
Awakening the Language and Speakers’ Community of Wymysiöeryś

TOMASZ WICHERKIEWICZ*, TYMOTEUSZ KRÓL** and
JUSTYNA OLKO***

*Faculty of Modern Languages, Adam Mickiewicz University, al. Niepodległości 4, 61-874 Poznań, Poland. Email: wicher@amu.edu.pl

**Wilamowianie Association, Wilamowice, Poland. Email: wymysojer@gmail.com

***Faculty of ‘Artes Liberales’, University of Warsaw, Dobra 72, 00-312 Warszawa, Poland. Email: justynao@al.uw.edu.pl

The town of Wilamowice (southern Poland) is the unique home to the community of speakers of Wymysiöeryś. The language enclave originates from Colonial Middle High German and – according to diachronic dialectological analyses – is made up of a sub-enclave of the so-called Bielitz-Bialaer Sprachinsel. As a result of social and political cataclysms brought by the Second World War and the following ban on and gap in its intergenerational transmission, it faced an inescapable language death. That doom, however, has been restrained by the activities of dedicated native speakers, with Tymoteusz Król (born in 1993) functioning as an eco- and sociolinguistic relay between the generation of last speakers passing away and, unexpectedly, a growing group of potential new speakers. The microlanguage, now spoken as native by fewer than 20 Wilamowiceans, and still without any official recognition at the administrative level, is experiencing an astonishing, but well-prepared and local culture-based revitalisation course. This article discusses the recent achievements and prospective challenges of the revival processes for Wymysiöeryś – from an internal (including T. Król as the youngest native speaker and intra-community researcher) and external yet engaged (J. Olko and T. Wicherkiewicz as participating academics) perspectives, including the recent results of activities undertaken within an integral revitalisation programme based on the successful collaboration of the community, two major universities in Poland, as well as the local school and municipal authorities. The programme covers all three levels of language planning: corpus, status and acquisition. Efficiently combining grassroots and top-down approaches, the collaborating actors also ground language revitalisation in the social, cultural and economical benefits of preserving and extending the local cultural heritage and linguistic landscape.

– *Månter, do dy wymysiöejer ryd zo weter zàjn derhalda?*

– *Dos ej ànikjer bűw, wo kon wymysiöeryś àn à lýt kyndyn*

(Interview with Helena Biba (Wilamowicean, born 1922) – 2013)

The town of Wilamowice (*Wymysoü* in Wilamowicean, historically *Wilmesau* in German) is located in the southern Polish province of Silesia, county of Bielsko-Biała, under current administrative division, ca. 15 km southwards from Oświęcim/Auschwitz. The settlement is a unique home to the community of *Wymysiöeryś* – a severely endangered microlanguage, now spoken by several dozen users. The town itself has ca. 3000 inhabitants and is an executive centre for a municipality with a population of ca. 18,000, where indigenous Wilamowiceans constitute a numerical minority even at the lowest self-governmental unit, not exceeding 18%.

The settlement was most probably founded around 1300 as a result of the so-called German eastward migration wave, which could have also included migrants from Germanic-speaking lands of Flanders, Friesland, or even Romance Wallonia. The colonists founded several settlements of/around Bielitz/Bielsko and Biała, on both sides of the river Biała/Bialka, which constituted a centuries-old border between the then Duchies of Cieszyn/Teschen and Oświęcim/Auschwitz as well as Dioceses of Breslau/Wrocław and Cracow, and later between Bohemian and Polish Crowns and lands of Silesia and Lesser Poland (the latter known later as western Galicia) respectively. That transborder cluster developed into what has been referred to as the *Bielitz-Bialaer Sprachinsel* in German historical dialectology – a mixed urban–rural complex with its own cultural profile and a dialect-cluster consisting of several subvarieties utilised as markers of both extra- and intra-group identities. The cluster broke up into the proper *Bielitz-Biala Sprachinsel* and Wilamowice (as a secondary sub-exclave) as a consequence of Polonisation of such villages as Piszczowice, which has since separated Wilamowice from the village of Hałcnów/Alzen – a continual constituent of the *Sprachinsel* until the 1940s.

After the 1772 Partition of Poland, the German(ic) ethno-linguistic cluster functioned as an enclave contained by a contact area of various West-Slavic language varieties spoken on both sides of the Silesian-Galician border within the Habsburg Empire of Austria. Wilamowice remained within the crown-land of Galicia.

The impact of the socio-political, cultural and linguistic constellations and policies of the Austrian Empire has formed the political/national identity of several generations of Wilamowiceans. After 1918, Wilamowice became part of the restored Polish State, while the proper *Bielitz-Biala Sprachinsel* turned into one of the German minority hubs in the Republic of Poland, with all its ethno-linguistic and political consequences, i.e. a well-constructed and deep-seated German national identity developing into a unifying German political nationalism, strengthened by minority institutions (including education, political life, sport and tourism organisations, etc.) and later by the Nazi propaganda apparatus. As a result, after the Second World War, most of the *Sprachinsel* inhabitants shared the fate of most ethnic Germans in Poland: persecution, imprisonment, rape and, eventually, expulsion to post-War Germany.¹

The community of Wilamowice has mainly constructed its identity around the local language, the ‘Austrian-Habsburg political nation’ tradition, endogamy, its own social structure patterns, economic and family ties, and a remarkable system of nicknames used within the community to identify its individual members.

Those elements, along with a well-developed system of folk costumes, including weaving traditions, wearing rules, terminology as well as trade skills and an extensive network of trade links within the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and Europe, have formed the constitutive markers of the actual Wilamowicean distinctiveness.

The social structure and ethno-linguistic order were infringed upon by the Nazi invasion in 1939 and then destroyed with the arrival of the Soviet Red Army in 1945, and the subsequent Polish communist administration. Numerous families in Wilamowice were ousted from their farmsteads and households by their former neighbours from the surrounding Polish villages with the permission of local Polish authorities. One of main allegations was the acceptance by Wilamowiceans of their addition to the *Volksliste* during the Nazi occupation, even though inclusion on the said 'German nationality list' was abundantly granted by the Nazi occupants to many inhabitants – including ethnic Poles² – of the vicinities of Bielsko and Biała (Bielitz-Biala). The actual reason for the massive appropriations were the old-established envy caused by economic differences and implicit consent for numerous forms of ethnic cleansings, excused by prior war atrocities. Worth mentioning here is the exceptionally wealthy condition of the town and its inhabitants in the times preceding the cataclysms brought by the Second World War.

Sociolinguistic Situation

Wilamowice does constitute an exceptional ethnic and linguistic enclave, actually the very last one of its kind in the present territory of Poland.

During the last seven centuries, the basic code of communication used on the local scale was the native language *Wymysiöeryś*, historically defined as a variety of Middle High German. The settlement formed an enclave in the region, where the wider means of communication was Polish or, precisely speaking, dialects of Polish. The Wilamowiceans had to communicate with their Polish-speaking neighbours, at least because of their vibrant trade business. Polish, in its literary form, was used in the church and school in the town. The inhabitants also knew standard Austrian German. This linguistic mosaic was preserved in the town until the end of the 1940s. The situation of language contact turned into a language conflict with the emergence of the new communist administration. The influence of the political and, as a consequence, social and demographic factors was crucial for the later developments. The inhabitants of the town, especially the speakers of the language, experienced severe persecution after the War, including an official ban issued on Easter 1945:

[...] from now on, we ban any use of the local dialect – also in family and private situations, the forgoing also concerns wearing distinct folk costumes.

Those who do not comply with the present ban will be brought to severe punishment; since it is high time to put stop to any distinctness and its lamentable results.

A steady and systematic language loss eradicated Wilamowicean from most, and eventually from all, of its traditional domains – from family circles to community life. *Wymysiöeryś* lost its communicative and integrative functions; a few exceptions

include individual biographies, such as, for example, grandchildren brought up solely by their grandparents, or displaced families. In the course of the post-War decades, the language and its use became a token of the past trauma for the eldest, a ridiculed emblem of unwanted otherness for the middle generation, and an incomprehensible symbol of an outmoded ‘grandfatherness’ for the grandchildren.

When the linguistic and sociolinguistic research on/in Wilamowice was re-undertaken at the turn of the 1980s, *Wymysiöeryś* seemed to be in the final stage of language death: completely unknown by the youngest generation, ridiculed by the middle-aged, forgotten or placed into the communicative closet by the oldest. As one of informants stated in a 1989 interview:

We prayed: ‘Mountains and hills, hide us’, since we’ve suffered so much because of our language and folk costumes. They’d better vanish forever...

The projects launched in the 1990s focused on documenting Wilamowicean culture. The publication of the results, as well as recurrent presence of Wilamowice and related topics in mass-media (e.g. documentaries on Wilamowice/an broadcast on national and international TV) had ignited a spark of cultural recovery of/within the community.

Wicherkiewicz³ stated at that time:

The Wilamowiceans are only now starting to be proud of their tradition and distinctiveness. Unfortunately, they can no longer be proud of their ethnolect, since, after 750 years of existence, this smallest (or the second smallest – after Karaim) minority language in Poland faces imminent extinction, which will inevitably accompany the death of its last speakers (probably within some 10 years).

Revitalisation

That ominous summary of an article turned consensually into one of the incentives, which have inspired Tymoteusz Król to counteract the death of *Wymysiöeryś*. Born in 1993 to non-Wilamowicean parents and brought up by a *Wymysiöeryś*-speaking nanny,⁴ Tymoteusz grew up as a speaker, researcher and soon an ingenious revitaliser of his ‘nanny-tongue’. In 2003, he founded a Circle of Wilamowicean Culture, but even before that, he had started compiling word lists and collecting folk costumes. As a teenager, he launched his own language archive, which currently contains ca. 800 hours of audio- and video-recordings of spoken *Wymysiöeryś* (including many speakers who have already passed away).

In 2004, the first lessons of the language were organised – initially at the local school (on a fully voluntary basis) and then in private homes (and gardens, etc). The classes were attended by about a dozen children. The teacher was Józef Gara (1929–2013), a native speaker and one of very few writers of literature in *Wymysiöeryś*.

Another shelter for (initially solely elements of) the language and local costumes became the local folk ensemble, founded in 1948 with the intention of preserving and maintaining Wilamowicean culture – within the frames allowed by the then system of

administration. The ensemble was dissolved in 1995, but revived in 2000 by the newly established Association for Preservation of Cultural Heritage of Wilamowice, with the main objective to strengthen its repertoire with local ethnic contents.

The Association also became the main advocate of the awakening of local identity and represented the community of Wilamowiceans in the Polish Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages, founded in 2003. The next developments included publishing books – e.g. poems and songs by Józef Gara, his *Chronicle of the Town of Wymysoi*⁵ – as well as maintenance and promotion of traditional folklore, e.g. the custom of *Śmiergust* ('water plunge Easter Monday'), known country wide. An example of successful bottom-up revitalisation actions is the re-introduction of the male folk costume. Unlike the initiatives focusing on language, the promotion of folk costumes as a marker of local identity has been supported by the local Catholic parish priest.

More initiatives have been undertaken thanks to a wide-ranging project, *Endangered Languages. Comprehensive Models for Research and Revitalization*, launched in 2013 by the Faculty of 'Artes Liberales' of the University of Warsaw in collaboration with the Association *Wilamowianie* as well as scholars from Polish and foreign universities, directed by Justyna Olko.⁶ The project has focused on three endangered languages; besides Wilamowicean/*Wymysiöeryś*, it included Nahuatl in Mexico and Lemko in Poland. The main objectives include the construction of a unique, efficient model for the revitalisation of each of these languages, as well as (a) more general universal model(s) for revitalisation that could be applied to other endangered languages. The overarching goal has been to develop new forms of collaboration between academics and their institutions, local activists and organisations, and local municipal and educational institutions through Participatory Action Research and Community-Based Research, maximising the effects of the project and bridging existing barriers.

These aims are being pursued in two ways: first, through interdisciplinary research including documentary work as well as investigation of both the cultural-historical background and the present state of the languages; and second through close collaboration with native speakers' communities. The collected resources serve to create dictionaries, grammars and manuals, among them the already printed booklets *Ynzer boümmüter*⁷ and *Wymysiöejer fibl*.⁸ More teaching materials (a dictionary, an illustrated dictionary for children, a manual, a grammar) have been, or are being prepared by Tymoteusz Król in cooperation with academics from various universities (e.g. Andrason or Wicherkiewicz). A pictorial dictionary and a textbook have also been published with the support of the Project (*Ynzer juśty wjtła* and *Heći Peći* by Król, Majerska and Wicherkiewicz). It should be emphasised that Król has successfully standardised and introduced a coherent, relevant, and efficient spelling system for *Wymysiöeryś*, which is of huge importance for publishing literature, textbooks and language reference materials.

As part of the aforementioned Project, in June 2014, the Faculty of 'Artes Liberales' organised an international conference on revitalisation of endangered languages, held in the town of Wilamowice,⁹ in cooperation with several other scholarly

and municipal institutions. The topics of interest included, but were not limited to, cross-cultural contact, interdisciplinary collaboration, multilingualism, and the protection and development of endangered languages as the source of profound and long-lasting social benefits and innovations. That unique event was not only a space for debate and exchange of experiences among an international group of scholars and native speakers, but it also marked a milestone in the process of fostering and maintaining cultural identity of the Wilamowiceans. Therefore, the turn of 2013 into 2014 could be considered as a breakthrough in restoring the social prestige and sociolinguistic self-confidence to the community of Wilamowice.

In November 2013, representatives of Wilamowice were invited to the Polish Parliament in Warsaw as special guests for the Conference on *European and Regional Instruments of Protecting Endangered Languages*.¹⁰ The conference participants not only got acquainted with the history, situation and prospects for the language,¹¹ but were also shown samples of spoken, sung and written *Wymysiöeryś*. A special guest of the event was Cardinal Kazimierz Nycz,¹² the archbishop of Warsaw, who expressed his thanks to the community and researchers for their efforts to keep the language of Wilamowice alive. This fact has considerably strengthened the position of the language (revitalisers) vis-à-vis the otherwise sceptical local Catholic clergy.

The launch of the above research project also resulted in establishing the *Wymysiöeryśy Akademij–Accademia Wilamowicziana* in November 2013. This event marked an important new direction in the conservation of *Wymysiöeryś* and hopefully a chance for a new beginning for the language. The *Akademij*, for the first time, brings together native speakers, academics, and community members in an international partnership of co-operation and understanding, with the goal of creating an academic body through which efforts in documentation and revitalisation of *Wymysiöeryś* can be coordinated.

In 2011, Tymoteusz Król started teaching *Wymysiöeryś*, originally on an exclusively private base (to five to eight pupils). Since autumn 2014, the classes were incorporated into the school curriculum in Wilamowice, so the language is currently being taught to almost 30 children and two teachers (who are ready to take over and develop the school teaching curriculum) on the basic, intermediate and advanced levels. The presence of Wymysorys at the local school in Wilamowice is supported with the direct assistance and honorary patronage of the Warsaw University's Faculty of 'Artes Liberales' and Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Faculty of Modern Languages and Literatures. Launching the language at the local school is a direct result of the successful collaboration and alliance between local teachers and revitalisers of the language, direction of the school and municipal authorities, and academic institutions; importantly, it was preceded by special psycholinguistic and educational workshops for children, their parents, and teachers. These and other specialised workshops have been designed and implemented within the aforementioned project as part of a broader strategy for reinforcing positive language ideology and attitudes. Thereby, for the first time, any language acquisition programme for *Wymysiöeryś* can be planned.

Another domain, closely linked to the language teaching programme and where the recent years brought significant changes in favour of the prestige of Wilamowicean, is amateur theatre. In common opinion, particularly among the younger generations, *Wymysiöeryś* can be used solely in domains referring to the past, traditional culture, ancient customs, etc. The spectacles arranged and put on stage in 2014 to 2017 – namely *Der Klíny Fjyšt* ‘The Little Prince’, *Der Hobbit* ‘The Hobbit’ and *Óf jer Welt* (‘In the Next World’, based on the epic poem by Florian Biesik) – not only proved the timeless dimension of *Wymysiöeryś* vocabulary and expressive potential, but attracted a troupe of young learners (= new speakers) to master their recitation and stage skills in the language.¹³ *Der Hobbit* and *Óf jer Welt* were staged at the Polish Theatre in Warsaw in February 2016 and March 2017, respectively, thus making the spectacles, performed exclusively in *Wymysiöeryś*, available for a broader public. In addition, starting in 2016, the language has been taught as a university course at the Faculty of ‘Artes Liberales’ of the University of Warsaw.

Activities in Wilamowice have been continued and significantly extended within the project *Engaged Humanities. Capacity Building for Participatory Research In Linguistic-Cultural Heritage*, carried out within the Twinning Programme of the European Commission (2016–2018) by the University of Warsaw, the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London and Leiden University. As part of the project’s activities, we carried out a field school in Wilamowice in September 2016 that gathered participants from 15 countries speaking 22 minority languages. It was aimed at both supporting local revitalisation activities and studying language attitudes with respect to *Wymysiöeryś* in the villages surrounding Wilamowice, where fieldwork was carried out. This event spurred other local initiatives, including the decision to launch a ‘living museum,’ and had a positive impact on improving attitudes toward the language and its users.

The recent years have also marked a considerable progress in documentation and archiving of the language of Wilamowice. One of them – *Poland’s Linguistic Heritage. A Documentation Database for Endangered Languages*, led by T. Wicherkiewicz – focused on launching a catalogued database, which could serve as a language archive for annotated (and provided with metadata) language corpora, and constitute a basis for further linguistic, ethnolinguistic, and sociolinguistic research. In a further perspective, the corpora and materials collected can serve as linguistic sources in community-driven revitalisation projects. The resources compiled under the project include, among others, numerous samples of Wilamowicean and its closest linguistic relative – Hałcnowan from the *Bielitz-Bialaer Sprachinsel*. The resources can be found and retrieved, with comprehensive background information in English and Polish, at www.inne-jezyki.amu.edu.pl.

As mentioned earlier, Wilamowicean has been extensively audio- and video-recorded by Tymoteusz Król. His archives are now being catalogued and transcribed in the framework of a project led by Bartłomiej Chromik (University of Warsaw), *Documenting the Language and Cultural Heritage of Wilamowice*. The project team includes prospective/potential new speakers, providing them with a unique opportunity to deal with utterances made by the community members who passed away, to deepen their passive knowledge of *Wymysiöeryś*, to identify and structure

vocabulary, which is not used/known anymore, as well as to develop technical skills of annotating current speech recordings. Outwardly, the result of the project should be an open-access ethnographic and linguistic database, interconnected with other documentation bases.¹⁴

Creation of a Tourism Cluster in the Municipality of Wilamowice on the Basis of *Wymysiöeryś*

The basic reason for undertaking this project was a threat that the current positive trends in the sociolinguistic situation in Wilamowice may be reversed if new users of *Wymysiöeryś* decided to move away from the town after completing their education. In order to prevent this situation, we wanted to create workplaces stimulating the usage of *Wymysiöeryś* through the development of tourism. The creation of a tourism cluster embracing the whole municipality (either Wilamowice or surrounding villages) will not only improve the economic impact of the project but also may help to mitigate the long-lasting conflict thanks to cooperation and mutual benefits for both sides. Leading Polish designers, ethnographers and an IT specialist were invited to take part in this initiative; in cooperation with local activists, they designed and created the prototypes of souvenirs inspired by the culture of Wilamowice that are handcrafted in the town, board and computer games, and the system of signs with tourist information (<http://etnoprojekt.pl/2.0>). The project was financed by the Foundation for Polish Science.¹⁵ The other outcomes of the project include the following.

- Scenarios for workshops based on language and culture of Wilamowice (costume, weaving, dances).
- A website concerning tourism in Wilamowice.
- Marked paths for tourists.

Worth mentioning are two other spheres of intergenerational revitalisation and essential markers of Wilamowicean group memory and identity:

- folk costumes with a highly developed system of nomenclature, weaving and wearing rules;
- a system of traditional local nicknames.

The former is being reintroduced mainly through the activities of the folk ensemble and is strongly supported by the local society, while the latter links the modern Wilamowicean identity of the youth with the family, community history, kinship and social structure. The role of the two processes is currently essential for upgrading the prestige (of markers) of ‘Wilamowiceanness’ and the processes definitely contribute to the popularisation of the language, even if these markers are just its individual sub-systems/elements.

Summing up, we can speak about a successful and exemplary collaboration of local activists and organisations, municipal government, the local school, and academic partners from two leading universities in Poland. The revitalisation efforts also embrace international collaboration (*Wymysiöeryśy Akademijj*) and raising

national as well as international interest and support for the language through a wide presence in local and national-level media, many forms of dissemination, conferences and workshops. The most important results of this boundary-breaking alliance include: formal instruction at school and production of teaching and reference materials; fostering numerous cultural, scientific and dissemination events linked to the language and performed, at least partially, in *Wymysiöeryś*; and an ongoing change in language attitudes in the community and in the region. It is noteworthy that some language learners come from outside the town, while teachers and students from neighbouring municipalities participate in local cultural events linked to the revitalisation of *Wymysiöeryś*, such as Mother Tongue Day celebrated from 2015 to 2017.

Challenges, Prospects, Objectives

The achievements so far have made the community and revitalisers of *Wymysiöeryś* more aware of the vastness of the tasks to be performed in order to awaken the language and form its new speakers.

The achievements involve implementation of new forms of academic and non-academic partnership, including an efficient way of collaboration between two leading Polish universities, local non-profit organisations and activists, municipal authorities, school authorities and an international group of supporting scholars. As a result, language instruction has been started in the local school, language transmission re-established and several young new speakers have appeared. Moreover, literary and teaching materials have been published, and there have been vivid artistic and dissemination activities related to the language, and with a broad community participation. There is a notable change of attitudes toward the language in the community and more broadly in Polish society. Finally, the commercialisation path related to local linguistic-cultural heritage has been opened in order to make it part of the local economy by creating a tourism cluster and offering a broad range of activities promoting local language and culture.

Apparently, the fully-fledged communicative function of *Wymysiöeryś* cannot be restored, although it can become a secondary tool of communication and obviously a vivid token of local identity. This is already happening within the group of learners (prospectively the new speakers) of Wilamowicean, who also actively participate in the theatricals, in the rehearsals and performances of the folk ensemble, as well in the *Facebook* community, where *Wymysiöeryś* has started to be used.

The main challenges and objectives of the language planning and policy for the microlanguage are:

- to make it officially recognised by the national Law on national and ethnic minorities and the regional language and by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;
- to make Wilamowicean a firm marker of strong local identity;
- to identify the language education planning needs and objectives through medium- and long-term strategies, including financing perspectives, development of teaching aids, teachers' training programme etc.;

- as a result of the former, to settle the objectives of language learning, teaching and revitalisation at a rational and measurable, but ambitious scale;
- to complement the teaching of Wilamowicean with teaching of at least a few school subjects in the language, possibly on an interchangeable basis;
- to make Wilamowicean a visible and stable element of the local, municipal and county language landscape and language repertoire;
- to extensively saturate the town's language landscape with Wymysiöeryś;
- to make Wilamowicean commonly understood (passively) in the town, through bilingualism promoted in official documents and semi-official use by local institutions (including the Municipal Office and the Church);
- to launch a local language planning programme – possibly modelled on regulations adopted for, for example, Aranés in Val d'Aran (Catalunya/Spain) or Mòcheno and Cimbrian in Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol (Italy);
- to promote multilingualism in the municipality, particularly in the school community, among pupils, teachers and parents;¹⁶
- to stabilise and normalise its corpus, i.e. vocabulary, grammar, spelling rules, etc., when possible through the Wymysiöeryśy Akademyj – Accademia Wilamowicziana;
- to create and maintain spaces of language and cultural immersion for new speakers, if still possible, through direct personal contact with the native speakers; such spaces should/could operate in the local school and in the to-be local museum;
- to deal with the issue of historical trauma of the Wilamowiceans, its long-term consequences on language use, language attitudes, and the community's health;¹⁷
- to involve local businesses and administration in revitalisation programmes, e.g. through a local cultural-economic-tourist cluster;¹⁸
- to further promote and teach Wilamowicean through courses offered by Polish universities;¹⁹
- to make the endangered languages visible in Polish mass-media (dissemination campaign, through making the broader society aware of Poland's linguistic diversity).²⁰

Time is short. At the very beginning of the revitalisation processes in 2004, the number of native speakers of Wymysiöeryś amounted to ca. 130 persons. In 2017, there are fewer than 20, and each month brings sad news of some passing away. Most likely, very soon, Tymoteusz Król will become the only living link between the generation of native speakers and new speakers.

Acknowledgements

This paper is part of a project that has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 692199. Some parts of the present text are based on Wicherkiewicz and Olko (2016) in

Ref. 1, which can be referred to for an extensive report on the history of research on, writing in and revitalization of *Wymysiöeryś*.

Further Reading

- H. Anders (1933) *Gedichte von Florian Biesik in der Mundart von Wilamowice* (Kraków: Uniwersytet Poznański).
- J. Latosiński (1909) *Monografia Miasteczka Wilamowic. Na podstawie źródeł autentycznych* [A monograph of the town of Wilamowice. On the basis of authentic sources] (Kraków).
- W. Mitzka (1968) Die Ostbewegung der deutschen Sprache. In: *Kleine Schriften zur Sprachgeschichte und Sprachgeographie* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter), pp. 127–179.
- H. Mojmir (1930–1936) *Wörterbuch der deutschen Mundart von Wilamowice* (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności).
- N. Morciniec (1984) Die flämische Ostkolonisation und der Dialekt von Wilamowice in Südpolen. *Slavica Gandensia*, **11**, pp. 7–18.
- N. Morciniec (1995) Zur Stellung der deutschen Dialekts von Wilmesau/ Wilamowice in Südpolen. In: G. Keil and J.J. Menzel (Eds), *Anfänge und Entwicklung der deutschen Sprache im mittelalterlichen Schlesien* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke), pp. 71–81.
- R. Neels (2012) *De nakende taaldood van het Wymysojer in Wilamowice, een Germaans taaleiland in Zuid-Polen. Een sociolinguïstische analyse* (Ph.D. thesis, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.).
- C. Ritchie (2012) *Some Considerations on the Origins of Wymysorys* (BA thesis, University of Sydney Department of Linguistics).
- H. Ryckeboer (1984) Die 'Flamen' von Wilamowice. Versuch zur Deutung einer bäuerlichen Überlieferung. *Slavica Gandensia* **11**, pp. 19–34.

References and Notes

1. For outlines of cultural, political and linguistic history of the *Sprachinsel* and *Wilamowice*, see the following: T. Wicherkiewicz and J. Olko (2016) Researching, documenting and reviving Wymysiöeryś – A historical outline. In: J. Olko, T. Wicherkiewicz and R. Borges (Eds), *Integral Strategies for Language Revitalization* (Warsaw: Faculty of 'Artes Liberales', University of Warsaw); T. Wicherkiewicz (2001) Piśmiennictwo w etnolekcie wilamowskim [Writings in the Wilamowice ethnolect]. In: A. Barciak (Ed.), *Wilamowice. Przyroda, historia, język, kultura oraz społeczeństwo miasta i gminy* [Wilamowice. The Nature, History, Language, Culture and Society of the Town and Commune] (Wilamowice: Urząd Gminy), pp. 520–538; T. Wicherkiewicz and J. Zieniukowa (2001) Sytuacja etnolektu wilamowskiego jako enklawy językowej [The situation of the Wilamowice ethnolect as a Sprachinsel]. In: A. Barciak (Ed.), *Wilamowice. Przyroda, historia, język, kultura oraz społeczeństwo miasta i gminy* [Wilamowice. The Nature, History, Language, Culture and Society of the Town and Commune] (Wilamowice: Urząd Gminy), pp. 489–519; B. Chromik (2013) *What Herder Could Have Learned in Wilamowice* <http://www.revitalization.al.uw.edu.pl/eng/Wymysorys/61/35/what-herder-could-have-learned-in-wilamowice>; B. Chromik and M. Dolatowski (2013) *Halcnovian and Bielsko-Biała Enclave*. <http://inne-jezyki.amu.edu.pl/Frontend/Language/Details/11>; B. Chromik and T. Wicherkiewicz (2013) *Wymysorys/ Wilamowicean*. <http://inne-jezyki.amu.edu.pl/Frontend/Language/Details/10>; T. Wicherkiewicz (2000) The impact of politics and social factors on the death

- of a minority language (the case of Wilamowicean in Poland). In: P.W. Thomas and J. Mathias (Eds), *Developing Minority Languages: The Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Minority Languages* (Cardiff: Gomer), pp. 547–555; T. Wicherkiewicz (2003) *The Making of a Language. The Case of the Idiom of Wilamowice, Southern Poland* (Berlin–New York: Mouton de Gruyter); T. Wicherkiewicz (2013) *Pochodzenie języka wilamowskiego – poglądy i badania* [The origins of Wilamowicean – Views and studies]. <http://www.revitalization.al.uw.edu.pl/eng/Wilamowicean?view=8>; T. Wicherkiewicz and J. Zieniukowa (2003) Sociolinguistic changes in the borderland area of Silesia and Małopolska/Polonia Minor in the 20th century. In: S. Warchoń (Ed.), *Proceedings of the Third International Congress of Dialectologists and Geolinguists – Lublin 2000*, Vol. II (Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press), pp. 449–457.
2. Being registered on the *Volkliste* was voluntary (although hardly refusible) for Poles, while the alleged ethnic Germans were included mandatorily.
 3. T. Wicherkiewicz (2000) The impact of politics and social factors on the death of a minority language (the case of Wilamowicean in Poland). In: P.W. Thomas and J. Mathias (Eds), *Developing Minority Languages: The Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Minority Languages* (Cardiff: Gomer), pp. 547–555.
 4. Helena Rozner fúm Böba-Loüzkja (1928–2015).
 5. J. Gara (2007) *Kronika historyczna miasteczka Wilamowice* [A historical chronicle of the town of Wilamowice] (Wilamowice: TIMEX).
 6. <http://www.revitalization.al.uw.edu.pl>.
 7. <http://www.revitalization.al.uw.edu.pl/Content/Uploaded/Documents/Ynzerboummuter-a10570de-8558-425b-bffc-9917d4519533.pdf>.
 8. <http://www.revitalization.al.uw.edu.pl/Content/Uploaded/Documents/wymysioejer%20fibl-cb417623-33a9-47f3-b1f1-4f793ab4b7ab.pdf>.
 9. <http://www.revitalization.al.uw.edu.pl/Content/Uploaded/Documents/Practical%20information-7f4c813a-0124-4661-a8b0-f731eb80b9d6.pdf>.
 10. <http://www.sejm.gov.pl/Sejm7.nsf/komunikat.xsp?documentId=390857B270785488C1257C2100494B9A>.
 11. Proceedings published as , L. Nijakowski (Rd.) (2014) *Europejskie i regionalne instrumenty ochrony języków zagrożonych. Konferencja* [European and regional instruments for the protection of endangered languages] (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe). [http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/WydBAS.nsf/0/988B9C60C56984A1C1257D50003FEDCD/\\$file/Jezyki_zagrozone.pdf](http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/WydBAS.nsf/0/988B9C60C56984A1C1257D50003FEDCD/$file/Jezyki_zagrozone.pdf).
 12. Born in the neighbouring village of Stara Wieś, known in Wymysiöeryś as Wymysdiüf.
 13. Both translations made obviously by... Tymoteusz Król.
 14. All three projects mentioned above were supported financially by the Polish National Programme for Development of Humanities.
 15. Second prize in the IMPULS competition.
 16. Workshops on psycholinguistic benefits of bi-/multilingualism have already been organised by the Warsaw University Faculty of ‘Artes Liberales’.
 17. This topic was addressed for the first time in the framework of the project *Endangered Languages. Comprehensive Models for Research and Revitalization*.
 18. A pilot project study is being carried out by Bartłomiej Chromik from the University of Warsaw, with financial support of The Foundation for Polish Science.
 19. Such courses (*Ethnographic Sketches of Wilamowice, Language Course of Wymysiöeryś*) have already been offered at the University of Warsaw.
 20. A number of tools have been prepared as results of national and international projects: <http://www.inne-jezyki.amu.edu.pl>, <http://languagesindanger.eu>, <http://www.revitalization.al.uw.edu.pl>.

About the Authors

Tomasz Wicherkiewicz is a Professor at the Faculty of Modern Languages and Literatures, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań/Poland, and head of the Department for Language Policy & Minority Studies. He is a specialist in minority and regional languages, language constellations in Poland, Europe and Asia, language policy and language planning, sociolinguistics and ethnolinguistics, language documentation, language endangerment and revitalization. In addition, he is initiator and leader of the project Poland's Linguistic Heritage – Database for endangered languages (www.innejezyki.amu.edu.pl); member of the project team Languages in Danger (<http://languagesindanger.eu>); author or co-editor of the monographs *The Making of a Language. The Case of the Idiom of Wilamowice, Southern Poland* (Mouton De Gruyter, 2003); with Cezary Obracht-Prondzyński, *The Kashubs: Past and Present* (Peter Lang, 2011); *Regionalne języki kolateralne Europy: porównawcze studia przypadku z polityki językowej* (Poznań: Rys, 2014).

Tymoteusz Król, Tioma fum Dökter. The youngest native speaker of Wymysiöeryś. Local activist for revitalisation of his mother tongue. Member of the Association Wilamowianie.

Justyna Olko is a researcher at the Faculty of 'Artes Liberales' at the University of Warsaw, and obtained a doctoral degree in the humanities in 2005 at the UW's Faculty of History and habilitation in ethnology at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań in 2016. She specializes in the ethnohistory, anthropology and linguistics of colonial and modern Mexico, with a special focus on Nahuatl language and culture. She is also involved in a programme for revitalising the Nahuatl language and works with researchers and activists committed to revitalising endangered languages of ethnic minorities in Poland. She is the author of several books, including *Insignia of Rank in the Nahuatl World* (University Press of Colorado, 2014); a recipient of several major grants for team projects, including a European Research Council Starting Grant (2012), the Twinning grant of the European Commission (2015) and the Team grant (Foundation for Polish Science, 2017). She has been awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta (2013) and a Burgen Fellowship by Academia Europaea (2013).