Letters of Freedom and Captivity:
Scriptal Planning and Language Ideologies in Baltic Central-Eastern Europe

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Introduction

Most experts in Japan's political history are aware that the reforms of the state initiated during the Meiji period also instigated a scriptal dispute by adding arguments on national identity to what was later known as 国語国字問題 [= *The Question of National language and National Script*]. The preference for a script and writing system—Chinese characters *Kanji*, only *Katakana* (or *Hiragana*), or Latin *Romaji* alphabet—reflected one's thought about the state and the nation, specifically, the national/state language used for and in a modernized Japan.[1]

The Japanese case evidently shows that scriptal issues may directly refer as much to politics and ideologies as to the language ideologies *sensu proprio*, that is, languages used by so-called "speech communities" as their social communication methods. Although I do not agree to the general criticism of the term "speech communities," the terminology is inadequate in terms of its reference to communities created, united, or consolidated by scriptal factors.

The results of research and practice show that one of the most visible dimensions of the dominance of one language over another implies the **dominance of writing system**(s), often occurring in the most visible spheres of language performance and use. Wherever people are politically influenced by others, the more powerful polity typically tends to—and eventually does—impose their scriptal principles, including script, writing system, orthography, or other graphic elements, such as fonts, letters/graphemes, or diacritics.[2]

Nevertheless, writing systems (and other scriptal factors) affect the users'

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1 Lee Yeounsuk, *Perspectives on Kokuji, the National Script: The Ideology of Kokugo: Nationalizing Language in Modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), pp. 23–32.

2 For the sake of precision, the classifier "scriptal" will be used in reference to all those factors/layers.

The meaning of the most frequent terms used in this paper have been defined, as given below:

  • a SCRIPT is a set of graphic signs (GRAPHEMES) for writing languages, which contains information about the basic level of language to which its signs correspond: words, syllables, or phonemes;

  • a WRITING SYSTEM—an implementation of a script (or sometimes more) to form a complete system for writing a particular language variety;

  • a writing system can be standardized by means of an ORTHOGRAPHY, that is, explicit spelling norms (arranged and published as spelling rules) and implicit norms (which often license a greater variation).

communities in multiple ways, as they constitute the focal points for disputes and political antagonism, highlight major socio-cultural shifts in societies, and embody issues, such as identity, ethnicity, cultural contacts and conflicts, religion, literacy, modernization and progress, and center-versus-periphery power relations.

These issues are part of traditional sociolinguistic research, in addition to playing an important role in the complex dynamics between writing systems and their communities. Therefore, I propose the term "**communities of writing**" as a scriptal counterpart of "speech communities" (even though the factors of (**il**)**literacies** of various levels and types must also be considered when constructing a model).

The main perspectives adopted in the present article have been historical sociolinguistics and language ideology studies. The former has been understood as a study of the relationship between language and society in its historical dimension, based on the studies of Romaine (1982) and Nevalainen (2003) and the handbook by Hernández-Campoy and Conde-Silvestre (2012).[3] Parenthetically, the understanding of language ideology has multiple applications in disciplines ranging from linguistics and anthropology through historical sociolinguistics, sociology, and political science. Therefore, I prefer to use a more general definition of the term, based on Silverstein (1979).[4] This definition makes no reference to the systemic structure, layout, or interface (spoken, signed, written: handwritten, painted, typed, or printed) of a language variety, its political, or extralinguistic status, or factual veracity: "A language ideology is a set (consistent or otherwise) of beliefs (conscious or otherwise) about the nature and practice of language, particularly in social contexts."

The transdisciplinary approaches and methodologies, such as (historical) sociolinguistics, language planning and policy studies, and language ideology studies, have included written language(s), or focused on scriptal issues in their studies. Contrarily, general and historical linguistics continue to ignore any relation between script and "the substance of language," viewing them as "a secondary matter":[5]

From the viewpoint of modern linguistics, the substance of language consists

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• FONTS or TYPEFACES are graphical variants within a script.

3 Suzanne Romaine, *Socio-historical Linguistics: Its Status and Methodology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Terttu Nevalainen, *Socio-historical Linguistics: Language Change in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Longman, 2003); Juan Manuel Hernández-Campoy and Juan Camilo Conde-Silvestre, eds., *The Handbook of Historical Sociolinguistics* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).

4 Michael Silverstein, "Language Structure and Linguistic Ideology," in Paul R. Clyne, William F. Hanks, and Carol L. Hofbauer, eds., *The Elements: A Parasession on Linguistic Units and Levels Including Papers from the Conference on Non-Slavic Languages of the USSR* (Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society, 1979), pp. 193–247.

5 Yeounsuk, *Perspectives on Kokuji*, p. 23.

of sound, whereas script is the mere outer covering of language. Just as cosmetics and clothing do not affect the human body itself, the choice of script is an external element irrelevant to the substance of language. Thus, the object of linguistics research has been sounds and the relationship among sounds at each level of phonology, morphology, and syntax. Why, then, do people become so passionate about the choice of script (...) if the problems of script are a secondary matter in language (...)?

In a footnote to the above fragment, Lee stated:

When it comes to script, people become so emotional that they form irrational but intense likes and dislikes. However, this is not because ordinary people are ignorant of linguistics. In fact, linguists also become passionate about the problems surrounding script.

Indeed, the present paper focuses on passions and emotions—which bind writing and scriptal policies with language ideologies—and sociolinguistic identities.

This paper focuses on selected scriptal aspects of language and identity engineering, supported by several case studies from the sociolinguistic history of Baltic Central-Eastern Europe. The discussed cases of scriptal identity and the related language ideologies and attitudes, as well as the relevant language planning decisions taken in modern history, have formed hotspots of contacts between Slavic, Baltic, and Germanic language communities. Both the Masurian and Lithuanian lects (as well as Latgalian, mentioned to a much lesser extent) witnessed fierce ideological and political conflicts centered on scriptal factors. The case studies explore possible extensions of the previous discussions on the orthographic debates in the Slavic world and Slavic studies.

SOCIOLINGUISTICS OF IDENTITY

Sociolinguistics and the sociology of language have, for many decades, explored and explained the relationship between language variation and society. This exploration has covered almost every aspect of language use and level of structure. It has demonstrated that choices have the potential to take on a social meaning—and they usually do.

For my current project (*Scripts, writing systems and orthographies in the sociolinguistics, contact linguistic and language policy studies of the Central-Eastern European Sprachareal*), I adopted a ternary aggregate perspective:

- historical sociolinguistics and the ideology of scriptal choices;
- ethnography of scripts;
- and, variationist sociolinguistics of writing, script, (ortho)graphies and fonts.

In this paper, I focus on the first approach, even though some elements of the remaining approaches are also referred to.

However, to accurately understand the ideological dimension of scriptal

policies—behaviors, decisions, and choices—we should allow for a semiotic perspective. Graphic signs are not only conveyors of linguistic content, but also form *Signs of Identity*. Ehala (2018) remarked,[6]

> Collective identities are organized along various dimensions: gender, race, ethnicity, age, language, religion, profession etc. Each of these dimensions allows a certain number of distinct categories (...) people may belong to groups, which are defined along the same dimension. (...) Members of a society, be it a relatively homogenous of diverse one, are acutely aware of the various identities that are present in their society.

Surprisingly, scriptal elements, such as script, writing system, individual graphemes, (any pleremic elements of) orthographic inventory, and fonts and typefaces, have rarely been perceived and analyzed as one (or multiple) of those dimensions. Consequently, they are not the "most acutely realized" elements but can be familiarized, for example, by the conscious authors of intra-group identity or by means of ethnicity-and-language engineering. Therefore, they ideally fit into complex models of identity, or "anatomy of belonging."

European Nation-States, Languages, and Scripts

Since the rise of nationalism, Europeans have mostly judged languages based on whether they are written and standardized. The case of Central-Eastern Europe is quite remarkable, as language constellations have been dependent on both imperial policies and nation-state language planning, typically in the form of social, ethnic, or linguistic "engineering." All the planned and unplanned choices in these processes amounted to standardization (homogenization or elimination of territorial and social diversity/variation), which intensified with the growth of literacy within a population. The long existent states and religions decidedly shaped the constellation of written languages across Europe and influenced circumstances in large parts of the world.

Europe's constellation of the 20th century witnessed the implementation of ethnolinguistic nationalism's political principle claiming that the nation-state is legitimate (generally) if it is monolingual (and, from the perspective of a "community of writing," monoscriptal) and does not share its official language with another polity.[7] These processes were pronounced in Central and Eastern Europe with consecutive stages of nation-state formation, peaking around 1918 and the 1990s.

Language planners frequently refer to their pursuit of "language purity."

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6 Martin Ehala, *Signs of Identity: The Anatomy of Belonging* (Basingstoke: Routledge, 2018), pp. 25–39.

7 The cases of biscriptality, with their sociolinguistic, glottopolitical, and ideological backgrounds and contexts, have been expertly described in the pioneering monograph: Daniel Bunčić, Sandra L. Lippert and Achim Rabus, eds., *Biscriptality, A Sociolinguistic Typology* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2016).

With respect to the lexicon, grammar, and orthography, they purportedly strive to follow a substantive language planning model, which rejects influences from outside languages in the most visible—written, printed, and displayed—form of language. However, it is almost impossible to preserve a "graphic purity"; otherwise, any variety considered a language would have its written form. Previous theoretical works on ideological arguments over language standardization and case studies exploring ideological foundations of specific orthographies have demonstrated that both the elite and everyday practices—through which the systematicity of a writing system is maintained—are generally intertwined with language ideologies (cf. Dickinson 2015).[8] They argued that through standardization, systematic regulation of writing becomes a means of strengthening a visible, iconic representation of a language. Graphocentric ideologies of standard language then posit these written forms as the norm based on which other written forms and spoken forms are judged (cf. Sebba 2013).[9] Thus, variation in written forms is both constrained and imbued with social meaning through the creation of indexical links between orthographic variation and/or orthographic variants and ideological positions (cf. Sebba 2007):[10] "There are socially and linguistically defined constraints that limit the range of variation in written forms, and these theoretical discussions highlight the importance of understanding variation as a key element in the negotiation of indexical meanings for written forms." In situations of digraphia, biscriptality, or competing standards and orthographies, the choice of writing system—or the choice to combine elements of available writing systems—simultaneously acknowledges parallel symbolic systems as sets of graphemes representing the specific linguistic segment and highlights the ideological layering of meaning, as comprehensively presented in the monograph by Bunčić, Lippert, and Rabus (2016).

THE MASURIAN CASE

Let us take a closer look at the question of scriptal identity among the **Masurians**, who are a small Lechitic ethnic group,[11] traditionally inhabiting the present-day Warmia-Masuria Voivodeship of Poland. In the 2011 Polish census, only 1376 individuals declared themselves to be Masurian, as the primary or

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8 Jennifer A. Dickinson, "Introduction: Language Ideologies and Writing Systems," *Pragmatics* 25:4 (2015), pp. 507–516.

9 Mark Sebba, "Multilingualism in Written Discourse: An Approach to the Analysis of Multilingual Texts," *International Journal of Bilingualism* 17:1 (2013), pp. 97–118.

10 Mark Sebba, *Spelling and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

11 The term "Lechitic" was introduced to Slavic philology to widen the philological concept of Polish(ness), to include chiefly the northern Kashubian(ness)... It has worked quite productively since then, as the micro-language-communities, such as Masurian, or Silesian, found their way into "Lekhiticness." To some extent, the term "Polish Macrolanguage" could be used in that sense.

secondary identification. For centuries preceding the World War II, and particularly before the post-war expulsions, Masurians prevailed over the southern parts of East Prussia as the dominant ethnic group Today, most of their descendants live in present day Germany.

Hentschel (2002) claims that remnants of the Masurian people are preserved in the south of the former German East Prussia, with around 10,000–15,000 native speakers.[12] The disappearance of almost the entire Masurian population of East Prussia can be explained by post-war expulsions, or by their post-1956 departure to Germany. In the period before World War II, the Masurian population was mostly of German nationality, or at least non-Polish. The Prussian administration and statistics labeled Masurians as a separate ethno-linguistic community; in contrast to an overwhelming majority of Poles belonging to the Roman Catholic Church, the Masurians have been predominantly Lutheran Protestants. Masurians constituted a border community, with a perceptible anthroponymic indicator of "borderness": German first names with Polish surnames. Consequently, many German sources referred to Masurian as a separate language, while Polish sources considered it a sub-dialect of Mazovian Polish. According to many Polish ethnohistorians, Masurians were regarded as a Polish minority in East Prussia. The ethno-linguistic constellation of Masurian(s) is otherwise quite straightforwardly expressed in the titles of monographs, such as Blanke's (2001) *Polish-speaking Germans?*[13] or Kossert's (2001) *Preußen, Deutsche oder Polen?*[14] After 1933, the use of Masurian was largely prohibited by the national socialist German authorities. In 1938, many places and personal names in Masuria were changed, and in 1939, a ban was imposed on religious services held in Masurian.

Hentschel (2002) classified Masurian as a dialect of Polish, more precisely, a subdialect of the Mazovian dialect of Polish, with abundant German loanwords and lexical borrowings resulting from immediate contact with the standard High-German language, mostly its colloquial variant.[15] Furthermore, lesser lexical traces of the Baltic Old-Prussian dialects (native to the region until the 16th century) have been found, which distinguishes Masurian from other Mazovian dialects. In sociolinguistic terms, Masurian could be considered a dialect of Polish (or "covered/roofed" by standard Polish as *Dachsprache*) until the mid-20th century, as the post-War policy of the Polish (communist) state and institutions disregarded any distinction of the Masurian lect to create "new mixed dialects" of Northern (and Western) territories. Kloss ([1952]

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12 Gerd Hentschel, "Masurisch," in Miloš Okuka and Gerard Krenn, eds., *Wieser Enzyklopädie des europäischen Ostens*, Bd. 10: *Lexikon der Sprachen des europäischen Ostens* (Klagenfurt: Wieser Verlag, 2002), pp. 313–314.

13 Richard Blanke, *Polish-speaking Germans? Language and National Identity among the Masurians since 1871* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2011).

14 Andreas Kossert, *Preußen, Deutsche oder Polen? Die Masuren im Spannungsfeld des ethnischen Nationalismus 1870–1956* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001).

15 Hentschel, "Masurisch," pp. 313–314.

1978 qualified Masurian (before 1945) as a "roofless exclave-dialect" (*dachlose Außenmundart*) of Polish).[16] Polish functioned as a symbolic reference for Masurian activists who overtly campaigned for the Polish state during the 1920 plebiscite, which shaped Poland's northern borders.[17]

According to Hentschel (2002), Masurians have not attempted to standardize the language, or any of its scriptal norm.[18] However, this opinion changed quite recently, when a copy of the book entitled *Ta Swenta Woyna, prowadzona od Pana Boga przeciwko Diabłowzy. Albo: Utrata i Nazatwigranie tego Mnasta Człowzeci-Dusi. Od Jana Buniana. Nowo obrozona i widana od chrzesćinskego Zwionsku Zmorcisnowy stroni Kraiu Nemneckego, w Niemneckem Jenziku. Roku 1900. Przetłomacona na Polski-jenzik, w Staropruski=Mowzie, od Górnika Jacuba Sczepana w Mnesće Herne. Westfahlach. On iö sam ieden widaie, i Rossiła na czałi Swat. (Drukowana w Mńiesćie Eisleben od Pana August Klöppel, a widana bendzä iedińie od Jacuba Sczepana, Herne)*[19] was described by the Masurian activist Piotr Szatkowski in a Kashubian journal, as a "lost Masurian novel from 120 years ago, which sheds a new light on the Masurian language."[20] The book had been mentioned in Chojnacki's (1975) outline on the "Polish-language publications for the Masurians in Westphalia and Rhineland in 1889–1914":[21]

The translation of John Bunyan's The Holy War from German to the Masur-

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16 Heinz Kloss, *Die Entwicklung neuer germanischer Kultursprachen seit 1800 [von 1800 bis 1950]*. P.61 ([München-]Düsseldorf: Schwann, [1952] 1978).

17 As, for instance, Michał Kajka/Kayka, whose Polish-language poetry was monumentalized by the post-War Polish cultural policy in the new northern territories:
   O ojczysta nasza mowo,   „Our father tongue,
   Coś kwitnęła nam przed laty, you blossomed for us years ago,
   Zakwitnijże nam na nowo,   blossom for us again,
   Jako kwitną w lecie kwiaty   as flowers bloom in summer"
   [www.michalkajka.pl], accessed on January 5, 2021.

18 Hentschel, "Masurisch," p. 314.

19 "The Holy War led by God against the Devil. Or: Loss and Retrieval of the Town of Human Soul. By John Bunyan. Newly depicted and published by the Christian Union of the Northern Parts of German Lands, in German. 1900. Translated in the Old-Prussian Speech of the Polish-language by the Miner Jacob Sczepan in the City of Herne in Westphalias. He has published it on his own and is Sending to the whole World (Printed in the City of Eisleben by Mr. August Klöppel, and published solely by Jacob Sczepan of Herne)."
   The title itself indicates the range of Masurian-German language contact, which goes beyond lexical borrowings—with the **Ta** *Swenta Woyna* ("the Holy War") impeccably marking definiteness.

20 Pioter Szatkòwsczi [vel Psioter ôt Sziatków, vel Piotr Szatkowski], "Zaginiona mazurska powieść sprzed 120 lat rzuca nowe światło na język Mazurów," *Skra—pismiono ò kulturze* (2017) [https://pismiono.com/zaginiona-mazurska-powiesc-sprzed-120-lat-rzuca-nowe-swiatlo-na-jezyk-mazurow], accessed on July 31, 2020.

21 Wojciech Chojnacki, "Wydawnictwa w języku polskim dla Mazurów w Westfalii i Nadrenii w latach 1889–1914," *Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie* 2 (1975), pp. 177–208.

ian dialect is unusual. Its translator and co-publisher was the miner Jakub Sczepan living in Herne. That an ordinary miner had the courage, time, and money to publish over 300 pages of the book written in the Masurian dialect is a rare phenomenon among the Westphalian Masurians. This is the only case of publishing a book in this dialect.

The rediscovery of this book was a presumable result of the recently growing interest in the identity of a few Masurians, who did not leave Poland and were probably the most marginalized community of the historical ethno-linguistic borderland between Poles and Germans. The Masurian microrevival has been focused on dialectal issues following microlanguage communities such as Polesians, Podlachians, and Kurpians. However, it lacked a visual symbolic signage: the tangible Masurian folk culture has been quite modest in decoration, which resulted from the semiotic modesty of Lutheran Protestantism. Even the meekest signs of Masurianness have disappeared from the cultural landscape of *Ostpreußen* in the post-war history of *Warmia and Mazury*: Lutheran cemeteries were destroyed, cast-iron tomb crosses stolen, Protestant churches turned into Roman-Catholic churches or, occasionally, into Greek-Catholic Uniate churches because of the Ukrainian minority deported from southeastern Poland in 1947. Symbols of the expelled "German tyranny" included German letters.

The German Letters

In the wake of World War II, the *Deutsche Schrift* was a visible semiotic carrier of the war and German occupation atrocities for many survivors in Central and Eastern Europe. The newcomers from the east or south hardly had any idea about the role played by the *Schrift* in the local semiotics of South-Eastern Baltics, including East Prussia. Based on an official order issued in 1947, everything German became forbidden, such as the public use of the German language in East Prussia or inviting the nationally verified citizens to apply for the restoration of their polish-sounding (looking) names.

Bunčić, Lippert, and Rabus (2016) wrote:[22]

Up to 1918 the Protestant Poles within the German Empire defined as a distinct 'Masurian' ethnicity, using the same Polish language as the Catholic Poles but in blackletter rather than roman type

Later, they stated the following:

The Lithuanian language seems to have been in the same situation because there also was a Protestant minority using blackletter among the Lithuanians. It would take a closer look at a larger sample of texts produced in these languages to decide if the two script variants were really confined to the respective confessional groups. (An examination of the use of blackletter and roman

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22 Bunčić et al., eds., *Biscriptality*, p. 202.

type in 16th-century German has shown that, at least in German, in contrast to popular convictions, there was hardly any confessional distribution.)

According to Kamusella (2015),[23]

> the printers ... introduced two different kinds of fonts (types) for writing and printing in the Latin script: Gothic (Black Letter, ...) based on late medieval manuscripts and Antiqua ('Old Letter'). (...) Already at the turn of the sixteenth century a division of labor between these two types developed: Antiqua [was] employed for printing in Latin, and Gothic for the newly codified vernacular lects. The Reformation destroyed this new norm, so books for Protestants, in whatever language, were printed in Gothic, and those for Catholics in Antiqua. (...)

> The new tendency to use different typefaces for Catholic and Protestant books was limited mainly to the Protestants of the Lutheran creed and never held in the Holy Roman Empire, where Catholic rulers endeavored to reach their Protestant subjects by adopting the Lutheran form of German and the Gothic type as well.

> During the early days of the age of nationalism in the nineteenth century, Gothic was increasingly associated with German as the national language of the German nation, which encouraged Lutherans of other ethnolinguistic backgrounds to abandon this variety of the Latin alphabet in favor of Antiqua.

> Gothic finally disappeared from use after 1941, called 'Jewish' and banned in the Third Reich. German legislation called Antiqua the 'normal script' (Normal-Schrift) for use throughout the lands controlled by the Third Reich.

Bormann's 1941 edict was the final stage of the long-lasting **Antiqua-Fraktur dispute** (*Schriftstreit*) in Central Europe. This overtly ideological role of the scriptal font showed that writing was more than just an external medium to convey the so-called contents, guiding the users' behaviors. Nonetheless, the "final solution to the Fraktur-problem" had limited impact on the situation concerning the Masurian language, as Polish (and Masurian) had already been banned from public use in *Ostpreußen*.

Before the War, Masurians exclusively used the Gothic fonts to write and print all texts, such as Jan Sczepan's Masurian book (where German rules of noun capitalization were applied in *Ta Swenta Woyna*), German publications, or ... books in Polish, translated and republished, especially for the "Poles of East-Prussia." This includes a symbolic edition of Henryk Sienkiewicz's novel *Krzyżacy. Powieść historyczna* (1930), which constitutes a nation-building popular history of the 16th century Polish-Teutonic (German) conflict.

As mentioned previously, books and journals for Masurians had also been printed in Western Germany, where scores of peasants from East Prussia had emigrated to industrial and mining centers (for meticulous catalog, see Chojnacki 1975).[24] This materialized contrary to scriptal cases of Polish-Ger-

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23 Tomasz Kamusella, *Creating Languages in Central Europe during the Last Millennium* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 55–56.

man language contact in other parts of Polish-language areas in the Prussian state, for instance, in the Provinz Posen/Poznań region, where bilingual texts (German and Polish) were printed in *Fraktur* and *Antiqua*, respectively.

The most recent episode in the scriptal history of Masurian results from the latest trends of raising the popular status of minority lects to literary microlanguages, for example, by publishing the translations of Antoine de Saint-Exupery's *Le Petit Prince*. The very existence of a translation of this booklet is a more popular indicator of "writability" of a lect than many previous common-sense markers. This can be compared to the ISO-639 identifier granted to a lect requiring recognition.[25] Following a wave of translations of *The Little Prince* into Poland's microlanguages—Lemko, Poznań urbolect, Warsaw Yiddish, Kashubian, and Silesian, many of which became scriptal challenges (e.g., Yiddish printed in Latin script) or orthographic manifestos (the revived "old" orthography for Kashubian)—the Masurian version was printed in 2018, with its Blackettered title of Mali Princ as a resuscitated symbol of the Masurian identity.

However, in the scriptal history of the Baltic languages, there were regions near Masuria where **German letters** were associated with freedom of print, language rights, and respect for societal multiscriptality.

The Lithuanian Cases

Here, we remember the words of Bunčić, Lippert, and Rabus (2016):[26]

> The Lithuanian language seems to have been in the same situation [as Poles within the German Empire] because there also was a Protestant minority using blackletter among the Lithuanians. It would take a closer look at a larger sample of texts produced in these languages to decide if the two script variants were really confined to the respective confessional groups.

The policy of linguistic Russification of non-Russian-speakers in the second half of the 19th century, intended as an extension or completion of the previous religious policy aimed at making the Russian Empire's entire population homogenously Orthodox, substantially influenced these developments. Extraordinary scriptal policies were adopted by the northwestern governorates of the Russian Empire and the neighboring areas of the German Empire.

Quoting Kamusella (2015):[27]

In the wake of the then popular Pan-Slavism, some Russian scholars and officials proposed a more modest program of introducing Cyrillic for all the Slav-

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24 Chojnacki, "Wydawnictwa w języku polskim, pp. 177–208.

25 [https://iso639-3.sil.org or http://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2], accessed on July 2, 2021.

26 Bunčić et al., eds., *Biscriptality*," p. 202.

27 Kamusella, *Creating Languages*, pp. 51 ff.

ic languages in and outside the Russian Empire, before extending this policy to non-Slavic languages in Russia. But this effort met with resistance, because neither Catholic nor Protestant subjects would accept '**Orthodox letters**' as their own.[28]

A "manual" for this program was *Obshcheslavianskaia azbuka: s prilozheniem obraztsov slavianskikh narechii* (A common Slavic alphabet, with the attachment of samples of Slavic dialects) by Alexander Hilferding (1871).[29] Hilferding and other Pan-Slavists were also involved in designing a similar project, which enforced publications in Lithuanian and Latgalian solely in the Russian alphabet and prohibited Polish texts in the Antiqua font. The former included both varieties of Lithuanian: Highlands' Aukštaitian and Lowlands' Žemaitian/Samogitian. However, the standard (Blackletter) print was allowed for Latvian, Estonian, and Baltic German. The project enjoyed the support of the highest Russian officials, as the 19th century Polish-Lithuanian irredentism[30] attracted the attention of the Russian public to the problem of the ethnically foreign northwestern peripheries and focused on the discussion about the privileged position of the Baltic provinces (Głębocki 2017).[31] An effort was made to use the Finnish and Lithuanian revivals against their respective old social, political, and cultural elites (who were considered repositories of irredentism); however, a similar attempt to favor Latvians and Estonians (who were subject to the local Baltic German landowners) faced strong resistance from the Russian German lobby.[32] The Pan-Slavists believed that if the Lithuanian peasantry could be drawn away from the Polonized nobility and the Roman-Catholic Church, it would gravitate toward Russia as its "natural" base. The Cyrillic reform was thus intended to aid in Lithuania's Russification after the insurrection of 1863/1964, as reflected in Marshall Milyutin's quotation by Schmalstieg (1995): *Russkie pis'mena okonchat to, chto nachato russkim mechom* (Russian letters will finish that which was begun with the Russian sword).[33] Contrarily, some Lithuanians believed that the introduction of the Russian alphabet would imply standardization for Lithuanian, strengthening its modern status as a language

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28 Bolded by this author.

29 A. F. Gil'ferding, *Obshcheslavianskaia azbuka: s prilozheniem obraztsov slavianskikh narechii* (Sankt-Peterburg, 1871).

30 The armed uprisings against the Russian authority took place in 1830/31 and in 1863/64 gaining the responsive support of citizens of the former Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania.

31 Henryk Głębocki, *A Disastrous Matter: The Polish Question in the Russian Political Thought and Discourse of the Great Reform Age, 1856–1866* (Cracow: Jagiellonian University Press, 2017), pp. 145, 241.

32 Several Baltic Germans served as ranking generals in the Russian Imperial army and navy, while numerous were their representatives in other domains of the Imperial Russian administration.

33 William R. Schmalstieg, "Baudouin de Courtenay's Contribution to Lithuanian Linguistics," *Lituanus—Lithuanian Quarterly Journal of Arts and Sciences* 41:1 (1995), pp. 5–25.

that is "visibly" distinct from Polish.

The so-called **Press ban** imposed by the Russian authorities on Lithuanian and Latgalian publications in 1864 forbade the publication or **import** of books and periodicals printed in the Latin alphabet. Only Lithuanian and Latgalian books using the Cyrillic script were permitted. Lasting 40 years, until 1904, the ban provoked a tremendous national response culminating in the successful *Knygnešiai* ("book-carriers") movement, in which almost four thousand Lithuanian language books in Latin type were produced abroad—mostly in Prussia's Lithuania Minor (and later in the United States)—and smuggled to "interior" Lithuania. The Lithuanian book smuggling became part of the Lithuanian national mythology and a symbol of Lithuanian defiance to Russification (Gibson 2013).[34]

However, in Latgale (the north-easternmost Catholic region of Europe), defiance to the type ban occurred on a much smaller scale. To begin with, there were fewer readers and writers of Latgalian. In addition, the number of Latgalian-speakers living abroad was much smaller than in the case of Lithuanians. Moreover, Latgale had no "compatriots" nearby, as the only neighbors in Vitebsk Governorate were Russian-speakers or those who were subjects to the menacing system of Russification. The exiled Latgalian book production was to develop much later, after World War II, when a Latgalian Publishing House became active in Munich (1945–1990). Nonetheless, handwritten books are known to have circulated illegally at the turn of the 19th century, such as those by Latgalian writers and activists Andryvs Jūrdžs (1845–1925) or Pīters Miglinīks (1850–1883).

At the very beginning of the 20th century, the Lithuanian literary standard was not homogenous, and two written language traditions existed: one for the texts written and published in the Lowlands' Diocese of Samogitia/Žemaitija (western and northwestern Lithuania), and another in East Prussia (Tamošiūnaitė 2013),[35] the part of Lithuania referred to as *Preußisch Litauen* or *Kleinlitaw* in German, *Lithuania Minor* in Latin, or *Mažoji Lietuva* (later) in Lithuanian. Prussian Lithuanians called themselves *Prusû Lietuwiai*, *Prusû/Prusißki Lietuvininkai*, or just *Lietuvninkai/Lietuvininkai*, whose three main criteria of self-identification included loyalty to the German state, strong religious beliefs, and their mother tongue. Due to differences in religion and loyalties to a different state, the Prussian Lithuanians did not consider Lithuanians of the Grand Duchy to be part of the same community and referred to them with the ethnonym of *Samogitians* (*Źemaicziai/Szameiten*). Despite the seemingly common

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34 Catherine Gibson, "Gruomota: The Influence of Politics and Nationalism on the Development of Written Latgalian in the Long Nineteenth Century (1772–1918)," *Sprawy Narodowościowe* 43 (2013), p. 45.

35 Aurelija Tamošiūnaitė, "Ego-documents in Lithuanian: Orthographic Identities at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," in Marijke J. van der Wal, Gijsbert Rutten, eds., *Touching the Past: Studies in the Historical Sociolinguistics of Ego-documents* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2013), pp. 225–242.

language, antagonism was common between the Lutheran Prussian Lithuanians and the Catholic Lithuanians of the Grand Duchy (Vareikis 2001).[36] The East Prussian written tradition developed in the 16th century and was based on southwestern Highland Lithuanian dialects. In the 19th century, two very influential grammars were published (in German) based on the East Prussian Lithuanian tradition: August Schleicher's *Litauische Grammatik* (1856) and Friedrich Kurschat's *Grammatik der Littauischen Sprache* (1876), which was crucial for the development of Standard Lithuanian, since many of the phonetic and morphological norms, alongside spelling strategies, such as usage of the graphemes ⟨ė⟩ and ⟨y⟩, were later adopted to modern Standard Lithuanian.

The "Prussian (= Lutheran)" Lithuanian orthography in Lithuania Minor was based on the German orthography and typed in Blackletter, while in the "interior" [= Catholic] Lithuania, it was primarily based on the Polish orthography and Antiqua-typography. The two communities did not read each other's texts, so their cultural communication was limited. Attempts to create a unified orthography and a common newspaper for all Lithuanian speakers at the beginning of the 20th century were unsuccessful. After 1905, the modern Lithuanian orthography was standardized, while Prussian Lithuanian orthography and font remained German-oriented, for example, with capitalization of nouns and the letters ⟨ ſ ß ʒ ⟩. Between 1923 and 1939, books and newspapers printed in Antiqua-Lithuanian were Blackletter-reprinted in the region of Klaipėda/Memel, to be shut down by the Nazis in 1940.

Parenthetically, such a twofold scriptal identity was also characteristic of the Macrolatvian[37] language area, where Western/Baltic/Lower Latvian (proper) used Fraktur, and eastern Latgalian followed the Antiqua tradition, until their political and national unification into and within the Republic of Latvia in November 1918.

The first Lithuanian book in Cyrillic, *Abėcėlė žemaitiškai lietuviška* (Lithuanian-Samogitian primer), was published in the summer of 1864. This primer was intended for use in the new government rural schools, which replaced the Catholic parish school system, and was followed by catechisms, gospels, and hymnals. In addition to publishing Lithuanian books in the Cyrillic script, the Russian government began an active campaign against the Lithuanian press produced in the Latin alphabet (frequently referred to as the "Latin-Polish" alphabet), and soon administratively forbade the publication of Latin-printed Lithuanian textbooks. The prohibition was formalized into a comprehensive press ban on all Latin-script Lithuanian publications in September 1865 issued

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36 Vygantas Vareikis, "Memellander/Klaipėdiškiai Identity and German Lithuanian Relations in Lithuania Minor in the 19th and 20th Centuries," *Sociologija. Mintis ir veiksmas* 1–2:6 (2001), pp. 54–65.

37 The term "Latvian macrolanguage" comprises both Standard Latvian and Latgalian—as e.g., in ISO 639-3 language code standard for Latvian = **lv**, where two individual language codes are assigned for Standard Latvian = **lvs** and Latgalian = **ltg**.

by the governor-general Konstantin von Kaufman. In addition, the governor sent a circular to the governors of gubernias' adjacent to the Lithuanian-speaking territories, asking for their cooperation in the ban on Lithuanian books. The press ban was confirmed by Russia's Minister of the Interior and extended to the entire Russian Empire. The government's harsh attitude towards the Lithuanian (and Polish) press was institutionalized as *Komissiia dlia rassmotreniia pol'skikh i zhmudskikh knig* (Commission for the Examination of Polish and Samogitian Books), established in August 1865. The commission concluded that the Lithuanian press—mostly religious at the time—was allegedly subversive, "filled with anti-Russian propaganda ... and agitation against the dominant religion of the state Orthodoxy."

In addition to repressing the Latin-printed Lithuanian, the Russian authorities tried to persuade Lithuanians, especially the peasantry, to accept Cyrillic books published by the government; this attempt failed completely, as rural schools hardly engaged in their distribution. Even when distributed free, Lithuanian books in Cyrillic failed to find acceptance among the people. The next step in tsarist language engineering was hybrid publications containing just a few Lithuanian words in Cyrillics, and the rest of the contents in Russian (obviously in Cyrillics), even though very few were published in the period 1902–1904.

The "clandestinization" of the Latin-based Lithuanian print paradoxically initiated discussions on the uniformization of Lithuanian orthography. Around 1890, the publisher and journalist Vincas Kudirka prepared and started circulating what would later form the basis of standard Lithuanian spelling. The orthographic changes introduced by Kudirka (and widely discussed by others) were driven not only by the need to have uniform spelling, but also by ideological factors. The pre-standard spellings of Lithuanian were based on Polish orthographic traditions: for instance, [ʧ] and [ʃ] denoted with the digraphs ⟨cz⟩ and ⟨sz⟩, and [v] with ⟨w⟩; Lithuanian also employed the (very) "Polish" letter ⟨ł⟩, as well as the digraphs ⟨aj⟩ and ⟨ej⟩. The introduction of new spelling strategies, particularly the rejection and replacement of "Polish letters," marked distancing from Polish identity and culture (Tamošiūnaitė 2013).[38] The establishment of a new Lithuanian orthography was required to develop a modern and distinct Lithuanian identity. Therefore, the rejected "Polish" di/graphs—⟨aj⟩, ⟨ej⟩, ⟨cz⟩, ⟨sz⟩, ⟨ż⟩, ⟨ł⟩, ⟨w⟩—and their proposed equivalents—⟨ai⟩, ⟨ei⟩, ⟨č⟩, ⟨š⟩, ⟨ž⟩, ⟨l⟩ and ⟨v⟩, inspired by the Czech spelling tradition—became strong symbolic markers of different linguistic identities. The iconic power of these letters is clearly expressed in the following statement made by the priest and linguist Kazimieras Jaunius at the end of the 19th century: "we are not supposed to use ⟨sz⟩ and ⟨ż⟩ anymore, because (…) in our orthography there should not be even the smallest trace of Polish" (Tamošiūnaitė

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38 Tamošiūnaitė, "Ego-documents in Lithuanian," p. 232.

2015).[39]

The period of "double orthography" lasted until 1904–1905, when Russia decided to take up a more liberal path of politics. After the appearance of Jonas Jablonskis's grammar (*Lietuviškos kalbos gramatika* 1901), which codified the grammatical norms and spelling of Standard Lithuanian, almost all publications implemented standard spellings. Thus, 1901 marked the end of orthographic variation in published material, except for prayer books, which were published with some of the "Polish" graphs until 1907. The Catholic Church was resistant to the orthographic changes introduced by secular newspapers. Therefore, "Polish" letters continued the writing tradition that had been used for religious texts for several centuries. Lithuanian periodicals printed in the United States (e.g., *Lietuwiszkasis Bałsas* in New York) accepted standard orthography in 1904.

THE LITHUANIAN SCRIPT REFORM AND (LANGUAGE) IDEOLOGY

The 1864 implementation of Cyrillics for Lithuania needs to be interpreted as a specific political measure taken by the Russian tsarist government to develop and secure political loyalty to the empire and diminish Polish influence over Lithuanians. Some Russian officials perceived the implementation of Cyrillic as a preventive measure that would "de-Polonize" Lithuanians, while others viewed it as a tool of assimilation (religious and linguistic Russification). Such perceptions imply that in Russian minds, the two scripts, Latin and Cyrillic, indexed different competing identities: the Latin alphabet was associated with "Polishness," while Cyrillic was associated with "Russianness." In addition to these secular symbolic meanings, Latin and Cyrillic served as strong religious markers. Because "Polishness" in Russian minds was often equated with "Catholicism" and Russian identity was indistinguishable from the Orthodox religion, Latin and Cyrillic scripts were iconically linked to Catholicism and Orthodoxy. Such connections are especially evident in some of the accounts of Russian officials who viewed the implementation of Cyrillic as one of the first steps that would later lead to the dissemination of Orthodoxy among Lithuanians. The script reform, as well as the prohibition against using Lithuanian in official settings, evoked opposition among Lithuanians, primarily due to the symbolic power that Cyrillic and Latin encompassed. Perceiving a Cyrillic script as a symbol of Orthodoxy, Lithuanians viewed the reform as a direct threat to their Catholic identity. Opposition towards Cyrillic publications intensified after priests revealed that some of the official Catholic dogmas had been changed in one of the Catholic catechisms printed in Cyrillic (cf. Subačius 2005).[40]

During the 40-year-long ban (1865–1904), the Russian government pub-

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39 Aurelija Tamošiūnaitė, "Defining 'Lithuanian': Orthographic Debates at the End of the Nineteenth Century," *Written Language & Literacy* 18:2 (2015), p. 317.

40 Giedrius Subačius, "Development of the Cyrillic Orthography for Lithuanian in 1864–1904," *Lituanus* 51 (2005), pp. 29–55.

lished almost sixty books in Cyrillic script in Lithuanian, while during the same time almost four thousand Lithuanian publications were printed in Latin abroad. The low number of publications, the application of several (mainly non-phonetic) models of Cyrillic for Lithuania, and the lack of an intellectual basis in preparing these texts resulted in the lost battle of the Russian alphabet against its clandestine counterpart (Subačius 2011).[41] Although Russian functionaries initially believed that the implementation of Cyrillic for Lithuania would help standardize the language (there was no Lithuanian standard in 1865), it was the clandestine publications that started shaping standard Lithuanian around the 1880s, and its features started penetrating the Cyrillic texts published in the 1890s.

THE ROLE OF ORTHOGRAPHY IN THE MODERN LITHUANIAN POLITICAL DISCOURSE ON IDENTITY

The impact of the 19th century scriptal policies applied in Lithuania can be observed in national language ideologies, as well as in language attitudes in the public discourse in Lithuania. Scriptal issues (spelling, orthography, and graphemics) are truly and continually present in public discourse at all levels, from popular ideologies that shape the bottom-up language attitudes, to official top-down actions and policies.

An example of the former might be a popular debate on the Lithuanian alphabet as an important sign of the nation's identity. Well-known Lithuanian linguists, such as Subačius (2017) also voiced his opinion in this popular debate, explaining the role of "national" diacritics and graphemes: "(...) most of the diacritic letters of the Lithuanian alphabet are borrowed from other nations (...) the thirty-two letters of the Lithuanian alphabet reveal the history of the country perfectly, only one letter is exclusively ours and has no 'analogue' in the world."[42] This letter is ⟨ė⟩, which was coined and used for the first time in Daniele Klein's 1653 grammar of Lithuanian.

Subačius (2017) continues:

> In the broadest sense, there are no national, Lithuanian letters, in fact. The extraordinary letters, we would like to call ours, are nine letters with different diacritics. They have either been borrowed or created in other languages. There are three 'birds'—č ž š—borrowed from the Czech language, then two 'legs'—ę ą—from Polish. There are still four more: ū ų į and ė.

The issue of "national," and Czech vs. Polish letters, has repercussions in the

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41 Giedrius Subačius, "The Influence of Clandestine Standard Lithuanian in the Latin Alphabet on the Official Lithuanian in Cyrillic Letters (1864–1904)," in Konrad Maier, ed., *Nation und Sprache in Nordosteuropa* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011), p. 239.

42 Giedrius Subačius, „Analogų pasaulyje neturi vienintelė lietuviška raidė", *Mokslo Lietuva* (2017) [http://mokslolietuva.lt/2017/01/g-subacius-analogu-pasaulyje-neturi-vienintele-lietuviska-raide], accessed on July 31, 2020.

swollen Polish-Lithuanian conflict on the spelling of personal names. In their paper on reciprocal minority language policies on Polish in Lithuania and Lithuanian in Poland, Walkowiak and Wicherkiewicz (2019: pp. 175–177)[43] describe the record of the spelling principles of Polish-Lithuanian personal names in Soviet Lithuania, as well as the consecutive policies in the independent Lithuanian state.

> In the Soviet era, personal names of the Polish minority in Lithuania and ethnic Lithuanians were morphologically Russified in official documents (...), which at the time were bilingual: Russian (Cyrillic) and Lithuanian (Latin). (...) Polish given names were frequently replaced with their Russian counterparts. The lack of uniformity in the transposition from Russian to Polish and vice versa led to the situation where two parts of the same family (...) might have two different written versions of the same surname. In Lithuanian-language publications or public notices, however, names were often Lithuanized (...) by replacing letters absent from the Lithuanian alphabet with their closest phonetic equivalents (...).

> Whichever option was chosen, still the spelling must be Lithuanian, which means that the Polish letters **ą ć ę j** (before consonants) **ł ń ó ś w x ż ź**,[44] digraphs **cz rz sz** must not be used, as specified by the detailed rules approved by the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language (...).

The question of personal names has become a hypersymbolic issue of conflict in Polish-Lithuanian relations, alongside the controversy about bilingual topographical indications, which was not conceded by Lithuania to date. Individual cases of using the latter regularly result in forcible removal accompanied by heavy fines. Attempts to put Polish names back on the agenda—for instance, when preparing a draft law on minorities—provoked "emotional opposition from the members of the working group representing different state organs" (Vasilevich 2013: 12). An example of the potential symbolic and emotional load of ethnolinguistic identity of the "Polish" letters may be the 2014 social-media campaign, which jokingly called *Ja za żółw* (ungrammatically "me for tortoise"): a Polish Lithuanian journalist perceived the name-spelling debate as unduly emotional and aimed to relieve the tension by introducing an element of humor (Walkowiak and Wicherkiewicz 2019).[45] The tortoise became the logo of his Internet action since the Polish word for "turtle" is *żółw*, composed only of those Polish letters that are not part of the Lithuanian alphabet and thus not allowed in official signage in Lithuania. Visibly, letters or their diacritics constitute stimulants or even semiotic symbols for the two "communi-

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43 Justyna Walkowiak and Tomasz Wicherkiewicz, "Tangled Minority Language Policies: Polish in Lithuania and Lithuanian in Poland," in Sanita Lazdiņa & Heiko F. Marten, eds., *Multilingualism in the Baltic States: Societal Discourses and Contact Phenomena* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2019), pp. 175–177.

44 Notably, the letters **ą ę** in Lithuanian Polish cannot be used, even if the Lithuanian alphabet possesses and uses the two letters.

45 Walkowiak and Wicherkiewicz, "Tangled Minority Language Policies ," p. 168.

ties of writing" in contemporary Lithuania: the *ū ų į ė* focused on Lithuanians vis-à-vis the *ż ó ł w* focused on Poles.

Conclusion

Writing systems, scripts, orthographies, their choices, developments, and reforms affect users' communities in multiple ways. They can and often start and/or result in power play and visible dominance of language(s) over other language(s). Wherever people are politically influenced by others, the more powerful polity usually imposes "top-down" scriptal principles on the less powerful community. On the contrary, many communities try to construct, strengthen, or transform their identity through "bottom-up" scriptal planning programs and grassroots activities. Both directions aim to achieve their goals in identity engineering, by—what in some instances of language planning can be referred to as—language engineering.

The debates and referred case studies might look interesting and exotic to many sociolinguists, specialists in language policy/language planning, and anthropologists of semiotics; however, considering that contemporary (Central-Eastern) Europe shares just two or three common scripts (Latin, Cyrillic, Greek, with very occasional presence of a few more: Arabic, Hebrew, Armenian, Georgian), we can expect and predict that any scriptal element may play a relevant and symbolic role in any identity discourse, not only in the relatively small continent of Europe or its individual regions, but also in most parts of the world.

Even the seemingly trivial details of orthography—for instance, whether to use individual graphemes as "symbolic" entities, digraphs (i.e., two-grapheme combinations), individual or combined diacritics—are intimately tied to larger sociopolitical debates. Therefore, using an orthography in an act of spelling can provide a meta-comment, not only about the orthography but also about ethno-political debates. Developing a written form (= graphization) of a language (variety) involves a simple selection of appropriate orthography and making decisions concerning cultural, religious, political, and historical matters. Language planning efforts must consider the ideological nature of orthography and standardization, in addition to believing in a single best strategy to guarantee success in promoting a writing system.

The case studies from Masuria, East Prussia, Lithuania, Baltic Latvia, and Latgale show that identities can be symbolically indexed by seemingly minor scriptal elements, such as diacritics (be it "birds," *haček*s, carons, or "legs," *ogonek*s, and hooks) or type-fonts, as reflected in the case of *Antiqua-Fraktur* dispute that divided Central-Eastern Europe in the long 20th century.