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Featured Review

Gerd Hentschel, Oleksandr Taranenko, and Sjarhej Zaprudski, eds., *Trasjanka und Suržyk – gemischte weißrussisch-russische und ukrainisch-russische Rede. Sprachlicher Inzest in Weißrussland und der Ukraine?* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2014), 394 pp.

It took quite some time for Trasianka and Surzhyk to find their way into Slavic studies as a subject in their own right. Obviously, the prevalent conservative academic climate before the demise of the Soviet Union was not auspicious for any studies of language beyond the beaten track of norm-enforcing structural linguistics. Gerd Hentschel, one of the editors of the present volume, was among the very first to undertake to make one of the mixed varieties, which form the topic of this volume, viz. Trasianka, the object of linguistic description based on field recordings. Preparatory to his five-year research project "Die Trasjanka in Weißrussland" [Trasianka in Belarus], funded by the Volkswagen Foundation, Hentschel organized in 2007 a conference on the topic "Studies on Belarusian Trasianka and Ukrainian Suržyk as a result of Belarusian- and Ukrainian-Russian language contact." It took seven years to compile the proceedings of this conference and have the 18 contributions (six of them in English and the rest in German) published in the present volume. This, of course, raises the question of the publications being possibly outdated by now, the more so that in fact Trasianka and Surzhyk have seen a general upsurge in academic interest in recent years, which is reflected in a large number of publications. Some of the contributors appear, however, to have taken the trouble of updating their contributions in the long period that had elapsed since the conference, as shown by the general reference section at the end of the volume, which includes publications up to the year 2013 (not all of which appear to have been quoted, however, in the articles). In some cases, statements of individual contributions have been updated and revised by means of footnotes added by the editors. Notwithstanding these visible efforts to keep up with the evolution of the field, there is one adverse effect of severely delayed publication in this particular case, which cannot be hoped to be remedied by any efforts whatsoever. The conference took place at a date when most scholars were still in a state of finding their way through and coming to grips with what they were actually dealing with, and it must be added that many could have scored better if they were methodologically better equipped from the beginning. Neither a clear-cut phenomenology nor a sound method of how to approach both Surzhyk and Trasianka empirically had then been worked out. With few exceptions, most papers sum up the first groping advances on the topic, which abound with preliminary assessments of the linguistic situation and how it should be properly addressed. This causes many redundancies within the volume with many basic facts and competing assumptions about Surzhyk and Trasianka being repeated over and over again. Sound scholarly intuition and anecdotic observation still take the place of thorough empirical investigation. Seven years later, Surzhykology and Trasiankology has taken its first steps into large-scale empirical research, which, though empirical analysis in this field is still in its infancy, has taken the field definitely beyond what the present volume has to offer.

The subtitle's reference to Yurii Andrukhovych's characterization of Surzhyk as "the incestuous child of bilingualism" raises expectations of the volume's contributions

being focused on issues of linguistic ideologies, which is not exactly true. Though some contributions do in fact address issues of linguistic ideology, many of them would rather qualify as material for ideological investigation themselves, whereas still others clearly try to stand aloof from ideological issues in trying to maintain a formal, and thereby neutral, approach, though neutrality, as Bilaniuk aptly points out in her short introductory keynote to the volume, is not to be had where any attitude you might take is likely to be ideologized. In fact, the volume is composed of heterogeneous contributions, which, however, should not necessarily be seen as detrimental.

Gerd Hentschel's introduction to the volume (pp. 1–26) touches upon a range of pertinent issues, such as the critical present situation of Belarusian and to a lesser extent Ukrainian, in which Trasianka and Surzhyk are assigned a crucial role as cause and catalyst of what is perceived as a general cultural crisis being couched in linguistic terms. He rightly identifies both Surzhyk and Trasianka as a projection surface for fear of cultural decline, in which linguistic mixing is identified as a direct pathway to the dissolution of national and cultural identity. Following Zaprudski (this volume, p. 134), Hentschel assumes that the linguistically untenable scenario of creolization, as it has been time and again invoked by Belarusian linguists,[1] rather than providing a linguistic account of the phenomena in question appear to be meant as a commentary on the Soviet past by contextualizing linguistic mixing and the concomitant cultural decline in a postcolonial narrative of Belarusians having been culturally suppressed and exploited by their Soviet-Russian masters. In this narrative, Trasianka figures as a linguistic scapegoat, which Hentschel deplores as the one most fundamental obstacle to a sober analysis of both mixed varieties as objects of (socio)linguistic investigation. Contrary to what the subtitle might suggest, for the initiator of this volume, the ideological aspects of Surzhyk and Trasianka seem to be a cumbersome burden to research proper rather than an intriguing field of investigation in its own right. The question mark that closes the subtitle to the volume may thus possibly be taken as a sign of hope that, linguistically speaking, there is more to both Surzhyk and Trasianka than just cultural polemics.

Like most of the contributors, the main editor appears to be torn between a desire to do clear-cut and well-defined linguistics and the necessity of addressing hazy issues of conflicting ideologies. Laada Bilaniuk's contribution (pp. 27–30) neatly sums up this inner conflict, which is to be felt throughout the volume as a contrast between a "naturalistic" and a "social constructivist" approach to language mixing in general, and to Surzhyk and Trasianka in particular. Bilaniuk's short note thus provides a useful commentary not so much on the subject of the volume itself, but on the heterogeneous composition of the volume. It may be noted in passing that a descriptive structuralist approach, though it accepts language mixing as a simple fact of language life, making it thus resemble the social constructivist approach, still remains naturalistic in essence by reifying mixed languages and treating them as closed systems on a par with national languages, thus opening up the theoretical possibility of creating a paradoxical difference between pure, systemic and mixed, unsystemic Trasianka and Surzhyk. In fact, Klimaŭ's (pp. 182–183) distinction between systemic and rule-governed "half-dialect" as opposed to unsystemic and ruleless Trasianka is a case in point (v. infra).

1 Cf. e.g. *Цыхун, Геннадзь*. Крэалізаваны прадукт: Трасянка як аб'єкт лінгвістычнага даследавання // Архэ-Пачатак. 2000. № 6. С. 51–58.

Mira Nábělková and Marián Sloboda (pp. 31–52) approach the terminological issue by treating Trasianka as an epic discursive folk category, contrasting it with the somewhat similar folk linguistic category of Českoslovenčina ("Czechoslovak language"). They take the idea of semantic prototypes rather than the definitely outdated approach of binary semantic features as a vantage point for their analysis, which is, of course, to be welcomed. However, as it comes to ideologically highly loaded folk terms like Trasianka, even prototype semantics may be likely to run up against its limits. The idea of prototype semantics still basically rests on the somewhat idealized assumption of a conventional semantic core, on which all members of the speech community agree, whereas in the case of highly ideologized and contested terms there may be no such prototype core at all, because there is social disagreement rather than agreement at its very base. The authors seem to be aware of this issue when they state on p. 33: "We would not like to conceptualize the natural categories "Trasjanka" and "Czechoslovak" as primarily cognitive but rather as discursive ones." A folk category like Trasianka, rather than categorizing and objectifying language practices from within the speech community, should be seen as a means to negotiate and control these same practices. Thus, Trasianka is not just an identification of perceived language mixing, but it is even more so an evaluative comment on it. Trasianka may be used to identify anything that the speaker thinks a bad and deplorable practice, and it need not even be linguistic practices that are the target of this term (p. 39). The common core behind Trasianka is a folk ideology (in the sense of Vološinov's *žitejskaja ideologija*) that identifies mixing with decay and cultural decline. It appears further that Trasianka is stereotypically associated with a rural background and is generally interpreted as constitutive of social groups rather than individuals, an observation corroborated by some of the contributions to the volume, which reproduce this attitude unreflectively. Ultimately, the term Trasianka, though hinging largely on linguistic practices, is more about a cultural critique that tries to explain the deplorable present by way of accusing the past, and the authors rightly observe (p. 44) that many linguists coming from the speech community in question are way too deeply involved in this process of ideological reorientation and nation building.

The immediately following contribution by Nina Mečkovskaja (pp. 53–89) is a case in point. The author makes an honest effort to get to the core of Trasianka and tries her best to give an exhaustive and objective account of it, but every so often she would become entrapped within her own cultural prejudices. The most serious drawback of this paper is surely its author's insistence on defining Trasianka (as well as Surzhyk) as a mode of speech that does not obey any rules or conventions whatsoever, despite the fact that recent research points to the opposite (as is indicated in a footnote by the editors). In addition, linguistic description tends every so often to become mixed up with pessimistic commentaries betraying the attitude of a cultural activist rather than a sober linguist. There are minor problematic issues in addition, as when the author maintains that any kind of linguistic crossing between Russian and Belarusian/Ukrainian should be considered as Trasianka/Surzhyk, which ultimately leads her to ask: "Wenn es überall Interferenz gibt, wie sollen dann Norm und Substandard unterschieden werden?" ["If interference is everywhere, how then are we to tell norm from substandard?"]. There appears to be a straightforward answer to this riddle, viz. by drawing a distinction between ideal or should-be and real states. Though this looks like the well-known structuralist *langue-parole* distinction, it is different in that it iden-

tifies the should-be state *langue* as a cultural expectation rather than as an autonomous linguistic state. Notwithstanding these general shortcomings, Mečkovskaja's paper has its merits, as when she introduces on p. 55 the neat and useful terminological distinction between "ethnic" bilingualism, brought about by migrations of ethnolinguistic groups, and "cultural" bilingualism, which would apply to situations of diglossia or schizoglossia within the same community. We agree with her conclusion that Trasianka and Surzhyk clearly qualify as cases of "cultural" bilingualism.

Hermann BIEDER's paper (pp. 91–118) is basically a research survey that in fact does not go beyond the year 2007 and may therefore be considered outdated by now. It may certainly be appreciated for its comprehensive listing and summary of all the different kinds of approaches towards Trasianka up to the time of writing, but since almost all of these approaches are still struggling to come to grips with the basic phenomenology, Bieder's survey hardly offers any insight into what Trasianka might possibly be about, the more so because he follows a strict policy of abstaining from any critical comments on the literature being surveyed. He touches briefly upon the issue of possible historical predecessors of present-day Trasianka and reaches as far back as the written mixed code *prosta mova* "simple language"[2] from the 16th–17th century, but only to conclude that it is hard to judge any link with Trasianka, since it is not yet known to this date whether *prosta mova* texts could really be classified as mixed (which, by the way, no one doubts is true). In doing so, he misses a chance to comment on the intriguing historical phenomenon of the practice of linguistic mixing remaining endemic to the whole region through the ages. Though no direct continuity between *prosta mova* and Trasianka may be assumed, linguistic mixing appears to be some kind of *longue durée* feature of Belarusian and also Ukrainian culture, which might be worth investigating. By identifying Trasianka to be a result of Soviet linguistic oppression and Russification and also as a threat to the survival of standard and dialectal Belarusian, Bieder finally leaves the path of a sober research survey and drifts off into the mainstream of cultural critique.

One of the most inspiring papers, which will be worth reading for years to come, is certainly Siarhiej ZAPRUDSKI's effort (pp. 119–141) to track down the emergence of the term Trasianka and the beginnings of latter-day Belarusian linguistic polemics. By starting on a discussion of the public debate on Russian-Belarusian mixed language practices of the 1920s, Zaprudski highlights the very contingency of folk linguistic terminology like Trasianka, notwithstanding the superficial similarities between the present and the historic setting. Like today, linguistic mixing in those times was linked to social mobility, but the social strata involved were different then. In the 1920s, it was mainly technical and administrative functionaries who saw themselves forced to accommodate to the new linguistic requirements of the *korenizacija* policy, which established Belarusian as a mandatory way of speaking for state dignitaries within the Belarusian Soviet Republic. So there is a clear social discontinuity between Trasianka then and now. Zaprudski further demonstrates that the object of analysis and observation may be subject to the focus of public debate. The present Trasianka debate started

2 Michael Moser, Что такое «простая мова»? *Studia Slavica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 47:3–4 (2002), pp. 221–260 considers *prosta mova* to be a loan translation of the German *die gemeine Sprache*, so that "common language" instead of "simple language" could in fact be the more appropriate translation.

with a cultural critique of Belarusian literary writing, putting heavy stress on authenticity as the hallmark of Standard Belarusian, underlining its role as a true language of its people and blaming the "mixed totalitarian newspeak" for the clumsiness of present Belarusian literary expression. In recent years, this originally literary debate has shifted to the much broader field of everyday public discourse and focuses accordingly on redefining the limits of proper ways of speaking in public. What started out as a discussion within a narrow circle of professionals thus ultimately became a matter of general public concern. It may be added here that the major rift between intellectuals and ordinary citizens in Belarus seems to have been brought about by divergent interpretations of linguistic realities. Whereas intellectuals blame linguistic mixing on Sovietization and condemn it accordingly as a remnant of an undemocratic past, most citizens will not follow this train of thought. For them, Trasianka does not smack of totalitarianism; quite the contrary. Zaprudski's well-informed essay raises the awareness that discourse on Trasianka is politically laden to a high degree. He also makes the point of blaming Belarusian intellectuals for taking a patronizing ("pastorale," p. 136) attitude towards language and culture, which further estranges them from ordinary speakers who see themselves bullied around as objects of public linguistic education.

Curt Woolhiser (pp. 143–162) may be credited for being the very first specialist in the field who approaches Trasianka from a strictly variationist perspective. He is also one of the first to base his observations and conclusions on an admittedly small sample of field data. His paper anticipates many of the more programmatically written claims put forward by Stern (2013).[3] By stating that ordinary Belarusian speakers would interpret the opposition between Belarusian dialects and the Russian standard in terms of social rather than ethnic difference, he corroborates Stern's claim that it was ordinary Belarusians who made Belarusian dialects of Russian. Unlike Stern, Woolhiser, however, refrains from taking the last step of treating Trasianka in purely variationist terms, which would mean to relegate contact linguistic models as basically irrelevant to the discussion on Trasianka.

Notwithstanding its many interesting observational details, Henadz' Cychun's article (pp. 163–172) is compromised by his barely hidden attitude of cultural pessimism towards Trasianka. It may be assumed that, like for so many Belarusian intellectuals, his reservations with respect to Trasianka are twofold in nature. Sociopolitical fears of cultural decline combine with rigid professional notions indebted to linguistic structuralism to disqualify Trasianka as a case for treatment rather than dealing with it as an object of unbiased sociolinguistic curiosity. Like other contributors to this volume (Zaprudski, pp. 139–140; Klimaŭ; Hentschel), Cychun becomes hopelessly entangled in the ontological intricacies of linguistic variation by trying to apply to it the blunt terminological tool of *langue* vs. *parole*. By rigidly pigeonholing linguistic invariants as systemic and therefore *langue* and opposing them to linguistic variation as unsystemic and therefore *parole*, this time-honored distinction is unable to tackle conventionalized linguistic variation, which is at the very core of sociolinguistic variation. Sociolinguistic variation appears to be both conventional (systemic) and free (unsystemic) at the same time. By conventionally allotting social values to linguistic variants, it enables free sociostylistic variation by the language-using individual. Linguistic variation

3 Dieter Stern, "Die Trasjanka und die Regiolektalisierung des Russischen in Weißrussland," *Zeitschrift für Slawistik* 58:2 (2013), pp. 169–192.

would in fact be pointless without conventions defining its scope. The strict alignment of invariance and systematicity on the one hand and variability and unsystematicity on the other hand, which lies at the bottom of the *langue-parole* distinction, simply does not work with sociolinguistic variation.

The contribution by Ihar Klimaŭ (pp. 173–192) also takes the *langue-parole* distinction as its point of departure, which he however maps differently on the opposition between interlanguage (=*parole*) vs. mesolect of a standard continuum (=*langue*). This mapping does not, however, bear scrutiny. Firstly, the term interlanguage conceives of language learning in terms of internal grammatical states, which would make it part of *langue*. Secondly, a mesolect does not necessarily have the rigid and stable features of a true fused lect, so it may appear not so *langue*-like after all. In his discussion, which contains many original and thought-provoking comments on the Belarusian situation, Klimaŭ introduces the somewhat awkward term of semi-dialect (*Halbdialekt*), which appears to be adapted from an earlier work on Russian by Kogotkova (1970).[4] He treats it as synonymous with interdialect, *prostorečie*, koiné, and urban dialect, so it appears at first glance to be meant as an alternative name for Trasianka. However, it turns out that Klimaŭ conceives of the semi-dialect as something opposed to Trasianka. Contrary to the semi-dialect, which is defined as a dialect (or rather sociolect?) with systematic and stable Russian admixtures (p. 182), Trasianka is marked by an "exaggerated and perceptible interference as a consequence of imperfect knowledge of the languages involved in group bilingualism" (p. 183). So, here in fact there is the paradox insinuated above of a correct, conventional and systemic version of Trasianka, here relabeled as semi-dialect, as opposed to an incorrect, spontaneous, and unsystemic version of Trasianka, which deserves to keep its name because of its properties, which are perceived as disorderly and therefore negative. Unfortunately, Klimaŭ does not state clearly whether he considers Trasianka and the semi-dialect as simultaneously coexisting phenomena within the present Belarusian situation, or whether the distinction identifies two successive states of sociolinguistic development.

Finally, Saussure's distinction is once again made use of as an opener by Gerd Hentschel (pp. 193–218), who offers a neat introduction to the present state of the theoretical debate as a preface to his comprehensive presentation of the variation among functional words in Belarusian-Russian mixed speech. Hentschel demonstrates that indeed for many if not most functional words, a preferential selection of one out of two variants can be shown to be operative, which is taken as a sign of emergent usage norms (as opposed to institutional norms) and is considered proof of systematicity by Hentschel. Unlike many other contributions, Hentschel's must in the end be credited for offering a first-hand analysis of primary linguistic data, which also holds for Sviatlana Tesch's paper (pp. 219–231), which investigates the distribution patterns of Belarusian-Russian morphological hybrids. Tesch demonstrates that received ideas about Trasianka as consisting of a Belarusian matrix into which a Russian lexicon is embedded are to be relativized in view of the fact that 60% of the stem morphology and 79% of the grammatical morphology are common to both strata, so that the application of Myers-Scotton's matrix language frame model seems not particularly suitable for

4 *Коготкова Т.С.* Литературный язык и диалекты // Акутальные проблемы культуры речи. М., 1970. С. 104–152.

properly describing Trasianka. The strong common core lends support to the interpretation of Trasianka as defining in fact the middle ground on a standard continuum. In our view, it may even be assumed that the predominance of common items may inform a folk perception of there being just one language with certain variants, after all. Tesch also shows, in accordance with Hentschel's findings, that variation is not played out at the grammatical and lexical level. True morphological hybrids appear to form only a very small subset of all occurring forms. It appears that sociostylistic variation is mainly acted out at the phonic level, which would be in line with the assumption that Trasianka has more in common with dialect/standard variation than with language contact.

An aside on *langue* vs. *parole* as a summary commentary on the papers employing this distinction may be in order here. Hentschel sums up the most recent approaches to the issue in question as treating language (*langue*) as an epiphenomenon of speech (*parole*). From here, it is just one step to arrive at the conclusion that not only language variation and change but also language stabilization and the emergence of invariant, rule-like features, which usually go by the name of language system, result from the same overall processes of the interactive negotiation of communicative resources. Language would thus be a specific feature or state of speech and both invariants and variation would derive from invisible-hand processes, which are driven by competition (producing variants) and selection (producing invariants) among individual communicative strategies and lexical items. This means that *langue* and *parole* are ontologically pretty much the same. There is no real difference in terms of abstraction and hierarchy, as the mainstream structuralist talk about language systems implies. On a metalevel, cultural values and expectations, known as linguistic ideologies, would frame and partly govern the selection procedure. It is this cultural framework that, together with the more practical knowledge of established constructions and lexical items, could be labeled as a system, but this set of knowledge and practices is not restricted to grammatical and lexical knowledge, but also encompasses cultural knowledge about commonly preferred attitudes and behaviors pertaining to linguistic communication. It then turns out that the *langue-parole* distinction is too narrow and too rigid to address linguistic phenomena in general. The inadequacy of the *langue-parole* distinction becomes particularly tangible when dealing with variationist phenomena, like Trasianka and Surzhyk.

Alena LIANKEVIČ's matched-guise test study of Trasianka (pp. 233–252) takes us back to issues of linguistic ideology. The present study is preceded by a similar provisional study by Woolhizer on a rather modest scale to probe into attitudes towards Trasianka, the findings of which the present study hopes to support by significantly extending the material base on a quantitative level. Despite the enlarged base of some 500 respondents, the sample may, however, not count as well-balanced. The results are likely to be skewed by the preponderance of the educated classes among the respondents. Apart from that, the study might additionally be compromised by the way matched-guise testing is applied to Trasianka. The matched-guise test was originally designed to uncover hidden attitudes to languages and accents within a speech community. In the original test designed and executed by Wallace Lambert, bilingual persons had to read samples of Standard English and French texts. The texts chosen consisted of authentic and unedited material. This is different from the present study, which operates on the basis of texts translated into Trasianka specifically for the pur-

pose of this study. The same persons were asked to read different versions (standard and substandard/Trasianka) of the same text. Liankevič seems to be well aware of this deficiency when she stresses on p. 237 that the Trasianka translations were compiled by the most eminent experts in the field of Belarusian dialectology and sociolinguistics. However, having read and reviewed the present volume, I wonder if there could have been any eminent experts capable of artificially compiling perfect surrogates of Trasianka utterances at a time when there was still no common agreement among these same experts on what Trasianka was and what its linguistic details were supposed to look like. At least, the frequent spontaneous reactions to the Trasianka stimuli, in which the respondents declared that what they heard was exactly the way they speak themselves, could with some reservations be taken as an indication that the respondents did not realize that the texts were in fact synthesized. But then again, declarations of this kind tell us more about self-images than they do about the way people really speak. In addition, this kind of declaration exposes yet another weak point of the study. For matched-guise tests to be successful, it is vital to conceal the true purpose of the test. Statements in the vein of "He speaks like me" and "Worse even than Trasianka" testify to the respondents having been well aware of the ultimately linguistic objective of the study.

In accordance with the findings of Sviatlana Tesch presented earlier in this volume, Irina LISKOVEC (pp. 253–263) makes a point of defining Trasianka primarily in terms of phonic variation, which immediately prompts the editors to add a note warning readers that there is more to Trasianka than just a strong Belarusian accent, implying that variation, or rather mixing, is also occurring at other linguistic levels. In my view, there is a misunderstanding at hand here. Liskovec puts clear stress on social signification by means of linguistic variation, from which perspective phonic variation indeed carries a higher functional load than variation at other levels in Trasianka. The paper does not restrict itself to a superficial inventory taking of sociostylistically motivated variation, but proceeds to explore and uncover the ideological preconditions for interpreting the existing variation in social terms. Liskovec perceives at the base of it all a culture of institutionalized education with its stress on conformity (p. 254). Within this ideological framework, deviance from the proper language as taught at school is interpreted in terms of personal failure to adapt to school standards, thus marking Trasianka speakers as dropouts and social misfits. Following another stereotype, which has become widespread throughout modern European cultures, according to which success at school will be identified with cool heartless rationalism, careerism, and social distance, as well as failure to be authentic and true to oneself and feel solidarity towards one's fellow men, Trasianka as a counter-image of the school standard almost naturally acquires the status of a solidarity code. This plausible assumption would be borne out by the empirical findings of Liankevič's study (notwithstanding our methodological reservations, voiced above). Liskovec takes a step further and proposes an almost game theoretical approach towards linguistic variation as an individual strategy to reach one's very personal social goals. This approach allows for all kinds of individual strategic patterns, where the perfectly well-formed school standard may not be expected to form the only possible goal for all and every member within the speech community. In fact, more often than not, it would be wiser to avoid perfect conformity to linguistic standards. Liskovec's analysis of President Lukašenka's speech behavior is a lucid demonstration of her point. On pp. 256–257 follows a micro-experiment in

"over-reading,"[5] in which four Belarusians are asked to determine the language use of passersby on the basis of their outward appearance. The experiment strikingly demonstrates the overall precision of all predictions, clearly testifying to there being more to it than just a linguistic prejudice. It appears that social prejudices act in two directions in that they not only serve as predictors of behavior, but by doing so also serve as a norm enforcement device, making them a self-fulfilling prophecy of sorts. Two more original micro-experiments follow, the latter of which is a matched-guise test, which, unlike Liankevič's, gets along perfectly without synthesized text material. Liskovec's penetrative and inspiring analysis counts among the best pieces written on Trasianka so far.

In his contribution, Oleksandr Taranenko (pp. 265–287) arrives at a solution for how to deal with Surzhyk, which on first sight appears reminiscent of Ihar Klimaŭ's treatment of Trasianka in this volume. Like Klimaŭ, he proposes to draw a line between, on the one hand, Surzhyk as an unstructured conglomerate of individual idiolects and, on the other hand, a genuine sociolect that goes by the same name. But unlike Klimaŭ, Taranenko proceeds to define this difference more in social than in structural-linguistic terms. Idiolectal Surzhyk is for him the result of the various uncoordinated attempts of members of the social elites at linguistic reorientation, whereas sociolectal Surzhyk is identified as the mixed language used by the uneducated masses. It is stressed that the uneducated masses speak Surzhyk because they know no better and are not capable of acquiring a correct language, an explanatory hypothesis that appears to be founded on prejudice rather than empirical research and that in theory could equally be applied to the elites. But even if divergent personal capacities should have an impact on patterns of speech behavior, it is speakers who ought to be categorized in the first place, and not their speech. Linguistic incapacity, as suggested by Taranenko to explain the linguistic behavior of the uneducated masses, would then correspond to inflexibility, which again could be translated into the difference between one-dimensional and flexible speakers, as has been successfully applied to behavioral patterns within German dialect-standard continua.[6] One-dimensional speakers would then be those who stick to only one variant (e.g., Surzhyk), whereas flexible speakers would shift between dialect, mesolect (Surzhyk), and the standard language. It goes without saying that these behavioral patterns need not necessarily be accounted for in terms of cognitive incapacity, as implied by Taranenko, but appear to have more to do with the self-image of speakers and the environment in which they are embedded. If indeed a difference between one-dimensional and flexible speakers should be present in the Ukrainian setting, only further research can show whether it in fact coincides with the difference between the elites and the uneducated masses.

Salvatore del Gaudio (pp. 289–306) pleads for a diachronic approach to Surzhyk, arguing that a strictly synchronic approach will miss important insights into the very character of Surzhyk. In restricting one's perspective to the present state of, especially, standard Ukrainian, one is likely to address apparent Russianisms as evidence of

5 Cf. John E. Joseph, *Language and Identity: National, Ethnic, Religious* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

6 Cf. Jürgen Macha, *Der flexible Sprecher. Untersuchungen zu Sprache und Sprachbewußtsein rheinischer Handwerksmeister* (Cologne-Weimar-Vienna: Böhlau, 1991) and A. Huesmann, *Zwischen Dialekt und Standard. Empirische Untersuchungen zur Soziolinguistik des Varietätenspektrums im Deutschen* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1998).

the mixed character of speech utterances, though they reflect in fact older common Ukrainian usage. Inasmuch as dialects are usually perceived as a reservoir of archaisms, del Gaudio's argument is easily mixed up with admonitions found elsewhere in Surzhyk and Trasianka literature, not to neglect dialectal input, which more often than not is closer to Standard Russian than to Standard Ukrainian or Standard Belarusian.[7] Though there is in fact some overlap with this reference to dialectology, it appears that del Gaudio claims the impact of older Ukrainian usage even where it is not reflected (and probably never was) in Ukrainian dialects. A case in point is the word *otec'* ("father") mentioned on p. 301, which is in fact of Church Slavonic origin and entered both Russian and Ukrainian through the Bible and liturgical practice, but was eliminated from written Ukrainian usage in an effort to bring written Ukrainian closer to the language usage of the common people. Del Gaudio admits, though, that the preference for *otec'* in Surzhyk may presently be additionally reinforced by the continuing impact of the Russian standard. Though Surzhyk speakers would regularly identify *otec'* and similar items as Russian, del Gaudio insists on the original Ukrainianness of these items within Surzhyk, thereby discarding folk linguistic judgments as basically irrelevant. In my opinion, however, it is speakers' assessments that are the driving force behind language mixture in Surzhyk (and, of course, also in Trasianka). It is the lay assessment of *otec'* being a Russianism that will determine the linguistic choices of Surzhyk speakers within a conceptual folk linguistic framework, which operates on the basis of a binary opposition between Russian high variety and Ukrainian low variety. A third category of "Ukrainian archaism" is simply not operative within this lay framework of value assignment. Words like *otec'* are therefore, functionally spoken, clearly Russianisms.

Natalja Šumarova's paper (pp. 307–326) is basically an overview of the current debate about Surzhyk and repeats many positions that can be found in most of the earlier papers in this volume. There are, however, some individual observations that deserve attention, such as the characterization of Surzhyk as an essential part of public life followed by a short outline of the context and genre restrictions pertaining to the use of Surzhyk on p. 312. Beyond that, the paper suffers from two serious drawbacks, one methodological and the other ideological. For the one, Šumarova fails to appreciate the primarily sociolinguistic dimension of Surzhyk, denying it the status of a sociolect, obviously due to her still being caught in the terminology of Soviet linguistics, which would recognize only professional jargon, slang, and other forms of specialized usage as sociolinguistic phenomena proper. For this reason, her paper unreflectively reproduces deeply rooted cultural prejudices, which generally disavow the capacity of nonstandard forms of verbal expression, like in this case Surzhyk, to express more refined nuances of thought of any kind (p. 314). By implication, this would demote those who exclusively speak Surzhyk as being unable to communicate and also unable, by the same token, to grasp and form more refined thoughts. This is Basil Bernstein at his worst, i.e., the way he has been often and willfully misrepresented.

Larysa Masenko's contribution (pp. 327–342) reads in some respects as a continuation or rather repetition of Šumarova's. On p. 335, the reader will experience déjà lu on reading that Surzhyk is basically the result of a lack of education among its speakers

7 Cf. e.g. Gerd Hentschel, "Zur weißrussisch-russischen Hybridität in der weißrussischen «Trasjanka»," in Peter Kosta & Daniel Weiss, eds., *Slavistische Linguistik 2006/2007* (Munich: Otto Sagner, 2008), pp. 169–219.

rather than proof of the resilience of the Ukrainian linguistic system against the onslaught of Russian. Prejudice goes here hand in hand with the mystification of *langue* as some kind of natural power. Prior to this, Masenko goes out of her way to demonstrate that Surzhyk is not *prostorečie*/*prostoriččja*. She argues that *prostorečie* is internal to language and forms part of a diasystem, whereas Surzhyk is situated between contacting languages and is therefore part of neither language. One may wonder why Surzhyk fills exactly the niches reserved for *prostorečie*, viz. the communication among the members of the often-invoked uneducated classes, thus clearly forming part of a sociolinguistic diasystem. As Masenko herself points out on p. 334, Surzhyk speakers themselves do not perceive a clear difference between Russian and Ukrainian as separate systems. Instead of taking this as a clue that Surzhyk might in fact be part of just one diasystem, she discredits Surzhyk speakers once again as incompetent, uneducated morons, rather than accepting lay perceptions for what they are: the very material out of which so-called linguistic systems as conceptual units ultimately arise. Masenko then goes on to claim that Surzhyk is primarily a rural phenomenon, while *prostorečie* is urban. This claim clearly conflicts with the common belief that the spread of Surzhyk was largely boosted by post-WWII work migration to the cities. To sum up, Masenko is way too deeply entangled in the discourse and notions of language custodians to be capable of advancing a true understanding of Surzhyk.

Bohdana Tarasenko's contribution (pp. 343–350) is a medley of intriguing and instructive comments based on observations made on language use in Kiev, which are also applicable to the Ukrainian linguistic situation in general. She starts out with the intriguing observation that the general spread of Surzhyk within the Ukrainian speech community is paralleled by a simultaneous change of attitude with ever more speakers accepting Surzhyk as a language of their own. Since this implies a shift from a polemic catchword towards a true glottonym, this raises once again the issue of which terminology to employ in order to grapple with the current sociolinguistic situation in Ukraine. Contrary to the terminological practice of the Oldenburg study group, which by now appears to be about to take firmer root, Tarasenko pleads for the use of Surzhyk also as a linguistic term, arguing quite pragmatically that the academic rigor required in any process of finding a workable scientific definition will in any event preclude blurring of lay and professional linguistic concepts. According to Tarasenko, the more essential question is which linguistic phenomena could reasonably be addressed as Surzhyk. Adopting the lay term for linguistic use, however, clearly requires that both the lay and the professional term somehow match and identify at least a roughly overlapping class of phenomena. At first glance, a systematic exploration of lay usages of the term might not be expected to prove helpful in delimiting the possible scope of the term for linguistic inquiry because of its polemic and therefore fuzzy character, though a research design that would differentiate polemic usage from more neutral forms of usage (like, e.g., using Surzhyk for linguistic self-identification) could yield useful clues.

The volume is rounded off by an engagingly written essay by the prematurely deceased sociolinguist Lesja Stavyc'ka (pp. 351–370), which touches upon the wider cultural implications of Ukrainian Surzhyk discourse. Predicating her comments and observations basically on pertinent statements made in or through works of art, she addresses a wide range of underlying motives and hidden perceptions informing the current public debate. A key role is assigned to the cultural fear caused by the metaphorization of Surzhyk as a sign and symbol of general cultural decline. This

metaphor is further reified by implying an almost biological deficiency in the moral outfit of Surzhyk speakers, putting all blame for the perceivedly negative aspects of the present situation on them. Cultural fear is thus delegated to the individual and surfaces accordingly even in the most mundane linguistic practices. Surzhyk speakers are portrayed as being permanently ridden by the fear of inappropriate language use while speaking in public. Stavyc'ka identifies Surzhyk, accordingly, as the product of this specific cultural fear of not being able to behave and speak properly. It should be added, though, that this fear, which is itself caused by the prevalence of a rigid standard ideology within Ukrainian society, ought rather be addressed as the force that ultimately brings about perfect standard speakers. It is true that Surzhyk speakers are subject to the pressure of the fear-prompting standard ideology, but so are all speakers within the modern Ukrainian speech community, and it looks like the real standard speakers would be those who have completely submitted to fear. This point can be amply illustrated by leafing through the pages of Bilaniuk (2005),[8] which abounds with examples of standard-speaking interviewees talking about their fearful struggle to arrive in the safe haven of standard usage.

To sum up, the present volume offers a representative overview of the various approaches prevalent within the budding fields of Surzhykology and Trasiankology in 2007. As a historical document of sorts, it gives a good picture of the efforts made by researchers of diverse denominations and backgrounds to come to grips with sociolinguistic phenomena, of which at least some seem to have taken them by surprise. Some papers testify to the uselessness of applying time-honored instruments of structural linguistics to the phenomena in question, others are methodologically better equipped to address the tasks ahead, and a few are intuitively hitting on the right track for future research to follow. All of the papers necessarily suffer from a lack of large-scale empirical research, a shortcoming that the Oldenburg group has helped to overcome in the years that followed the original conference. With a time gap of seven years in a rapidly evolving field of research, it cannot be otherwise than that some of the papers are outdated by now, but others are still relevant and readable and a few will remain so for a long time to come.

DIETER STERN

8 Laada Bilaniuk, *Contested Tongues: Language Politics and Cultural Correction in Ukraine* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 2005).