East Slavic parallel corpora: diachronic and diatopic variation in Belarusian, Ukrainian, and Russian

Dmitri Sitchinava

mitrius@gmail.com

Bilingual corpora

- Bilingual parallel corpora – contrastive linguistics, “small” typology (English vs. Russian, Czech vs. Slovene)
- Bilingual corpora can be symmetrical (Russian-English, English-Russian). The Norwegian team (HuNOR) calls only this symmetrical corpora “parallel”
- “Families” of bilingual corpora within some “mother corpora” (Czech, Russian National corpora, Norwegian, Lithuanian)
- Within the RNC:
  15 languages parallel with Russian (Slavic, Germanic, Romance, Baltic, Armenian, Buryat, Estonian, Chinese); 70 million tokens
- Ukrainian/Russian and Belarusian/Russian – 9 million each

Ukrainian and Belarusian in parallel corpora

- Both Belarusian and Ukrainian are under-represented languages in the field of corpus linguistics.
- There exist no comprehensive national corpus for either
- The best existing monolingual corpora are, respectively, **bnkorpus.info** and **mova.info**
- The number of corpora-based research for them is also limited.
- Rather few Belarusian and/or Ukrainian texts are featured in the collections of **massive parallel texts** (Cysouw & Wälchli 2007) or multilingual parallel corpora. The Universal Dependencies corpora for B (translations from Russian, sometimes with mistakes) & U are rather small

(Post)-soviet translation between East Slavic: quality issues

- Machine translations (texts retrieved from the Internet), and even in the printed sources
- Looseness of translations (typical for most genres)
- Omissions (censure, just shortening etc.)
- Soviet era: Russianization; Post-soviet era: avoiding direct calques

Subnorms

- Both Belarusian and Ukrainian are languages with standard forms that were established relatively late.
- There still coexist multiple sub-norms in the written standards of either language, more “Russianized” and more “Westernized” ones, dating back to different political **periods**, 1930s vs. 1920s (a split clearly visible in Belarusian: *narkamaŭka* vs. *taraškevica* and less perceivable albeit existing also in Ukrainian).

Subnorms

- Due to the dialectal factors and the historical political divisions of the East Slavic territories there has existed a **diatopic variation** in the standard-oriented Ukrainian and Belarusian texts, reflecting both traditional dialects and local sub-norms, especially the Western Ukrainian sub-normative variant with less Russian (but more Polish and/or German) influence in both grammar and lexicon.

Russian *bylo*

- Modern Standard Russian has a construction derived from the Slavic Pluperfect, viz. the *bylo*-construction:
- an invariable particle *bylo* plus a form of past tense (finite or participial: *pošël bylo* PF-go-PST.M.SG be-PST.N*, pošedšij bylo* PF-go-PARTCP.PST.M.SG.NOM be-PST.N).
- It signifies in standard speech a disturbance of the natural flow of events (cf. Barentsen 1986, Kagan 2011)
- avertive
- cancelled attempt
- frame past
- With participles, it marks more often cancelled result

Russian *bylo*

Unfinished action that is developed in a short span:

I started reminding him of our appointment, but a dignified old lady in whom I recognized Madame Junker interrupted me saying it was her mistake. [Vladimir Nabokov. Look at the harlequins! (1974)]

Ja popytalsja bylo napomnit’ emu o našej dogovorennosti <…> [S. Ilyin, 1999]

I PFV-try-PST.M.SG be-PST.N.SG PFV-remind-INF he-DAT about our-LOC.F.SG appointment-LOC.SG

English counterparts

- Zero – 46% cases (P *было*, but Q)
- *To be about to, just going to* – 12%
- Short span adverbial: *podumal bylo* PFV-think-PST.M.SG BYLO *(*for a moment), *pobežal bylo* PFV-run-PST.M.SG BYLO (took a few rapid steps), *načala bylo* begin.PFV-PST.F.SG BYLO (for a while) – 9%
- Mood: *would have +ed – 7%*
- *to try – 7%*

Eastern Slavic Pluperfect

- Until the 17th-18th centuries Russian used to have a Pluperfect construction with an inflected auxiliary that co-occurred only with finite past forms (*pošël byl, byla, bylo, byli*).
- The same more archaic construction, inherited from the Old East Slavic "supercompound" form with two auxiliaries, is still attested (and called Pluperfect, "anterior past", or "remote past"):
- (~standard) Ukrainian and Belarusian (cf. Xrakovskij 2015 or Sitchinava 2013)
- some Russian dialects:
- Northern Russian (cf. Pozharitskaya 1996, 2015):
- Cental dialects, eg the dialects of the Murom region (Ter-Avanesova 2016).

Semantic archaisms

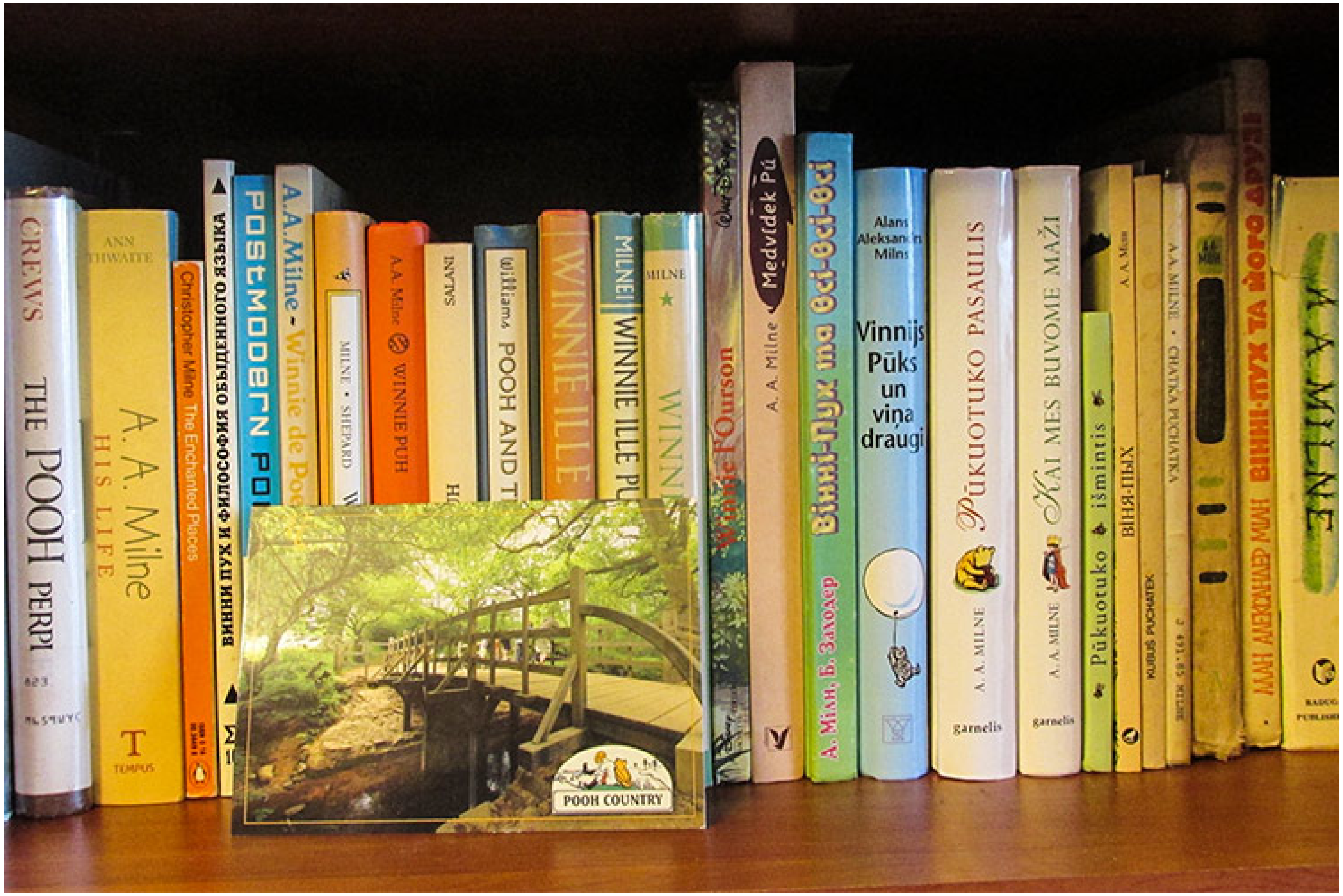
- Usually more archaic than Modern Standard Russian *bylo* from the semantic point of view as well
- Allows for additional uses like frame past situation, cancelled result
- *Dom sgorel byl, no ego otstroili*
- House PF-burned.down-**PST.M.SG** be-**PST.M.SG** but it.M.ACC.SG PF-build-PST.PL
- 'The house (lit. had) burned down, but it has been rebuilt since'
- Introduction marker in discourse (cf. residual use of the formula *žili-byli* 'once upon a time, there lived' in Standard Russian).
- These types of uses were also attested more or less in Old East Slavic (cf. Petrukhin, Sitchinava 2006) and are also known for Pluperfects cross-linguistically.

Pluperfect polysemy

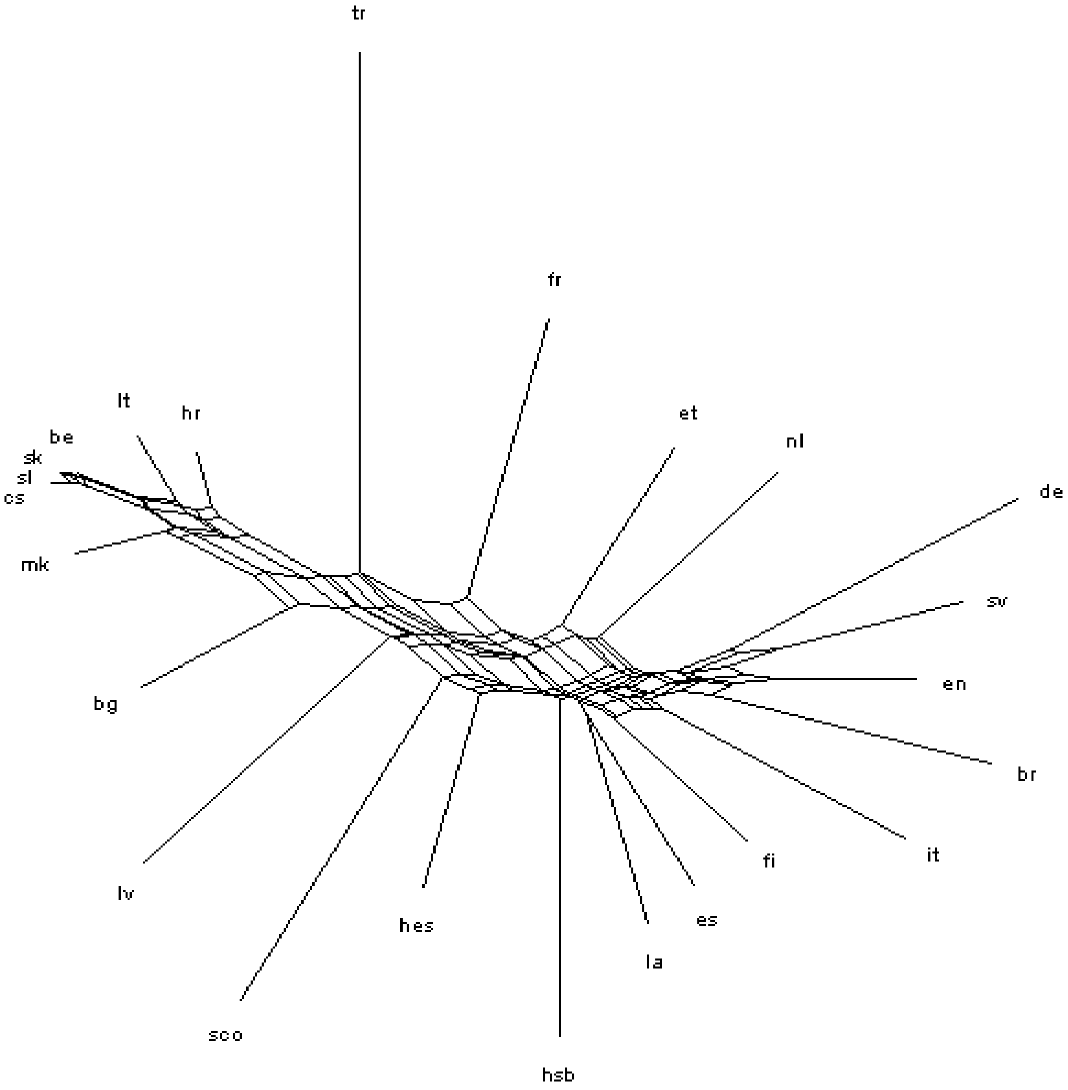
(cf. Squartini 1999 on Germanic and Romance and further research)

- temporal precedence in the past
- past resultative
- closed temporal frames
- remoteness
- cancelled result (~25%, Dahl 1985)
- counter-factuality
- experiential uses
- evidentiality
- digression, backgrounding, marking initial fragments

Corpora-based study on Pluperfect distribution



Pluperfect in Europe



Pluperfect in Europe

- Consequence of tenses (SAE): most Germanic and Romance languages, **Sorbian**, Baltic Finnic or Latvian. Internal divergence is quite significant (eg in French Frame Past is marked rather by Imperfect; Scots or Hessisch use more Simple Pasts than the standard languages). (NB: Molise Slavic according to Barentsen)
- Less obligatory Pluperfects marking past resultatives or specially highlighting the consequence of events: under this label fall **Balkan Slavic** and Lithuanian (these properties correlate with those of rather "weak" Perfects in these languages; NB in Slavic Perfective aspect alone can mark anteriority)

Pluperfect in Europe

- Languages that use their (former) Pluperfects excessively rarely, mainly in residual contexts, viz. cancelled result or avertive (East Slavic like Rus. *bylo*) or irreality, usually together with Conditional *byl by + l* (West Slavic, Ukrainian, Belarusian and Slovene; in Conditional it is in fact a Past form)
- Turkish: marks all the digressions, states in the past, Frame Pasts, avertives ("I nearly died", a rather rare function of Pluperfects)

Contexts

- The contexts that yield pluperfect in most European languages include the “iamitive” and reiterative contexts (‘already’, Ö. Dahl’s term). Cf. languages with “Weak” Pluperfects:
- "Many happy returns of the day," called out Pooh, forgetting that he had said it already.
- LT: - Širdingai linkiu tau viso labo!—šaukė Pūkuotukas, visai užmiršęs, kad šiandien jau buvo sakęs tą patį.
- …be-PST.3SG say-PARTCP
- **BE: – Zyču zdaroŭja i radaści, – uskliknuŭ Pych, zabyŭšysia, što jon užo pavinšavaŭ byŭ la raniej.**
- …PFV-congratulate-**PST.M.SG** be-**PST.M.SG**
- HR: - Moje iskrene želje za tvoj rođendan—dovikivao je, zaboravivši da je ovo već bio rekao.
- be-**PST.M.SG** say-**PST.M.SG**

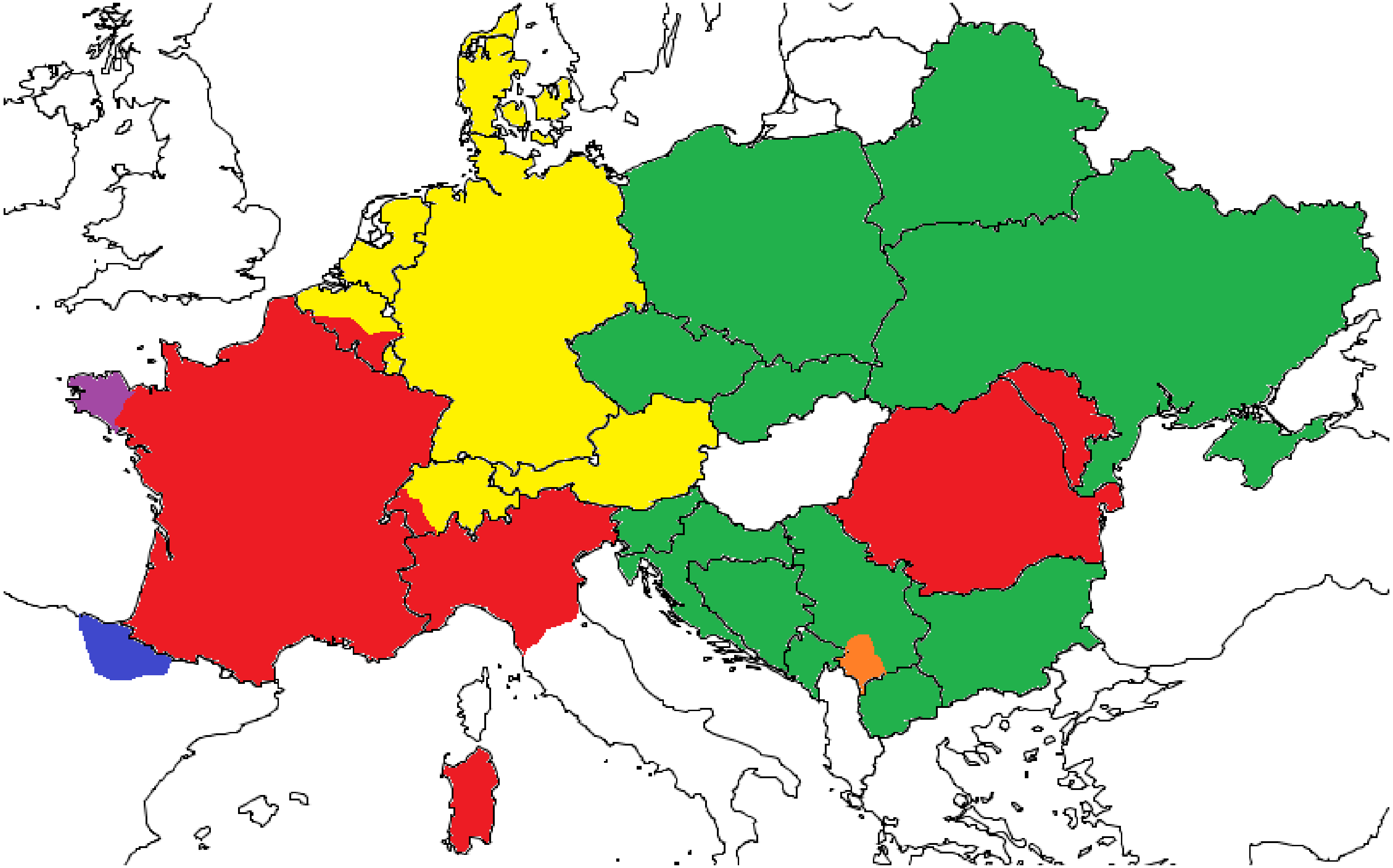
Supercompound forms

- Based on a compound Perfect form (HAVE or BE + participle)
- The auxiliary is itself in compound Perfect > 2 auxiliaries
- Il est venu > il a été venu (standard French, dialects; Franco-Provençal)
- Ich habe gelesen > ich habe gelesen gehabt (colloquial)
- NB a uniformed « auxiliary of shift » in some languages with HAVE/BE auxiliary choice (Franco-Provençal, Yiddish)

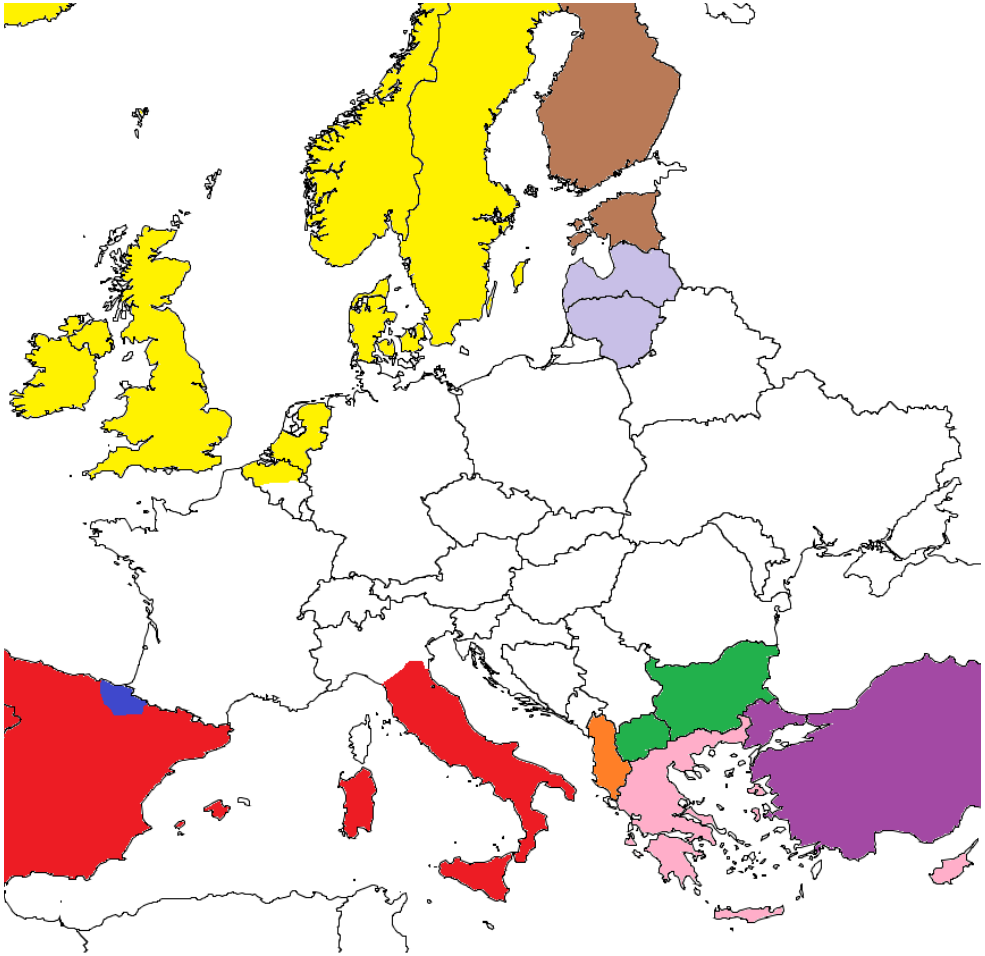
Works on supercompounds

- Without typological generalizations until 1980s
- Holtus 1995 on Romance
- Litvinov, Radčenko 1998 about German with parallels
- Buchwald-Wargenau 2012 – German (diachrony)
- Gilbert Lazard 1996 – *surcomposé* on Iranic
- Lewin-Steinmann 2004 – Bulgarian and German
- Petrukhin et Sitchinava, 2006+ -- Slavic forms
- Europe mainly Romance & Germanic: Ammann 2005; Schaden 2009; L. De Saussure, Sthioul 2012

Areal distribution (roughly)



NB: Perfect vs. Past, areal

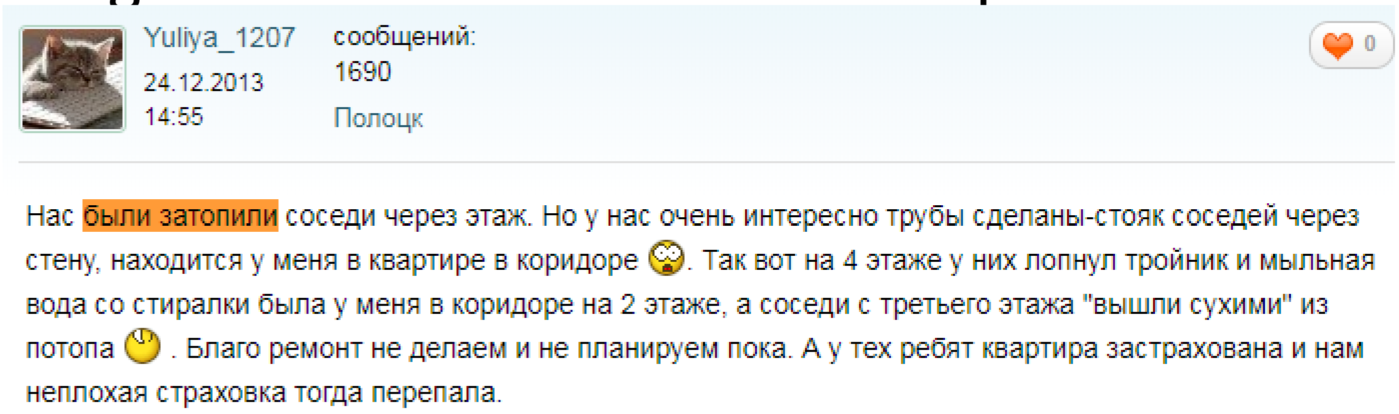


Russian language in Belarus: agreed Pluperfect auxiliary

- *Na SSSR napali byli* (Minsk Radio)
- on USSR attack.PFV-PST.PL BE-PST.PL
- ‘The Soviet Union had been attacked’
- Perfect-in-the-Past
- *Stoilo mne bylo tol’ko podumat’, chto tebja moglo i ne byt’ v moej žizni…* (General Internet Corpus of Russian, Vitebsk)
- cost-PST.N.SG I.DAT be-PST.N.SG only think.INF that you-GEN may-PST.N.SG PART NOT BE-INF in my-LOC.F.SG life-LOC.SG
- As soon as I thought that you could have been absent in my life…

Russian language in Belarus: Agreed Pluperfect auxiliary

- EXPER: “We once had an experience of P”
- A discussion of water leaks from neighboring property and resulting damage costs
- *Nas <u>byli zatopili </u>sosedi čerez ètaž*
- we.ACC BE-PST.PL PF-flood-PST.PL neighbor-PL.NOM through floor-SG.ACC
- “We have (lit. **had had**) once our flat flooded by neighbors who lived two floors upstairs”



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Нас были затопили соседи через этаж. Но у нас очень интересно трубы сделаны-стояк соседей через стену, находится у меня в квартире в коридоре. Так вот на 4 этаже у них лопнул тройник и мыльная вода со стиралки была у меня в коридоре на 2 этаже, а соседи с третьего этажа "вышли сухими" из потопа . Благо ремонт не делаем и не планируем пока. А у тех ребят квартира застрахована и нам неплохая страховка тогда перепала.

Non-canonical Russian *bylo* in the parallel texts

- The non-canonical instances of *bylo* that are found in the translations of Belarusian fiction to Russian are of particular interest because they **are not** always directly **transparent** from the original (cf. the problem of “transparency” and “translationese” in Cysouw & Wälchli)
- Sometimes they emerge where in Belarusian there is no Pluperfect

Non-canonical Russian *bylo* in the parallel texts

- Vitaŭt Čaropka's story with a trivial use of Bel Conditional:
- *I mne xacelasja nešta sačynic'. Hetae nešta pačynalasja b slovami…*
- …begin-PST.N.SG COND…
- 'And I wanted compose something; this something would begin like this…'
- Translation by Taccjana Zaryckaja
- *Xotelos' čto-to sočinit'. Èto čto-to načinalos' bylo slovami…*
- …begin-**PST.N.SG** be-**PST.N.SG**
- A non-canonical *bylo* construction that has irreal semantics (attested for the Belarusian Pluperfect as well as typologically, cf. English counter-factual *If I had come*)
- Russian *by*-Conditional, cognate to the Belarusian form, would be perfectly grammatical.

Non-canonical Russian *bylo*

- Cf. also Past Conditional in original texts (found also in colloquial Russian in Russia, Standard Polish and Ukrainian):
- *Pereryla vse, gde ono tol'ko* ***moglo bylo by*** *byt'* (General Internet Corpus, Belarus)
- PFV-dig-PST.F.SG everything where it-N.SG only can-PST.N.SG BE-PST.N.SG COND BE.INF
- '(a certain woman) has searched all the places where it **could** possibly be'

Transparency

- Pierad vajennym pažaram jon pahareŭ byŭ jašče čysciej, navat i pahrebnika tady nie zastalosia. [Janka Bryl’, 1966]
- Do ètogo požara on pogorel bylo ešče počišče, daže I pogreba togda ne ostalos’ [translation by A. Ostrovsky]
- ‘Before that fire it had (already) burned down even more completely, without even cellar left’

Transparency/Non-standard *bylo* in the Russian language of Ukraine

- Comparable phenomena can be found also in translations from Ukrainian (including those made by bilingual Ukrainian-Russian writers).
- Išče bulo up”jateryt’ podobalo za takovoje zlodijanije [Hr. Kvytka, 1833]
- Ešče bylo podobalo upjaterit’ za takovoe zlodejanie [self-translated]
- ‘It would have been necessary to apply the punishment five times for such an evil deed’

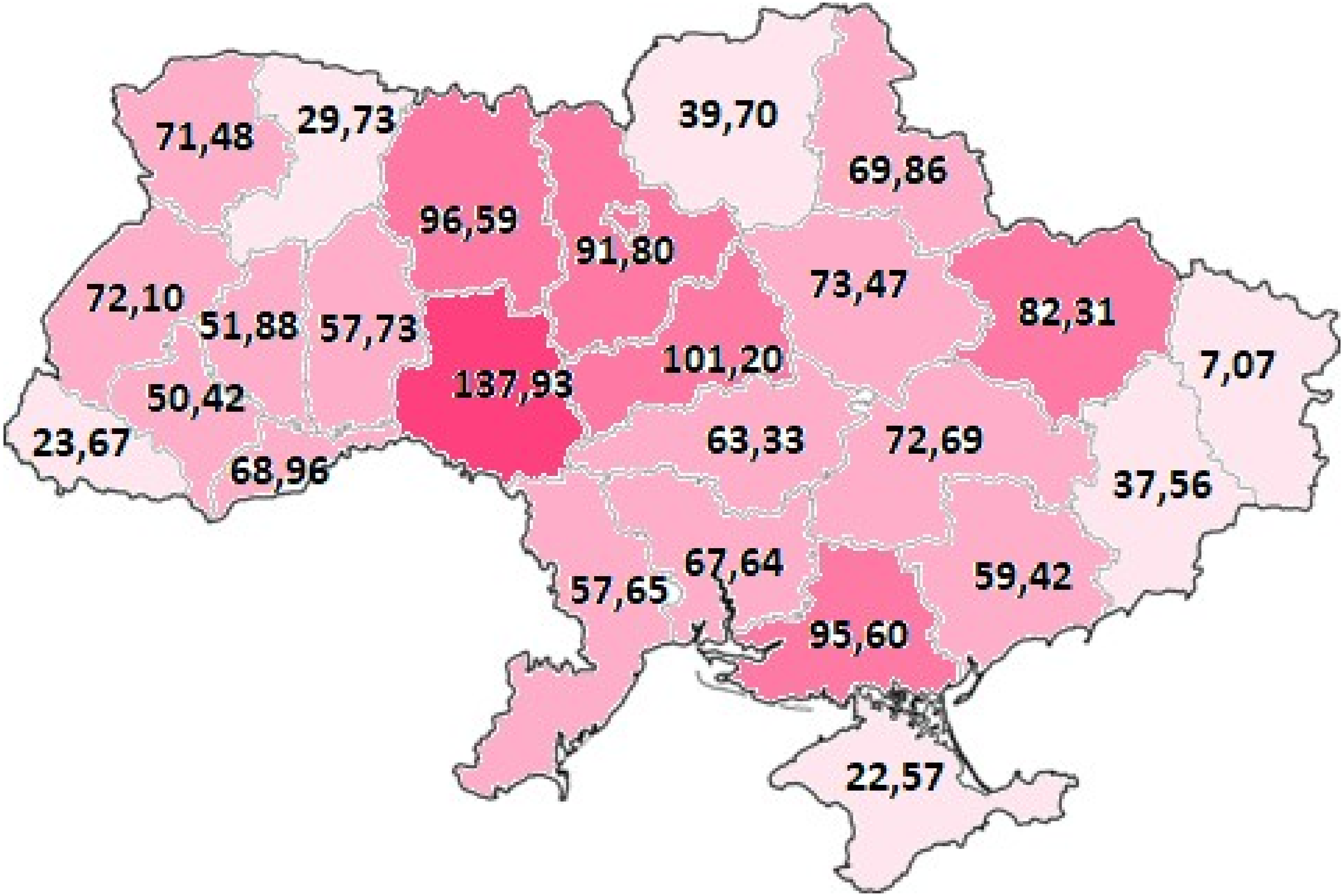
Pluperfect: Diachronical dimension

- Decline of the frequencies of the (non-standard) Ukrainian Pluperfect in fiction (other than counterparts of *bylo*, and even these) towards the later Soviet period (100 > 60 ipm, only fiction)
- Revival with some Post-Soviet authors, but still rare

Pluperfect: Diatopical dimension

- Higher frequencies in the texts by the authors coming from the predominantly Ukrainian-speaking regions (NB the Center more than the West, although the West has “non-standard” uses) minus the North; in Belarus the non-standard uses are more characteristic for Western Belarus
- Pluperfect frequencies (ipm) on the General Regionally Annotated Corpus of Ukrainian (GRAC, courtesy of M. Shvedova / R. von Waldenfels)

Pluperfect: Diatopical dimension



Lexicon and standartization

- *Toska* ‘~yearning, nostalgia, misery, Angst’ *,* a word with a high entropy of translation counterparts (eg 66 equivalents in Rus-En corpus, H = 1,6 for English, H= 0,6 for Ukrainian)
- Modern Ukrainian counterparts: *tuha, žurba, smutok*
- Higher entropy (H=1,9) for pre1930 Ukrainian, more counterparts since defunct (cf. *žjel’* or *tusk* that are Western, “obsolete” *zanuda* or *toska* – cognate of Russian *toska*, avoided since 1930s as “too Russian”)
- Same tendency with Ukr. *čajka* ‘seagull’ (cf. Russian *čajka* ‘seagull’, Modern Standard Ukrainian *martyn*)

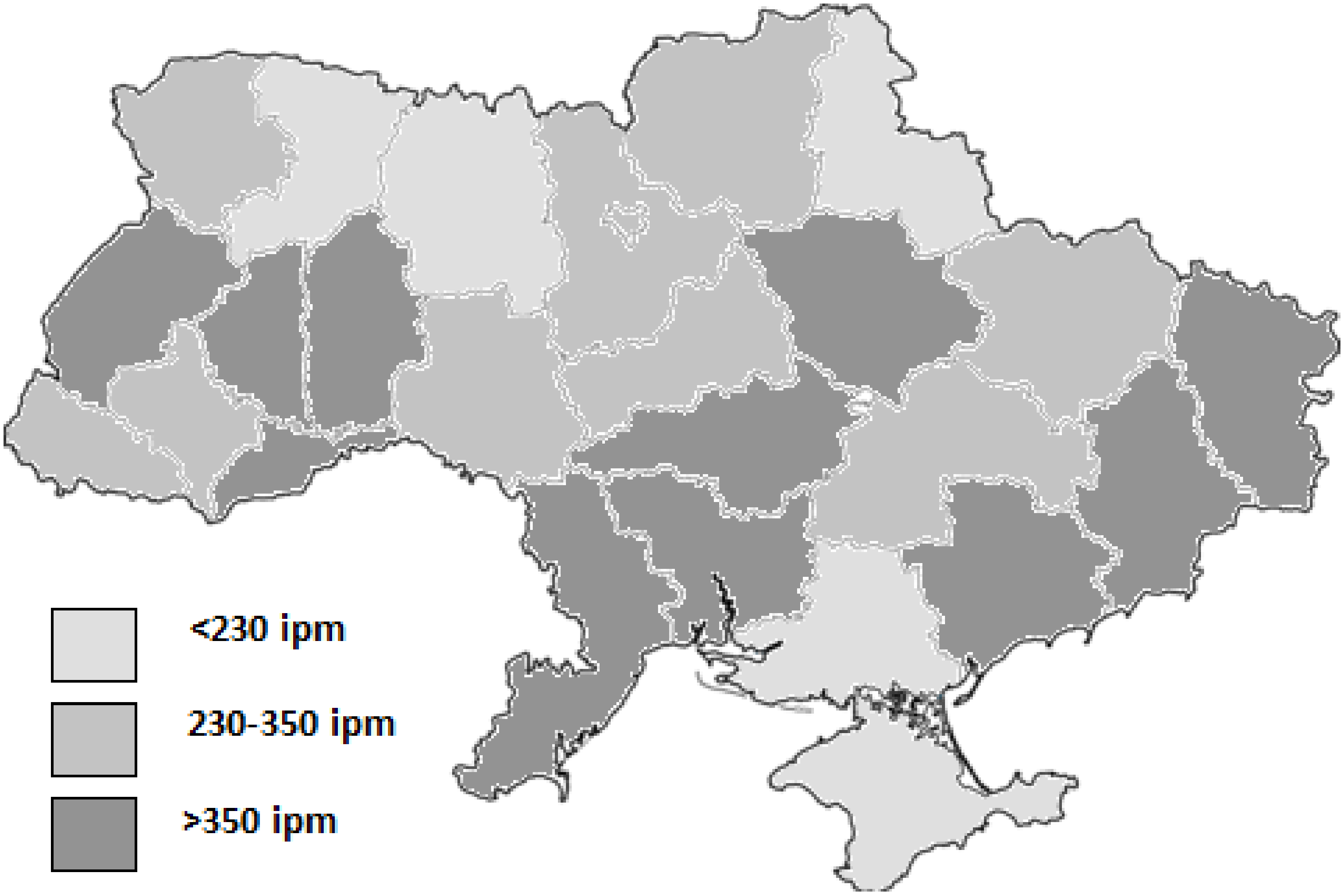
Syntax: Ukrainian animate-like accusative -*a* with body parts

- *prykusyty jazyk-a* lit. ‘bite tongue-GEN’ (‘to stop talking’) parallel to Russian *prikusit’ yazyk* with zero-marked ACC=NOM.INAN; some other phraseological units
- Fiction after 1990: ipm increases from 55,5 to 66,9 (exact Fisher test $p < 0.00001$)
- “Phraseologisation” (whereas some other semantic groups favoring -*a* such as “days and months” or “trees” shrink since the beginning of the 20th century)

Other topics of interest

- Active participles in *-juč-* (cf. Russian and Church Slavonic *-jušč-,* Polish *-ąc-)* vs. “more Ukrainian/Belarusian” relative clauses; active in 1920s and decline since then; diatopically, present in particular along the borders
- Possessives like *ixnij* ‘their’ vs. indeclinable *ix* ‘oni.GEN’; *ixnij* absent in written Ukrainian until 1880s and standartized since, correlates (in Ukrainian and Belarusian) with concrete/abstract nouns (Bel. [*ixny > ix*] *dom* ‘their house’ but [*ix > ixnaja*] *moc* *‘*their strength*’*), declines and is severely stigmatized in Russian as “illiterate” since 1930s
- Attenuative comparatives with *po-* (productive in Russia and rare in U & B)

Active participles in Ukrainian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