,' 'Ruthenian,' 'Croatian,' 'Serbian,' and 'others.' As far as speaking any other language of the country was concerned, what this actually meant was knowledge of Hungarian as a second language (cf., e.g., Országos magyar kir. statisztikai hivatal, 1895, pp. 32–37). From the point of view of Hungary's statistical bureau, this was an attempt to track the assimilation of the non-Magyar population, or, at least, the success of implementing Hungarian as the language of the state and its citizens (Gal, 2011). Bilingualism was considered a necessary, transitional evil at best. Otherwise, the discourse of ethnolinguistic nationalism in late nineteenth-century Hungary and elsewhere had it as a potentially corrupting force that jeopardized a clear sense of national belonging. The census respondents themselves, however, may have had entirely different ideas about this. As Gal (2011) argues, the practice of child exchanges between Hungarian-, German-, and Slovak-speaking families well into the twentieth century is a potent example of how many of them deliberately raised their children as polyglots with a multilayered linguistic and national identity. Child exchange was equally well established among Czech- and German-speaking families in Bohemia (Zahra, 2008), even though, as mentioned, the Austrian censuses did not allow for individuals to declare themselves bi- or multilingual.

In short, the linguistic data gathered in the Austrian and Hungarian censuses from 1880 to 1910 were biased in various ways. Still, they offer a useful tool to identify in considerable detail which areas were bi- or multilingual, and to what extent. The societal bi- and multilingualism that the monarchy's statistics agencies recorded became subject to an ever-increasing number of language laws. These laws stipulated which language should be used on what occasion in public domains, notably in administration, education, the judiciary, and the military. They are an eloquent testimony to the underlying language ideologies of the time. An important shift occurred in the constitutional aftermath to the revolution of 1848–1849. For the first time, a law included a complete and fixed list of the languages officially considered customary in the lands of the monarchy. This was in the context of the introduction of a general 'Imperial Law and Ordinance Gazette.' The regulation stipulated that the gazette should be published in the German original and in translations into 'Italian,' 'Magyar,' 'Bohemian (with Moravian and Slovak),' 'Polish,' 'Ruthenian,' 'Slovene' (with Windish and Carniolan), 'Serbian-Illyrian' (in civic Cyrillic script), 'Serbian-Illyrian' (with Croatian in Latin script), and 'Romanian' (with Moldavian-Wallachian) (Fischel, 1910). These are effectively the same

standard and national languages in waiting that we already encountered as a rubric in the censuses of 1880–1910.

Once the monarchy's multilingualism was configured in these terms, public domains could be readily portioned into subdomains in which one or another of the officially sanctioned languages should be used by law. For instance, the administrative apparatus was divided into imperial, provincial, and autonomous local authorities. Each of them operated in three distinct areas of activity. Internal administrative processes were set apart from dealings between authorities, and these, in turn, were separate from dealings with members of the public (Mischler & Ulbrich, 1906). These subdomains allow us to reconstruct how the state agencies valued and hierarchized the languages that they proscribed for them.

What's more, these subdomains provide a dimension, key to any meaningful sociolinguistic study: a set of extralinguistic parameters with which linguistic variation is said to correlate. The compartmentalized world of official communication in the late monarchy readily translates into Fishman's (1965) notion of domains of language behavior. For each of them, we can investigate and quantify the actual linguistic choices made, that is, how often one or another language was used in particular domains and subdomains. Empirical studies of this kind can draw on the large paper trail that the late monarchy's public agencies left behind in archives across Central Europe (cf. Rindler Schjerve, 2003, on district offices, courts, and school authorities; Scheer, 2014, on the military) and elucidate the workings of bi- and multilingualism in public life at the time.

They also allow us to check language policies against actual linguistic practices. The comparison can be telling. For instance, the legislation concerning the above-mentioned Imperial Law Gazette changed frequently between 1849 and 1869. In one form or another, it stipulated that there should be translations from German. In practice, however, it was at the provincial level, rather than at the central ministry of justice in Vienna where these translations were mostly made in the 1850s and 1860s (Fellerer, 2005). This shows that multilingualism, by then legally sanctioned by Vienna, was still relegated in practice to a provincial matter. In the Austrian half of the monarchy, this didn't change until 1869 when all the translations of the Imperial Law Gazette were in fact prepared at the center of power in the imperial capital itself.

Albeit revealing in certain respects, the study of language policies and actual linguistic practices in public domains has an important limitation too. In historical sociolinguistics, it remains wedded to the written medium, and a monolithic understanding of languages in terms of glossonyms, such as 'German,' 'Slovene,' 'Slovak.' Yet, everyday life in multilingual communities is first and foremost based on oral communication. It tends to involve more complex forms of linguistic competence and practices, notably different

degrees of individual bilingualism, code-switching, and code-mixing. To take account of this, and to gain a better understanding of what happened on the ground in the late monarchy's bi- and multilingual villages, towns, and cities, we must look toward entirely different sources, as I shall outline in the next section.

10.2 Memoirs, Satirical Magazines, and Criminal Court Records

This section critically assesses sources that take us closer to the multilingual reality of the late monarchy on the ground, in everyday life, when people had direct dealings with each other in the streets, marketplaces, houses, workshops, and inns of their locality. They are texts that, in one way or another, recreate past daily life in a bi- or multilingual setting. The example that comes to mind most readily is the many memoirs that have come down to us from the late monarchy. They may include passages in which the author recounts experiences of a bi- or multilingual neighborhood, family, upbringing, or career, such as the life of Václav Holek, a German-Czech worker, teacher, and social democrat from northern Bohemia (1909, with a Czech translation in 2011). Holek was not at all interested in linguistic matters. His main focus was poverty and politics. Still, the narrative regularly features instructive passages on the author's daily life as a Czech and German speaker in various areas of northern Bohemia, before he left for Dresden in search of work. His son, Heinrich, who became a successful writer, also left a memoir that recounts his childhood between German and Czech (Holek, 1927, see also Zahra, 2008).

Memoirs aside, there are other, less expected textual sources. The following discussion will first focus on the burgeoning satirical press of late nineteenth-century Austria. It will then turn to criminal court records as another gateway into understanding multilingualism in past daily life. Humorous magazines often had a distinctly local focus and employed stereotypes to identify particular social groups, and to cast judgment on their alleged behavior or views. A prime device to that end was linguistic characterization, in particular nonstandard forms of usage, notably dialect, 'non-fluent' bilingualism, code-switching, and code-mixing. It is not possible here to expand on these widely discussed concepts describing types of nonnormative linguistic performance by speakers in situations of societal bi- and multilingualism (for a brief introduction to the particularly problematic term 'non-fluent' bilingualism, see Edwards, 1994, pp. 55–60). Whichever their precise linguistic manifestation, the satirical press frequently featured them in the form of stylizations that deliberately deviated from the officially sanctioned standard languages.

Take, for instance, the satirical magazine *Strachopud* [Scarecrow] from Lviv, the capital of the crown land Galicia in the northeast of the Austrian half of the late monarchy. The magazine was a relatively stable fixture of the

city's satirical press from the 1870s. In ideological terms, it was close to Galicia's so-called Russo- or Moscophiles, Ukrainian activists and intellectuals who thought of themselves as part of the Russian nation. They counted on association with it as a potential means of political and cultural emancipation from Habsburg-backed Polish dominance over the province and its capital city (Wendland, 2001). In its own voice, *Strachopud* employed a form of Russian that incorporated numerous western Ukrainian linguistic features. The peculiar amalgam did not exist in speech, but it built upon a long history of mixed written forms of expression among Galicia's Ukrainians. At the same time, the magazine employed further linguistic stylizations to pinpoint specific constituencies of the city's population. For example, toward the end of its existence, in the year 1912, it featured a column titled *Kocja* (*Strachopud*, 1912, nos. 3, 7, 11, 18–19). This was the name of a fictitious female correspondent who sent in hostile letters to the magazine to hurl abuse at its Russophile orientation from the point of view of a fervent, yet still generally Habsburg-loyal, Polish nationalist from Lviv. Fictitious readers' letters were a popular genre in the satirical press of the time in general. They provided a format to mount a clichéd caricature of the writer as a representative of a particular social group, with the aim of denouncing their alleged views and behavior. Linguistic characterization was central to that end.

The following illustration shows the caricature accompanying the column. It is addressed at a fictitious *Maszercio*, presumably a hypocoristic modeled on French *Ma chère.* As was customary, this was published anonymously to avoid the hand of the censor.

Here is a passage from the column in which our fictitious *Kocja* expresses her delight at an anti-Russian gathering of Poles in central Lviv:

Ach jag to miło beło popaczeć na tylo tysięczny tłum protestantuf, protestujących przeciw narodowyj krzywdzie, zrżądzonyj nam przez moskala! Powiadam ci, - że z radości pierś mi wezbrała jak Czarny potok w Kołomyi po dyszczu i aż mi oddech zaparło, a sercy to mi tak tiochkało jak motor fatalnego samochodu p. Richtmana, co to nidawno pszyjechał u wy Lwowi przez jakoś kobito.
[Oh how lovely it was to see a crowd of so many thousands of protesters protesting against the harm that was done to our nation by the Muscovite! I'm telling you that my breast filled with joy like the Black Brook in Kolomyja after rain, and it took my breath away, and my heart was beating like the engine of the fatal car of Mr Richtman that recently ran over some woman in Lviv.]

The column is composed in a stylized form of the local urban Polish dialect of late-Habsburg Lviv. This was a variant of so-called southeastern 'borderland' Polish. It had developed under strong influence of the surrounding southwestern Ukrainian vernacular. Some of the various Ukrainian-inspired

Fig. 10.1 *Kocja* column in *Strachopud* 11 (1912), pp. 3–4. Public domain.

dialectalisms reflected in the passage are the raised articulation of unstressed vowel phonemes, such as [i] for /ɛ/, as in *nidawno* for *niedawno*; and the lowered articulation of the phoneme /**i**/ close to [ɛ] in stressed syllables, as in *beło* for *było* [was] (Seiffert-Nauka, 1992). At the same time, some Ukrainianizing traits of the passage transcend the usual range. What is not normally attested in Lviv Polish is, for example, the verb *tiochkać* [to beat strongly] (with regard to the heart), the reduplication of the local preposition in the form *u wy Lwowi* [lit. in in Lviv], and the adjectival fem. dat. sg. ending –*yj*, as in *narodowyj* [national], instead of the usual dialectal ending –*y* for Standard Polish –*ej* (Seiffert-Nauka, 1992). These were synchronous Ukrainianisms, modeled on Ukrainian *t'ochkaty*, a Ukrainian reduplication attested in *u-vi-jty,* [lit. in-in-go, that is 'to enter'], and the consistent retention of word-final –*j* in southwestern Ukrainian (even though, admittedly, fem. dat.

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sg. *–yj* might also be under the influence of Standard Polish). The author must have chosen these linguistic markers to betray our fictitious correspondent as someone with a Ukrainian linguistic background, even though she had fully adopted the local Polish vernacular in a bid to emulate the city's dominant language and culture. In the same vein, her name itself appears to be the polonized form of the Ukrainian nickname *Kotja*, lit. 'kitten.' How accurate stylized texts of this kind were in structural-linguistic terms is a question I cannot pursue further here (for more detail, see Fellerer, 2020). However, they must have undoubtedly served the purpose of signposting nonstandard usage typical of a particular social group; in our case, that of Lviv commoners of Ukrainian extraction who had, as it were, traded up to the city's local, Polish-based vernacular. Otherwise, the intended satirical effect would have been lost on the contemporary reader.

The corollary for the purpose at hand here is that these texts reveal some of the actual linguistic complexities hidden behind the monolithic glossonyms of the national era. These had historical Lviv as a 'Polish-Ukrainian' speaking city, without acknowledging Yiddish, and without recognizing that the city's multilingualism first and foremost involved nonstandard usage in the form of dialect, code-mixing, code-switching, and 'non-fluent' bilingualism.

The same point can be made if we move to another capital city of the late monarchy. In Prague, we find that the city's Czech satirical press was not just in Czech. It played, to some extent, on the city's more complex linguistic landscape that also included German and Yiddish, albeit the latter decreasing fast in the nineteenth century. Take, for example, a fictitious conversation between two coachmen in an issue of the satirical magazine *Nový Paleček* [Tom Thumb] of 1894. The illustration in Fig. 10.2 shows the accompanying caricature and the beginning of the text titled *Na štaflu* [At the carriage stand].

Here is a passage further into the conversation between the two coachmen. They talk about their business woes at a time of political turmoil around the so-called *Omladina* trials.

A vostatně já sem spokojenej. Kšefty se dělaj. Když bouchnou někde dvéře vod sklepu, tak hned je tu mladej pán, samej cvikr, samej krabatl – to je jako z novin – ten tam jede, kde to bouchlo, za chvíli tam inej pán v cylindru, proč to bouchlo. Jeden to spisuje a druhý to hned maluje a tak jezdím furt. Teď, co to vybouchlo u tý „Voršuskasy", tak nejezdím na štafl, objedu Prahu a ritů houf!

[But lately I'm calmer. There is business. When the doors of a shop bang somewhere, then, immediately, there's a young gent, all pince-nez and tie – like from the papers. He goes where it banged, and a moment later there's another gent in a top hat; why it banged. One writes it down and another paints it straightaway, but I drive on anyway. Now, something exploded there at that Advance Payment Bank, and so I don't go to the carriage stand. I'll drive around Prague, and there are rides galore!]

Fig. 10.2 *Na štaflu* in *Nový Paleček* 11 (1894), p. 88. Public domain.

The text is written in the colloquial form of Central (Prague) 'Common Czech' with numerous loans from (Austrian) German. Some typical colloquialisms represented in the stylized text are [ej] for /i:/, e.g., masc. nom. sg. *mladej* for Standard Czech *mladý* [young]; [i:] for /ɛ:/, e.g., fem. gen. sg. *tý* for *té* [that]; and 3rd pl. *dělaj* for *dělají* [do] (Townsend, 1990). The Germanisms of the passage are *cvikr* [pince-nez], *krabatl* [tie], *furt* [constantly], *štafl* [stand], *rit* [ride], and *houf* [a lot]. Some less, some more established, they testify to the significance of language contact in the linguistic landscape of historical Prague.

Such contact-induced nonstandard vernaculars were usually the most characteristic variants used in speech in the late monarchy's bi- and multilingual localities. One can identify them with the help of the satirical press, provided that one submits the texts to careful source criticism. That is, one must read them with close reference to the historical context and events to which the texts refer, and mindful of the ideological direction and prejudices of the press organ where they appeared. In particular, it is important to keep in mind that the linguistic stylizations were clichéd, sometimes maliciously so. They were meant to signify, but not to document, actual linguistic practices.

To understand when the contact-induced nonstandard vernaculars were used in actual practice, I propose to look at another source – criminal court records. The charges brought by the prosecutor, witness testimonies, other pieces of written evidence, and the courts' judgments contain a wealth of information about the individuals involved in each case, their contacts, and daily routines. These texts thus effectively recreate the social networks of ordinary people whose life and activities rarely went on record anywhere else. The notion of social networks is an important tool in variationist sociolinguistics (Milroy, 2002). When applied to past bi- or multingual communities, it helps reveal the communicative situations in which speakers of different languages came into direct contact with each other. The varieties they typically used on these occasions can be reconstructed from what the court records tell us about their social and linguistic background, in conjunction with our knowledge of what nonstandard lects were in use at the time.

In short, criminal court records can be a window into the workings of bi- and multilingualism in daily life in past societies. To be sure, the texts rarely provide any direct linguistic evidence. They are composed in the official 'internal' administrative language of the province or district, and they show little or no traces of the nonstandard vernaculars many defendants and witnesses will have undoubtedly used. However, the information they contain about them allows us to make inferences about their actual linguistic conduct. For an illustration, we will now return to Lviv, the capital city of the late-Habsburg province of Galicia. The court responsible for criminal and serious civil matters in the city and the Lviv court district was the Imperial-Royal Provincial Court. Its rich records are held in fonds 152 of the Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine in Lviv.

Let us turn to one particular case study. It concerns the housemaids Eudokia *vulgo* Ewa Zacharko and Józefa Tomasiewicz (sub-fonds 2, file 20491). Accused of a theft that occurred on October 3, 1900, the defendants were tried by jury, found guilty, and sentenced on February 9, 1901. The entire act is in Standard Polish, even though this was undoubtedly not the language of the main defendant, Ewa Zacharko. Zacharko was twenty-eight years old and a member of the Greek Catholic Church. She hailed from the village of Machnówek north of Lviv, close to the border with the Russian Empire. Approximately two thirds of its population spoke 'Ruthenian,' that is, south-western Ukrainian, according to the Austrian census of 1900 (K. K. statistische Zentralkommission, 1907, p. 620). There can be little doubt that Zacharko as a Greek Catholic was one of them, even though the records are typically silent on the language or languages individuals spoke. The courts did not consider language a significant attribute. What was important was that officialdom had done its duty and compiled all the relevant documents in the courts' official language, Polish. If a witness or defendant gave their testimony in

Ukrainian – as was their right – the official would have still taken this down in Polish. Rather than language, the emphasis was on other attributes, most importantly religion, but also place of birth, parents, age, and education. In the case of Zacharko, the records explicitly mention that she had 'no education' and could not read or write, a frequent occurrence in Galicia even as late as 1900 (e.g., Baczkowski, 2006). Given compulsory elementary school attendance and the availability of a parish school in her village (Chlebowski et al., 1884, p. 874), this probably means that Zacharko left school early and that she migrated to Lviv in search of work at an early age.

The court records refer to various engagements as a domestic worker before she entered the services of the Mościskers, a middle-class Jewish family at 8 Staszic Street in the relatively affluent southern district of the city (now Tomašivs'koho Street). Józefa Tomasiewicz, a twenty-two-year-old Roman Catholic of Łęki Dolne, an exclusively Polish-speaking village in western Galicia (K. K. statistische Zentralkommission, 1907, p. 460), was Zacharko's immediate colleague in the Mościskers' household. The witness testimonies show that Zacharko also had regular interaction with the Polish-speaking maids of other households at 8 Staszic Street, such as that of Aniela Wiszniewska and her sister Klara Migocka, the victim of the theft. Zacharko, in the presence of Tomasiewicz, had gained access to their attic and taken money and various valuable household items. She gave one of them, a piece of linen, to her fiancé, Antoni Tyśnicki, with the request that his sister should use it to sew a shirt for her. Tyśnicki, a carpenter and, at the time, a recruit at the thirtieth infantry regiment with Polish as its official language of command, was a Roman Catholic from suburban Lviv. It is highly likely that he was a speaker of the local south-eastern 'borderland' dialect of Polish.

The picture that emerges is that Zacharko's main means of communication in her social network of peers, employers, and fiancé must have been a variant of the local Polish dialect with strong contact-induced Ukrainian features. This was the dominant vernacular in late-Habsburg Lviv. It reflected the fact that, since the late 1860s, political control over the city and the province was largely in the hands of the Habsburg-loyal Polish estates. Their language, however, was certainly not Zacharko's or Tyśnicki's dialect. It was Standard Polish, and, until earlier in the nineteenth century, Latin in writing. Zacharko had adopted the local dialect not out of choice but to adapt to the diglossic reality in the city at the time. The fact that she went by the Polish first name 'Ewa,' rather than her actual Christian name 'Eudokia,' suggests that she had done so with considerable consistency. As soon as the court received a copy of the birth certificate from Zacharko's Greek Catholic parish, it added '*recte* Eudokia' to any mention of the name 'Ewa' in the documents. That is, it clarified that her actual Christian name was not Ewa, but Eudokia, which clearly identified her as a Greek Catholic. As mentioned, the authorities continued to give

precedence to confessional and religious divides over linguistic distinctions. Zacharko's main linguistic persona in Lviv appears to be similar to what the stylization of the *Kocja* columns in *Strachopud* took aim at: a lower-class female resident of Lviv with a Ukrainian linguistic background but assimilated to the local Polish dialect. At the same time, it must not be overlooked that Zacharko's social network also included fellow Ukrainian dialect speakers. The court case reveals that she had taken most of the stolen items, concealed in a large parcel, to the place of Teodor and Anastazya Wołczak, or Wawczuk in some of the documents. They are the only individuals in the file referred to as Zacharko's friends. They were Greek Catholics and residents – in the case of Teodor native – of the suburban, almost exclusively 'Ruthenian'-speaking village Humieniec/Humenec' south of Lviv (K. K. statistische Zentralkommission, 1907, p. 342). We do not know how Zacharko and the Wawczuks knew each other, but it is highly likely that they were fellow speakers of southwestern Ukrainian dialects who would have used their vernacular when they met.

The 'Ukrainian' maid in 'Polish' Lviv is a well-worn stereotype. Even though compelling in its simplicity, this description obscures the actual, more nuanced manifestation of bi- and multilingualism in everyday urban life. For example, Zacharko's bilingualism must have developed gradually. Illiterate in both Polish and Ukrainian, her adopted southeastern 'borderland' Polish dialect could readily accommodate a variable amount of grammatical and lexical influence from her native southwestern Ukrainian dialect. Zacharko must have had a high degree of linguistic integration into her Polish-dialect speaking social network at work, in her lodgings, and her private life. Yet, the latter also provided occasions when she spoke her native Ukrainian dialect. The court file on the criminal case for which Zacharko went on record allows for this more nuanced reconstruction of her linguistic conduct in multilingual Lviv. One must add that it is also a sad illustration of the socioeconomic hardship that someone like Ewa Zacharko suffered.

As the term 'reconstruction' suggests, and as mentioned before, the criminal court records rarely offer direct evidence of who used what lect, especially nonstandard ones, in everyday life in bi- and multilingual localities of the late monarchy. They contain a range of information about the individuals involved, their origin, religion, education, trajectory in life, occupation, residence, their social circles, and, occasionally, their knowledge of written languages. It is this information, in conjunction with our knowledge of the local linguistic landscape, that allows us to make inferences about their lingustic choices in particular communicative situations. The outcome are likelihoods, but not certainties. For example, it is likely that Zacharko and Tyśnicki conversed in their respective variants of south-eastern 'borderland' Polish when they met. At the same time, it is not entirely inconceivable that Zacharko spoke in her

southwestern Ukrainian dialect if, exceptionally, Tyśnicki perceived it as sufficiently intelligible to guarantee successful communication. Thus, we are dealing with likelihoods, rather than certainties. This is the main limitation of criminal court records as a source to study historical multilingualism in everyday life. We can mitigate against this by way of looking at a number of cases to see whether they converge on likely patterns of who used a particular lect and on what occasion. In the absence of direct documentation, the results remain inferential, rather than proven.

Conclusion

The multilingual world of the late Habsburg Monarchy has come down to us in a variety of sources. There are maps, census data, language policies, and choices in the domains of public life. They allow us to reconstruct the geographical and large-scale societal distribution of languages. However, they do so on their own terms, wedded to the primacy of written national languages, and silent on all forms of nonstandard usage and language mixing. I argued that a completely different range of sources was needed to overcome these constraints. Memoirs, the satirical press, and criminal court records afford glimpses into the actual linguistic practices of the time. Yet, they come with their own limitations. They invite an inductive approach, and with it, its pitfalls. An individual biography, a stylized satire of local society, or a chunk of past everyday life around some alleged wrongdoing – these pieces of evidence suggest probable patterns of people's actual linguistic conduct. However, they do not provide certainties. If we could travel in time and observe firsthand, we might well find that some conclusions were wrong. To mitigate against this, we must triangulate the sources. The geographical and societal macro-view puts a check on what was possible on the ground. The linguistic stereotypes recurrent in satire whittle down the linguistic continuum to some salient nonstandard, mixed, and switched varieties. For the selection to stack up, the social networks that emerge from the criminal court records must reveal plausible interactional sites where these varieties were in use. In short, this chapter encourages an approach to historical multilingualism that will be discouraged in other fields of study: eclecticism of sources and data.

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