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## Jan Cygan and Linguistic Change in Polish in Wrocław after 1945

**Abstract:** The paper discusses changes in pronunciation of Polish in the Polish population in Wrocław after 1945, when almost all German citizens were expelled from the city. The paper reviews various interpretations of the changes in the literature, presents relevant demographic factors shaping the accents, and interprets their influence and the outcome of demographic processes, supporting them by anecdotal evidence, relating them also to Jan Cygan's accent.

**Keywords:** sociolinguistics, linguistic change, accents of Polish, variation of Polish pronunciation

Jan Cygan, when I heard him for the first time in 1976 in Wrocław, spoke with a distinct accent. His pronunciation was typical of the Lwów variety of the Polish language. This variety was spoken in the south-eastern regions of pre-1945 Poland, or in present-day Western Ukraine (cf. Kurzowa). Cygan was born in 1927 in Lwów and was raised and educated in this city. Nowadays, it is known as L'viv,<sup>1</sup> Львів, in Ukrainian. One can still hear this accent in the speech of the Polish-speaking inhabitants of today's L'viv. After 1945, interwar Poland's eastern territories were annexed by the Soviet Union. As a result, Lwów and its vicinity became part of Soviet Ukraine. Jan Cygan himself provided a brief description of the urban variety of Polish there, pointing out the characteristic neutralisation of certain oppositions in unstressed syllables with regard to the degree of openness of vowels (370), so that, for example, inflectional forms *żołnierz*, *żołnierza*, *żołnierzowi*, when pronounced the Lwów way, could be written down in standard spelling as *żolnirz*, *żulnierz*, *żulnirzowi*. In standard Polish, the value of the relevant vowels

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<sup>1</sup> In ISO 9 Latin transliteration.

is unchanged (Cygan 371). This quality makes the Lwów variety so distinct that its rhythm and intonation can be easily distinguished. My last meeting with Jan Cygan was in 2019, and he still had this accent of Polish.<sup>2</sup>

In this paper, I will briefly outline what linguistically happened in Wrocław and the New Territories between 1945 and 2022 and what explanations of the processes can be found in the literature, offering my own interpretation<sup>3</sup> of how they occurred. There is one serious shortcoming of any studies of this issue: there are few serious empirical studies of the linguistic changes there, especially in large cities; one has to use one's own memories and memories of other people. In this paper, I will focus on how the pronunciation of Polish changed after 1945 in Wrocław; obviously, most of the changes also occurred in other Western and Northern parts of Poland, especially in larger towns. My discussion will be limited to the area of pronunciation, as the type of accent is clearly discernible in any speech, even in a small sample. In contrast, one needs a large sample to study grammar and an even larger one for a study of vocabulary. First, there will be a sketch of the historical background to the linguistic changes, then a discussion of some demographic factors. Next, I will compare the linguistic situation in Wrocław to that in other countries, especially in the new town in England called Milton Keynes. Finally, I will present my hypothesis about the most important factors in the change. As the history of my family is in many respects similar to the history of life of Jan Cygan, I will provide the necessary comparison whenever I feel it helps me make my point.

Jan Cygan spoke the standard dialect of Polish as regards syntax and inflection; he had a regional accent and certainly regional vocabulary, which I would not notice, as my predecessors came from the same region. However, I do not have this accent, though my father—from Cygan's generation—had some traces of it. My mother spoke only the standard dialect because of her social background and because her family was on the move from 1918<sup>4</sup> till 1949. While Cygan's accent did not sound marked in 1976, it did so in 2019. In 1976, one could still hear a wide variety of Polish accents in the streets of Wrocław, while in 2019, the typical type of pronunciation was, and still is, that of standard Polish, at least in my experience. Until 1945, Wrocław and the Western and the Northern areas in present-day Poland

<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, Ukrainians who live in Wrocław either because of economic migration or because of the war that Russia is waging against Ukraine in 2022, and who speak either Ukrainian or Russian, when using Polish can be perceived as having some phonetic features of the traditional eastern varieties of Polish, which were influenced by East Slavic languages.

<sup>3</sup> My interpretation was presented at various meetings and conferences, and I would like to thank some of the participants, especially Dennis Preston and Peter Trudgill, who believed I was on the right track, and Antoni Furdal, who believed I was not. My thanks also go to Bogusław Wyderka and Krzysztof Kleszcz for their comments.

<sup>4</sup> Her mother was born in 1900 near Żmerynka (today Ukrainian *Жмеринка*), and in her life moved across postwar Poland from Hrubieszów to Wrocław. Though she used some Yiddish borrowings (*meszugene* רענעגשמ) and borrowings from Ukrainian (her expression was *bijte me kocjubq* Бий його коцюба), she spoke only the standard.

used to be in Germany, and to avoid any ideological associations, I will call them the New Territories.<sup>5</sup>

Some linguists in general do say that the dialect of Polish spoken in the New Territories is the “purest” standard Polish; this is what two influential linguists-cum-celebrities say, Miodek about Wrocław, and Bralczyk about the New Territories in general (qtd. in Augustyniak-Żmuda 1–2), and because of their media exposure, this view is often repeated. Typically, neither of the two linguists refers to any empirical research; most likely, they use their impressions, Bralczyk, however, has never spent any longer period of time outside the Warsaw region. They likely repeat stereotypes disseminated in Polish linguistic literature. I will describe these stereotypes below. The two linguists who did carry out empirical studies, Augustyniak-Żmuda and Zielińska, disagree; they argue that one can find a wide variety of accents in the New Territories. However, while Bralczyk and Miodek most likely note their impressions about the dialects of people born after 1945, the other two studied the language of those born before 1945, and outside large cities, the accent spoken by this group of people is certainly often not standard. Wyderka, who did carry out research on the issue, however, confirms the view that standard Polish is spoken in the New Territories (Wyderka, “Przemiany” 464), most probably referring to younger people. It is fair to conclude, however, that we do not know precisely what linguistic features people in the New Territories have in their Polish and what is their demographic distribution. We can note isolated examples: Jan Cygan had a regional accent. In February 2022, I spoke with a man in Jelcz-Laskowice, a town with some 15,000 inhabitants. He had a distinct eastern accent and kindly answered my sociological questions: he was born in 1941 in a village in the Lwów region. However, it is not common to meet a young person who has a non-standard accent, though there are some cases: Piotr C., fifty-ish, has some regional phonetic features.

Unfortunately, as noted, I cannot use empirical data for this paper, as there were no significant sociolinguistic studies of who speaks what variety of Polish in Wrocław, or in other New Territories of Poland. What I can use is essentially anecdotal evidence, i.e., my memories: I was born in Wrocław and have lived in the city all my life. Though there are two volumes of a study that has the promising title *Polszczyzna mówiona Wrocławia*, the authors also use anecdotal evidence, most often noting their impressions of the dialects people from their own social group speak. This paper is about Polish as spoken in a large city, and it has to be noted that Polish spoken in other regions in the New Territories was certainly different. In some regions, for example in those in which there was an indigenous pre-1945 Slavic group, such as the Gdańsk area, Masuria, Upper Silesia, including the Opole region, contact with immigrants with indigenous Polish dialects had some influence

<sup>5</sup> The New Territories had various names after 1945; for propaganda purposes they were called regained/recovered territories (*ziemie odzyskane*), cf. Grębowiec; the English Wikipedia entry has a reliable discussion [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recovered\\_Territories](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recovered_Territories).

on the languages spoken (cf. Zielińska). However, Wrocław was sociologically and demographically a unique city among those in the New Territories, and the linguistic changes followed political and sociological changes. I will describe these below.

Before 1945, from the 13th century, for about 700 years, Wrocław was outside political structures of the kingdom or the state of Poland (cf. Mühle). It was the seat of an independent duchy; in fact, a number of duchies later, it went to Bohemia, briefly was in Hungary, when Bohemia fell under the rule of the Habsburgs was annexed into Prussia, found itself with Prussia in the German Empire, and finally was conquered by Soviet troops in May 1945 (Hargreaves). Since that date, Wrocław has been in the Republic of Poland. Roughly every 200 years, Wrocław was under a different political authority. However, after 1945, for the first time, the vast majority of the inhabitants were forcibly expelled and new people came from Poland, as well as from the pre-war territories of Poland. Jan Cygan came from Lwów, while my father came from a village near Stanisławów (now Ukrainian Івано-Франківск). In general, every second person moved about 200 km across Poland just after the war (Okólski). Cygan travelled 600 km to reach Wrocław; my father travelled 750 km. The social mobility certainly contributed to the disappearance of non-standard Polish varieties.

In 1939, Breslau had more than 620,000 inhabitants (Goliński 465); in August 1945, there were 189,500 German citizens (who I will call Germans later on) left in Wrocław; at the beginning of 1947, 17,000 Germans; later in 1947, 4,000 Germans; and at the end of 1948, 2,400. In contrast, in 1945, there were 43,000 Polish citizens—a sizeable group was that of prisoners from before 1945; at the end of 1946, 185,000; and in 1947, 224,800. The 1939 size of the population was reached again in 1981 and surpassed in the 1990s (Kaszuba). These facts are significant, as Wrocław was the largest city annexed into Poland after 1945.

While there are no detailed studies of the varieties of Polish spoken by the new population,<sup>6</sup> one can form some broad generalizations based on the social background of the speakers, their place of origin and their social status. I will present here a general picture of the demographics in Wrocław, referring to the literature for a detailed breakdown. The pioneering empirical study was that of Irena Turnau, in which she studied registrar documentation in Wrocław. A useful summary of various studies, which do not differ significantly, can be found in Bergman. I will use it from here on. The new inhabitants came predominantly from villages (63.2%) and small towns, i.e., those with fewer than 100,000 inhabitants (16.9%); together the two groups constituted 80.1%. They came from various geographic parts of Poland: c. 73% in 1947 and c. 66% of all newcomers came from southern

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<sup>6</sup> There were also other languages spoken in the new population; for example Yiddish or various dialects of Ukrainian (some considered separate languages, cf. the Rusyn dialects). They were always in the minority; most speakers of Yiddish went elsewhere after the 1940s, and especially after 1968, mainly to Israel (cf. Ziątkowski, Waszkiewicz 2000). Most likely most of the speakers of those languages were multilingual, and Polish was one of their languages.

and central provinces (Polish *województwa*) in post-1945 Poland. From eastern areas of pre-1945 Poland, there were 22% of inhabitants in 1947 and 29% in 1950, or, to view it in a different way, in both 1947 and 1950 more than 50% came from the Poznań, Kraków, Łódź, Kielce, Rzeszów, and Warsaw provinces, roughly 10% in each subgroup. 8% came from the Lwów area. 49% of those born before 1945 had a peasant origin and 35% had a working-class origin; together, that constitutes 84% of the population of the immigrants. 60% had primary, or lower, education. The linguistic conclusion is obvious: the prevailing majority of new inhabitants of Wrocław did not speak the standard dialect and were from areas in which the linguistic features of dialects differed remarkably.

The statistics correspond to the general statistics about the historical stratification of Polish society (Lubaś); however, a very significant difference was that in other areas in Poland, dialects formed a dialect continuum, and that was not the case in Wrocław. A similar situation could be found in other comparable<sup>7</sup> cities in the New Territories; for example, in Szczecin (Kołodziejek and Dąbrowska). While social and linguistic changes that originate thanks to urbanization are well known, what was unusual was the size of the population and the rapidity of social changes. The British new town Milton Keynes, which I am going to compare to Wrocław at a later point, was planned to have 250,000 inhabitants and, in contrast to Wrocław had a continuous history, i.e., its inhabitants came from the region (Milton Keynes City Council).

The social changes, one could suppose, would bring about rapid changes of linguistic behaviour. Because of these factors, linguists were given an extraordinary laboratory in which to study linguistic change. However, most accounts of the linguistic changes in the Wrocław area mention the fact that there were only few empirical studies (cf. Wyderka, “Przemiany”, “O rozwoju”; Zielińska). In general, linguists set out to demonstrate that this melting pot rapidly produced a unified standard variety of Polish, which was what was expected from them by the political authorities (cf. Kłoskowska). The new population in the New Territories was supposed to rapidly integrate with the population elsewhere in Poland, and that would include also the outcome of linguistic changes (cf. Rospond “O integracji”). The new Polish community was expected to be homogenous with respect to ethnicity and language. Some scholars suggest that the new inhabitants themselves expected there would be political, cultural and linguistic integration with the respective structures of the prevailing community in Poland (cf. e.g., Thum; Zielińska). I will return to this issue at a later point.

Wyderka (“O rozwoju”) discusses several important reasons why linguists did not study the new linguistic situation in as detailed manner as it deserved. First, the political pressure, which I have mentioned. Second, the traditional methodology of

<sup>7</sup> By similar, I mean those that were big enough and in which there was no significant pre-war indigenous Polish population. Thus, Wrocław and Szczecin were unlike Gdańsk or Opole, in which there was a Polish (or Slavic) population before 1945.

Polish dialectology—used to describe slow processes in close-knit communities in rural areas—which the linguists knew how to use, was ill-suited to a study of this linguistic situation, in particular to the rapidity of change and to change in urban areas, and Polish linguists did not know the methods developed elsewhere. There were no empirical studies on a large scale; those that were carried out were small and not consistent methodologically. Lack of empirical studies also led Polish linguists to adopt hypothetical theoretical constructs, such as the emergence of so-called new mixed dialects. Wyderka (“O rozwoju” 9) attributes them to a 1973 paper by Szymczak. In short, hypothetically, linguistic features from various dialects would produce a new dialect, in which one could find a mixture of those features. This would normally be the case, according to some sociolinguists, Trudgill (*New-Dialect*) in particular. This, however, has not been realized.

What is perhaps most worrying is that in Polish linguistics, in which arguments from authority were often traditionally accepted as true, the hypotheses not derived from empirical data, i.e., those that can be falsified, are repeated to this day. In a popular scholarly web page on dialects in Poland, there is a section on new mixed dialects, but Halina Karaś in the relevant section explains that in fact there are no new mixed dialects.<sup>8</sup> I might add also the fact that traditionally, Polish linguists have had a very strong prescriptive bent, and, as the population of Polish citizens predominantly spoke non-standard dialects, and because the pre-war social organization was rapidly changing, they were busy with prescriptive activities after 1945. What is interesting, and what was often noted in studies of Polish culture, Poles with peasant or working-class origins adopted the values of upper classes (*szlachta*, noblemen), not of their own social group (cf. Tazbir), which were considered not prestigious. Those values included also linguistic behaviour, i.e., there was an internalized cultural pressure in non-standard speakers to adopt the standard dialect of the upper classes.<sup>9</sup>

Let us return to demographic changes, which quite likely had an effect on spontaneous linguistic changes. To repeat, the new inhabitants spoke a wide variety of dialects. What about the reproduction of those dialects? We have to take a look at the basic social environment: the family. Bergman in his studies notices

<sup>8</sup> This view is repeated over and over again, cf. for example the official page of the Ministry of Education, in which one can find a statement “terytoria na zachodzie i północy Polski odzyskane po zakończeniu II wojny światowej. Na obszarach tych występują nowe dialekty mieszane.” Without any examples, which are provided for other dialects that are discussed (<https://zpe.gov.pl/a/polszczyzna-niejedno-ma-imie-terytorialne-zawodowe-i-srodowiskowe-odmiany-wspolczesnego-jezyka-polskiego/D17EgtYEO>).

<sup>9</sup> Bajerowa has some typical statements about the linguistic changes in post-war Poland. She says that after 1945, there were new participants in high culture, they attempted [!] to use the standard dialect, even though they had no preparation in it: “rzesze ludzi wkraczały w życie kulturalne usiłując używać języka ogólnego mimo braku odpowiedniego przygotowania” (38) The standard language spoken by people of non-upper-class origins is said to be “general” but impoverished [sic!] (40).



that speakers with similar social background tend to bond together and to form endogamous marriages, in which cultural patterns, including linguistic patterns, were basically similar and would be reproduced. Unfortunately, there is no detailed study of the social background of spouses. Most likely, both spouses spoke the same dialect, as language is one of the primary ways of demonstrating social and cultural identity. That means that their children also spoke their dialect in their primary socialization. From my primary school days (1964–1972), I do not remember any non-standard phonetic features in my peers. I do remember that their parents did have non-standard accents. However, on the recording of Renata K., described in more detail later in this paper, she had the Lwów accent before her school days. It has to be remembered that after 1945 in Poland, children were socialized quite early outside their families in pre-school facilities, as most women had to work to support their families. My siblings and I went to nurseries and kindergartens before school, from the age of 3. It is quite likely that children in primary school, after they passed through the pre-school facilities, already exhibited some levelling of the dialects spoken at home towards the standard, and that this was acceptable to other children.

If we move to social interactions outside families, the dialect differences could lead to misunderstanding, and cases of that were noted by Rospond (“O integracji”) in his once-influential paper. On the other hand, Nieckula (*Polszczyzna mówiona Wrocławia*. Vol. 1) says there was no misunderstanding, and in his social environment, in which standard Polish was most likely used, that was certainly true. The findings of Zielińska from her wide-ranging studies, carried out from 2009 to 2013, seem to be conclusive, however. About 65 years after the war, her interviewees, born before 1940, remembered many cases of misunderstanding, which would suggest they found such situations very difficult; otherwise, they would not remember it. The speakers certainly wanted to resolve the difficulty and, first, dropped features that marked the speaker distinctly as low-class, for example mazuration (mazurzenie). This again was noted by Rospond (“O integracji”), and they adopted more prestigious features, i.e., those of standard Polish. There is the question, though: how did the dialect shift proceed? What were the methods of diffusion?

The traditional mechanisms for dialect shift that have been offered by Polish scholars are usually external to the language (cf. Bajerowa); according to them, the standard dialect was disseminated by schooling and by the mass media. The influence was considered only top-down; the teacher’s standard dialect was to be copied by pupils and students, they were then corrected by the teacher, and they thus learned the standard. The same can be said about mass media: until recently, participation could be only passive. However, this model does not explain why in Poland the Podhale or the Silesia regions do retain their own dialects (some say languages; cf. Czesak), despite the long exposure to schooling and the media, and even though the schooling system actively suppressed non-standard dialects (cf. Kłoskowska 256). This is because language change really happens through the

face-to-face interactions of participants in speech acts (cf. Trudgill, *New-Dialect*, extensive literature), who acclimate to the speech of their interlocutors. Teachers typically do not accommodate their language habits to those of their students. So the mechanisms favouring dialect shift had to be those that could be found in dialogue. While Trudgill (“Colonial dialect”) thinks that the issues of social identity are irrelevant in new dialect formation, and that a new dialect is formed automatically, by selection of phonetic features, the development of Polish dialects after the war shows that they were important. Silesian and Podhale dialect speakers stress their social identity by using their highly-distinctive dialects, but the uprooted inhabitants of the New Territories felt they have to forge a new, nation-wide identity by shifting from the dialects they were speaking to the “best” one, i.e., the standard. This is stressed by Zielińska in her study. Actually, the Lwów accent was usually considered to be attractive and prestigious (cf. Kurzowa), but was not adopted by the new Wrocław population. Furthermore, spontaneous change was frowned upon, which I hope to show via example of the names of geographic entities.

The immigrants were uprooted;<sup>10</sup> they found themselves in a foreign land, in a foreign city. But they were not allowed to tame the land, to domesticate it, by using new Polish names for geographic entities, coined by themselves, even when they wanted to. One can note the suppression of spontaneous names for various entities of Wrocław. There is a hillock in the central part of the city, originally a part of fortifications, *Taschenbastion*; later on it was called *Liebichs-Höhe* after *Liebich*, the investor of the architectural structures on it. By false analogy, “Liebich—Liebe—miłość (love)”, it was called *Wzgórze Miłości* (love hill) by the new inhabitants. The official name now is *Wzgórze Partyzantów* (partisans’ hill), which is just as unrelated to the history of Wrocław as the spontaneous name. The street *Tilsiterstrasse* was named *Tylżycka*, a spontaneous loan translation; later, it was “correctly” renamed *Elcka* (Kruszewski 133); Kruszewski calls these names unauthorized, “samowolne”. Nothing was really gained by changing the name from *Tylżycka* to *Elcka*. The district now called *Kłokoczyce* had the spontaneous name *Głogczyce*, based on the original German form *Glogschütz* (Kruszewski 10).

This pattern of blocking spontaneous naming can be found in general in changes in the names of geographical entities in the New Territories. It is also better documented. I will use one example. The task of giving Polish names to the settlements was assumed by the official Committee for Settling of Place Names (Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji). The general idea was that the names were supposed to stress the Polish heritage of the New Territories and “prove” that Poles have every right to them.<sup>11</sup> Committee members did not feel obliged to

<sup>10</sup> The original title of Thum’s book *Die fremde Stadt*, and the title of the Polish translation stresses this fact; the English title is *Uprooted*.

<sup>11</sup> As late as in 1984, Rospond (*Słownik* 11) says that for Silesia and Pomerania, his dictionary confirms that they are historically Polish (“jest potwierdzeniem historycznej polskości tych ziem”), and adds a horrific statement that a nation has the right to those territories which it named (“prawa



conform to the wishes of the inhabitants of the cities or villages. One of the best known examples of their attitude is the name of *Lötzen* (cf. Wagińska-Marzec; Rospond, *Słownik*), which had the historical pre-1945 Polish name *Łuczany*. This was changed to *Gizycko*, to commemorate *Gizewiusz*. In general, the names adopted by the new settlers after 1945 were changed to “better” ones, even though in many cases, they were just as arbitrary as those given by the settlers. The only recognized method of changing a name was by official means.

If we look at the processes of dialect shift in the New Territories from a wider perspective, we must note that they were in a way similar to processes that occurred in some other territories, such as in the USA, Australia or New Zealand. In those countries, there was little influence of indigenous languages and a mixture of various dialects of English. Peter Trudgill (*New-Dialect* 26–30) suggests that in those environments, new dialects were created in a deterministic way; he thinks that American, Australian or New Zealand Englishes came into being in an automatic way, as a result of linguistic accommodation, which arises from social interaction. However, this did not happen in the New Territories, even though the linguists referred to earlier did believe that new mixed dialects would originate. One factor that could make the social situation different in the New Territories than that in the British colonies was the fact that the British colonies were discontinuous; they were far removed from England, while people in the New Territories mixed freely with other people in Poland. Indeed, historical sources suggest that the movement in and out of the New Territories was quite intensive in the years just after the war (Kaszuba 40–41).

Another social experiment, quite similar to the one in Poland, was the establishment of new towns in the UK; for example, Milton Keynes. However, while some of the patterns of linguistic change there are certainly similar to those in Poland, in particular the role of children of various age groups (cf. Trudgill, *New-Dialect* 27–30), researchers note that what in fact occurs is regional dialect levelling (Kerswill and Williams), i.e., new-town speakers’ dialect becomes more similar to the dialect in nearby Reading. Dialect levelling there does not result in standard dialect adoption. This has not happened in Poland; in most areas in Poland, what is noted is a significant dialect shift from non-standard dialects to the standard one. However, Polish linguists think, as I do, that the standard dialect of Polish is far more widespread among second and third generation speakers in the New Territories than elsewhere in Poland. In what follows, I will reconstruct what happened, adding explanations based on available demographic data.

There are now three generations of adult inhabitants of Wrocław: the immigrants, their children and their grandchildren, and a fourth generation of pre-adults. Bergman notes that in 1950 there were already statistically more young

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narodu do tych ziem, które sam ponazywał”), horrific in view of the fact that Berlin, Chemnitz, Dresden are etymologically Slavic names, or that towns like Olkusz, Wolbomierz or Olsztyn (near Cracow) have etymologically German names.

people in Wrocław than in the core Polish regions. In 1985, those born in Wrocław before 1960 constituted 51% of the population, and those born until 1985 made up 74.5%. This is a result of the fact that the birth rate in the New Territories exceeded that of other areas in Poland (Bergman 66; cf. Okólski).<sup>12</sup> After 1945, in Poland in general there were two demographic peaks (Główny Urząd Statystyczny): 1950–1960, this group went to primary school from 1957 to 1967 and reached adulthood 1975–1985; the other, flatter, peak was in 1970–1990, and this group went to school 1977–1997 and reached adulthood 1988–2008. These data are consistent with my experiences; my three siblings and I are in the first group. To conclude, in Wrocław, very young and young children very quickly dominated numerically, and this had its effects on the transmission of language. Typically (Kerswill and Williams), pre-school children replicate the dialect of their parents and tend to change their dialect when they go to school and meet their peers. As usual, language accommodation results from social and linguistic interaction.

I had access to some documentation of this process in the New Territory, specifically in Jelenia Góra, though it has been unfortunately destroyed. There were tape recordings of Renata R.,<sup>13</sup> born in 1953—judging by her childish voice in the recordings, they were done in the late 1950s<sup>14</sup> from her pre-school days in Jelenia Góra—there was obviously no metadata. In the recordings, she had the Lwów accent.<sup>15</sup> When I met her in 1973, she spoke only the standard dialect, and her parents had some faint traces of the eastern accent; interestingly, it was her mother who had a stronger accent. This was interesting because in my social group, women usually had the standard accent, while men did not—for example, my father’s peers. This confirms the belief that women adopt linguistic innovations quicker and tend to use the prestige norm (cf. Milroy and Milroy) more, perhaps because their social relations are far more extensive than those of men, so their needs of accommodation are greater.

The New Territories data, anecdotal though they are, so far support the sociolinguist view that a new dialect appears after two generations (Trudgill, *New-Dialect* 28). To repeat, in 1976, with the first generation reaching adulthood, various accents could be heard in Wrocław, and there was huge variation of linguistic features (cf. Rospond, “O integracji”; Wyderka, “Przemiany”), though they were

<sup>12</sup> In the Szczecin area, the birth rate in 1950 reached astonishing 49 births per 1000 people (Okólski 34). In Wrocław from 1949 to 1953, it was 40–43 (Górczyńska et al. 80). From 1950–1956, the average fertility rate in Wrocław (117) exceeded the average Polish fertility rate (100) and was the highest among the five largest cities in Poland. In 1950–1951, it was nearly twice as high as that in Kraków (Górczyńska et al. 81).

<sup>13</sup> My brother’s wife.

<sup>14</sup> In Poland, the production of consumer tape recorders started in 1958 (Tułodziecki).

<sup>15</sup> There are recordings from the 1980s, some of which have been made available; however, there has been no description of the data (Majewska-Tworek, Zaško-Zielińska and Pęzik). The recordings are available on [spokes.clarin-pl.eu/](http://spokes.clarin-pl.eu/). Most of them, however, seem to be recordings from the social circle of the researchers.

unusual in the late 1990s. However, in contrast to what Trudgill (*New-Dialect*) suggests, no new dialect came into existence, most speakers, including adults, switched to the standard. My hypothesis is that the factor that was decisive in the acceptance of the standard was the numerical domination of children in their primary social groups, i.e., families. Children, who most likely spoke different dialects at pre-school and school, had somehow to resolve communication problems, and they adopted the language of their teachers.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, because of the strong prescriptive tendencies and the standard language ideology, schools also actively suppressed any non-standard dialects (and other languages). Children brought linguistic innovations home and their parents accommodated to their children's dialect because, first, the parents felt that the new community had to be unified politically, culturally and linguistically nation-wide, and, second, as the example of the new geographical names shows, they believed that the approved changes could only be instilled from the top, from the authorities.

At this point, one may go back to Jan Cygan's speech and wonder why he, like some people of his generation with the eastern accent, preserved his dialect until his final days. That was not the rule. There were three strategies for people with regional accents. Preservation of the accent would be one; another would be to change to the standard. Waclaw O., born in 1921, felt ashamed of his eastern accent and tried to eradicate it. I could not hear any non-standard features in his speech in the 1990s when I met him. His wife, born in 1917, spoke the pure standard accent to the point of being hypercorrect. What is interesting is that their daughter, Maria O., a speaker of standard Polish, went to Poznań when she was 16–17 years old. A shopkeeper identified her as a speaker of the Lwów accent, i.e., a person from Wrocław,<sup>17</sup> which shows that the accent was used in the family in the mid–1960s. Finally, a third strategy is possible. At the beginning of the 1980s, I asked an elderly cloakroom attendant in the Ossolineum library whether he had been with the library in Lwów before 1945, and he answered in the affirmative. I expressed my surprise that he did not have the accent and he switched over to the dialect with evident relish. He was a bidialectal person. Cygan always had the eastern accent, and it is evident from his paper and from my talks with him that he treasured it and speaking it was evidently a sign of his social and cultural identity for him.

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<sup>16</sup> I assume that teachers generally had the standard accent; however, some elder teachers in my secondary school (II Liceum) had distinct features of the eastern pronunciation. I do not recall any teacher in my primary school having an accent.

<sup>17</sup> I would like to thank the two sisters, Anna D. and Maria O., for sharing their memories with me.

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