Spotlights on Russian and Balkan Slavic Cultural History

Edited by Alexandra Ioannidou and Christian Voß
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Introduction

Christian Voß, Alexandra Ioannidou

This book contains the papers presented at the conference, “Slavic Studies after the EU enlargement: Challenges and Prospects. First Interdisciplinary Slavic Studies conference“, that took place between September 29 and October 1, 2006 in Thessaloniki. The title points, on the one hand, to the overall situation of the academic discipline of Slavic Studies, which is currently in crisis in Western Europe even though the European Union has undergone a process of “slavisation” with its on-going enlargement. The conference is, moreover, the result of an interdisciplinary methodological approach of the editors, who endeavour to bridge the gap within the field of Slavic Studies in Germany and in Greece. In view of the forthcoming development of Slavic studies in Greece, these conference proceedings are intended to emphasise the attractiveness of innovative research in the field of Slavic studies and its relevance in the Greek context. From this follows the focus on Art and Literature in Soviet Russia in the 20th century and on the still politically contested Slav-speaking minority in Northern Greece, which constitute the focal points of the panels.

The book opens with two programmatic texts under the title “Setting the Agenda: Slavic Studies in the 21st century”, which reflect the discipline of Slavic Studies within the political developments of the last 20 years.

Klaus Steinke takes on the question, why the academic discipline of Slavic Studies has gone on the defensive in recent years despite the fact that it has gained enormous socio-political importance in the wake of the dissolution of Europe’s divisions and the subsequent enlargement of the European Union in 2004 and 2007. Steinke demonstrates the pejorative hetero-stereotypings of the Slavic language area in historical perspective and calls for reassessment of such stereotypings.

The translation scholar Lew Zybatow presents the project EuroComSlav that is intended to guarantee the handling of language diversity in Europe, which is indeed a declared component of the European self-image. The main objective of Eurocom and its Slavic variant EuroComSlav is the systematisation of interlingual comprehension: common internationalisms belong to the passive competence of other European languages and can therefore be cultivated.

In the panel “Migration and Linguistic Hybridity” Kira Kaurinkoski retraces the transformation of Greece of having been traditionally a country of emigration to a country of immigration beginning in the 1990s. In her case study, she analyses primarily female immigrants from the Ukraine who are
partly ethnic Greek resettlers. The prevailing perception of these immigrants by the Greeks as potential prostitutes and or spouses contrasts starkly with the flexibility and adventurousness of this immigrant-group.

The Russian language is, because of its territorial expansion, the only Slavic language that has generated pidgins. The development of radically simplified commercial and makeshift languages is appealing in view of the complexity of Russian morphology as compared to Western European mariner-languages like English or Spanish. Dieter Stern points out that the mixed variety spoken on the Taimyr Peninsula constitutes a special form of pidgin due to the fact that the relationship of the Russian settlers to the indigenous population differs considerably from the violence-based master-servant-relation of the colonial pidgins.

The panel “Perceptions of Slavs in Greece” addresses the issue of integration of the Slav-speaking population into the Greek State. Spyros Marketos probes for continuities in inter-war and post-war Greece on the basis of the political biography of Sotirios Gotzamanis (1884-1958), who was minister of economic affairs in the Greek Quisling government from 1941 to 1943. Based on a speech by Gotzamanis about Alexander the Great in 1957, Marketos portrays the psyche of the native Slav politician through analysing the category of ethnicophrosyne, which was introduced after the Civil War in 1949 as a tool for controlling anti-communist sentiments.

Tasos Kostopoulos shows in an historical outline the different appellations for the Slav-speaking population in the area between Kastoria and Drama, which was incorporated into the Greek State in 1912/13. In this respect, pronounced discrepancies arise between self-ascription and the attribution by others. Indeed, well into the 20th century the national, widely indifferent group was stigmatised as being closely affiliated with the arch-enemy Bulgaria and thus the term “Slavomacedonians” was engendered due to Communist engagement in the region beginning in the 1930s. The term “local” has to be interpreted as an indigenisation effort.

Vemund Aarbakke picks up the topic and outlines the Greek discourse on the Slavic dialects of Northern Greece (thus including the Muslim Pomaks in Thrace). The current situation displays a helpless insistence on the utter denial of linguistic otherness on Greek national territory, which is, amongst others, reflected in a pseudo-scientific literature on alleged non-Slavic dialects in Greece. Against the background of EU minority protection standards and a politically active ethnic revival that has developed under these conditions, Greece has been forced to part with traditional patterns of thought.

Raymondos Alvanos brings into focus the inter-war period in Greek Macedonia and considers the year 1936 and the beginning of the blatantly repressive dictatorship of Metaxas to be a radical break: Until this point, a thoroughly
successful integration policy had been conducted in which local politicians of Slavic descent in their capacities as *makedonomachoi* acted as intermediaries.

The book ends with two panels dealing with **cultural studies on Russia**: Firstly Stavros Alifragkis/François Penz and Panayiota Mini provide an analysis of Soviet avant-garde cinema of the 1920s. Alifragkis/Penz carry out a shot-by-shot analysis of the mechanisms that are used to present the city of the future in the film “Man with a Movie Camera” by Dziga Vertov (from 1929): The city as the site of technical progress and living space of the industrial working class was the central setting of the Soviet self-image, showing that conceptions of the city were therefore ideologically loaded.

Mini contextualises the film “Chess fever” by Vsevolod Pudovkin (from 1925), concluding that chess was cultural-politically staged as a secular religion in Soviet Russia in the 1920s. The comedy about a man who loves chess more than his wife reflects the Russians’ enthusiasm for Chess on the occasion of the World Tournament at the end of 1925 in Moscow.

Mirjam Goller introduces Anthropology as the new leading discipline in the study of Literature: the production and reception of Literature thus become an integral characteristic of being human. This “anthropological turn”, which addresses corporality particularly, Goller deduces successfully from the Western and Russian patterns of thought.

Katerina Mavromichali explores the political and aesthetic function of painted porcelain in the Soviet Union in the 1920s. On the basis of examples from the Costakis-collection in Thessaloniki, Mavromichali presents the future optimism of leading artists like Kandinsky, who in the 1920s enjoyed freedom of expression allowed to them by the Soviet State at that time.

Maria Tsantsanoglou examines the image of the newspaper “*Pravda*”, the leading organ of the Communist party from 1918 to 1991, in its self-perception and its perception by others. The analysis of seven pictures from five decades, which display the “*Pravda*”, consolidates to a history of the Soviet Union and its treatment of artists.

Syrago Tsiara reevaluates Socialist Realism, which was declared the Art-Doctrine in 1934. Generally, Socialist Realism is interpreted as a cultural-political expression of “High Stalinism” and a totalitarian genre. Tsiara, however, devalues the common periodisation of Russian literature in the 20th century and emphasises the continuities.
The editors wish to thank the University of Macedonia Research Institute and the Humboldt-University of Berlin for the publication of this book. Furthermore, we want to express our gratitude to the students Tina Drossou and Niobe Zambouka for the organisation of the conference in Thessaloniki and Simone Rajilić for thoroughly editing of these proceedings.
On the Importance of the Slavonic Languages in Europe after 1989

*Klaus Steinke*

Before we discuss and analyse the importance or significance of the Slavonic languages in Europe after 1989, we should start with a short historical review on the role of these languages in the European context before this central turning point in our recent history. This is essential for the better understanding of the actual situation and for drawing the necessary conclusions for the future treatment of the urgent problems in this context. The first contacts between Slavonic tribes and idioms with the other European peoples and languages go back into Antiquity.¹ Written reports about the invasion of the Slavs, reaching into the southern Peloponnesus and even the island of Crete, are to be found already in the sixth century in Byzantine documents, such as in the *Ecclesiastical History* of *John of Ephesus*.² Even if similar documents about the intensive contacts in more northerly regions are of later provenience, the traces of Germanic-Slavonic symbiosis are also very old. The spread of Slavonic toponyms east of the rivers Elbe and Saale and the significant numbers of old Germanic lexical items in Common Slavonic testify to this statement.³

In general, these contacts can be characterised as unilateral, although the primary direction of cultural influence came from the west. There is no doubt that Byzantium initiated and determined the acculturation of large parts of the Slavonic groups and drew them to Orthodox Christianity, with all the consequences for their religion, institutions, culture, literature, arts, architecture etc. Later, Moscow even claimed to be the third Rome⁴ and the legitimate heir of the Byzantine Empire. But the number of Germanic and German loanwords in the languages of our eastern neighbours is much higher than the other way around. The importance of western culture and languages for the development of the east remains an indisputable fact. This context is already a justification for the old statement *slavica non leguntur*. But this is only one side of the medallion, or as the Polish aphorist *Stanislaw Lec* characterised the multifaceted situation with his famous dictum, *ex oriente lux, ex occidente luxus*.

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¹ Several collections of the most important sources were published in recent years, e.g. *Gindin et al., Brzóstowska/Swoboda* etc.
³ Fundamental work was done in this field by *Trautmann* and *Eichler*.
⁴ An essential study on the influence of this ideologem and its political importance for the Slavonic world was presented by *Schaeder* (1957).
The obvious and very suspect one-sidedness of this restricted interpretation of the relationship between east and west overshadows the much more complex reality. But while the influence of the Slavonic world on Western Europe is of less significance, we find from time to time nevertheless a particular interest for Russian literature or Polish films etc. An extraordinary curiosity for the dissident’s literature existed during the Cold War, which was usually reduced to a simple symptom of active resistance against the communist regime. Unfortunately, this politically determined attention for the east did not provoke a similar interest in the Slavonic languages. Comprehension of French or, today, of English is obligatory for every well-educated European scholar, but the comprehension of Slavonic languages is still considered to be exotic and nobody is ashamed about his complete ignorance in this field. Sometimes the ignorance of Slavonic languages is even seen as chic, demonstrating a kind of contempt for these barbaric languages, which a normal and intelligent human being can not pronounce correctly.

Nevertheless, a limited and very practical interest in Slavonic languages was always present in the west and can be traced back to earliest times. If we accept the statement that the contracts between Byzantium and the Kievian Rus' in the tenth century were originally written in Slavonic as well, then the knowledge and the use of this language may be presupposed also in the chancelleries of the Eastern Roman Empire (MALINGOUDI 1994: 95ff). Certainly, Byzantium had experts for Slavonic languages and their knowledge left its traces in the different glosses used in Greek texts, such as in the legacy of Constantine Porphyrogennetos *De administrando imperio*. Several western pilgrims added short wordlists and phrases in the languages they met on their way to their reports describing the way to Palestine, like the Ritter ARNOLD VON HARFF (15th c.) or JEAN PALERNE in his *Peregrination* (Lyon 1606), who also mentioned Slavonic words in their glossaries (STEINKE 1988).

But all these vernacular and barbaric languages had a lower or no prestige and always stood in the shadow of classical Latin and Greek. They remained, like all the other colloquial languages, barbaric for a long time; only in the periods of the Renaissance and the Reformation did the situation finally change thoroughly to their advantage. A growing interest in Czech and Polish as well as other vernaculars can be observed in the west in this time. The first dictionaries, phrasebooks, orthographies and grammars for these languages appeared, mainly written in Latin and therefore also accessible to foreigners.

Some examples may illustrate the new situation: JAN HUS, *De Orthographia bohemica* (15th c.), VAVŘINEC BENEDIKT NUDOŽERSKÝ, *Grammaticae bohemicae ad leges naturalis methodi* (1607), WENCESLAUS JOHANNES ROSA, *Čecho-řečnost* (Czech Grammar 1672), JAKUB PARKOSZ, *Traktat o ortografii polskiej*.
(1440), **ADAM BOHORIZH, Arcticae horulae succisivae** (Wittenberg 1584). Finally, the short phrasebook *Kurtze und grünliche Vnderweisung beyder sprachen zu reden und lessen Polnisch und Deutsch* (Wittenberg 1523) represents an early crash-course in Polish.

Beginning in the seventeenth century, awareness for the need of Russian phrasebooks and grammars arose among foreigners with Russian interests. The manuscripts of some practical guides to Russian were recently edited together with large linguistic commentaries: Tönnies Fenne’s *low German manual of spoken Russian Pskov 1607* (Copenhagen 1961-1986), Thomas Schrowe’s *Ein Russisch Buch* (Cracovia 1992 ff.) or A. E. Sellius *Vocabularium Russo-Germanicum 1701, Russorum formulae loquendi*, edited by B. Panzer (Heidelberg 1989). The appearance of the first printed grammar for this language, the *Grammatica Russica* published by H. W. LUDOLF in Oxford 1696, represents an initial climax in the interest for the Russian language. The market for such publications was a limited circle of practically interested persons, mostly merchants, and later on church reformers and scholars.

In the last two centuries the scholarly interest for Slavonic languages acquired a small, but rather solid foundation. In the middle of the nineteenth century the first chairs of Slavonic studies were founded in Paris, Vienna and Berlin, and this favourable tendency for our discipline continued into the next century. In Austria and Germany the institutionalisation of Slavonic studies accelerated in response to the demands of Slavonic citizens, while the common interest for these languages remained very restricted. The first professors of Slavic philology, such as MICKIEWICZ, MIKLOSICH and JAGIĆ were exclusively of Slavonic origin, revealing in itself the lack of interest the subject met within even the broader academic sphere from the beginning. This regrettable situation has not changed substantially. Nevertheless, to demonstrate the real and global success of our discipline, it is sufficient to mention the names of eminent Russian scholars such as NIKOLAJ TRUBECKOJ or ROMAN JAKOBSON, whose influences on modern linguistics and literary studies go far beyond our discipline (STEINKE 1999: 131).

Sufficient money for language programmes and for the research in this field in the USA and West Germany only existed in the period of the Cold War. The better knowledge of the enemy had priority and financial support was therefore guaranteed. This favourable situation for Slavic studies peaked in the short era of Gorbachev’s *glasnost*. Public attention broadened and the number of students of Russian increased for a little while. However, this pleasant development did not last and the limited acceptance of Slavonic languages in public

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5 An early state-of-the-art-report for the first century of Slavic studies was made already by JAGIĆ (1910).
opinion did not really change for the better. Many Russian language classes introduced in the period of Gorbi-mania and before have been closed again and the closing of institutes at the universities has become epidemic. Usually the globalisation and the dominance of English, reinforced by the necessities of economic cuts in all public sectors, are the general explanation brought into the discussion by the politicians responsible for this disastrous policy. Their occasional public declarations in favour of the Slavonic languages have no real consequences for Slavic studies and language teaching.

A deeper analysis of the phenomena will show that our neighbours to the east are not considered to be really equal partners by the public. The old, already rather grave stereotypes of them\(^6\) have been replaced in the last century by even more hostile clichés. Primarily the ideologies of nazism and communism altered the situation and for the first time deep hatred and irrational contempt determined the relationship between the east and the west. Czarist Russia was maybe not a loved, but always a respected partner with equal rights. Marriages between the Russian court and European aristocracy, a sign of respect and mutual acceptance, were absolutely normal. The ultimate low point in the last century represents Reagan’s infamous assertion that Russia and the communist camp were an empire of evil; Reagan marks the endpoint of this fatal development.

After the collapse of the Berlin Wall 1989, the political situation changed fundamentally, as we all know, but many of the old prejudices are still virulent in relations with the east.\(^7\) The image of the Eastern European countries is still bad. Life there seems to be chaotic, the economy weak and the mafia reigns everywhere. These dubious impressions dominate the picture of Russia and its former satellites in the west. When I travelled to Moscow for several months in 2001, many of my friends in Germany were worried about me, because they were convinced it would be very dangerous there. Indeed, the Russian mafia had killed some of their own people a short time before, but no tourists were harmed in these actions. At the same time, in Florida, several German tourists were robbed and murdered immediately after leaving the airport with a rented car. Naturally, nobody claimed in the same time that it would be dangerous to go to Florida for a holiday (STEINKE 1997: 69). The negative image of Eastern European countries promoted permanently by our mass media is one of the

\(^6\) An early testimony of these national stereotypes represents a painting from the beginning of the 18\(^{th}\) century under the title Kurze Beschreibung der in Europa Befindlichen Völkern und ihren Eigenschaften (STEINKE 1999: 134; KELLER 1985: 25).

\(^7\) How old they are, OHNHEISER (1997: 75) shows by quoting KRUMBACHER in this context, who regrets the lack of interest for the Slavonic languages and culture already at the beginning of the 20\(^{th}\) century. His statement is still valuable today, in the 21\(^{st}\) century (cf. KRONSTEINER 1997).
most important reasons that at present the number of students in Slavonic languages and literatures is shrinking and not increasing in Germany. Somehow, they still do not realise that we have a completely new situation after 1989.

The collapse of the Berlin Wall is not only a symbol for the final collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, and the end of the Soviet empire; at the same time it marks a new beginning in our relationship with these countries. But what really changed after this unforgettable event? First, the frontier, the former Iron Curtain became less daunting and inconvenient and more permeable. Access in these countries is not restricted anymore and everybody is free to go there. But, “the new freedom to travel is used primarily by our eastern neighbours and not by us”. Germans visit the east mainly as nostalgia tourists in search for their lost homes. Despite all the improvements in the tourist infrastructure, genuine tourism is still underdeveloped.

Pioneers using new chances are always industry, commerce and the entire business world exploring new fields of activity. If we take for example Russia, the former practice of joint-venture projects expanded and acquired a new quality. Europe already depends to a high degree on this country in the supply of energy, as we saw recently. In the meantime, Russian tourists – an unknown species before – have become today important clients for many Southern European countries. This fact is underlined e.g. by the Russian-language advertisements for luxury goods in many Greek towns. A new market was discovered in the east by western firms, which founded new branches everywhere. If you go to Poland or Russia, you will find there our well-known supermarket chains and all famous brands. Unfortunately, this economic success only stimulates interest in Slavonic languages to a limited degree because in many of these countries English has become dominant. Only in the area of the eastern border regions do we notice a vivid interest for the language of the immediate neighbours. After a short phase of mistrust based on old prejudices, German merchants recognised the new market and put signs saying *mówimy po polsku* (We speak Polish) in their windows. The economic contacts have grown and have a positive influence also in other fields.

Science received many innovative impulses from the free and unrestricted contacts with the eastern colleagues. To visit them and to realise common projects became a quite normal matter. Almost every day we get flyers and emails announcing language courses and scientific projects or asking for support for a grant or a scholarship in the west. That is a development, which no one would have dared to predict some twenty years ago. The exchange of professors and students has reached unimagined levels and these contacts would grow further.

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8 The statement of the former Polish president Aleksander Kwaśniewski in favor of the Polish tourism in 1997 remains still valid (STEINKE 1997: 70).
if there was only enough money. The scientific profit of these meetings is mutual, as experience shows. In the last few years a new species has appeared in our universities, namely students from these countries overcoming all the difficulties often created by western bureaucracy. At the University of Erlangen Bulgarian students represent the largest group of foreign students. International scientific projects and university teaching lost all ideological restrictions, and sociolinguistic fieldwork for example is not hindered anymore by central or local officials.

Finally, the events of 1989 and the following years had an important effect on politics, and changed completely the relations between the states on both sides of the vanished Iron Curtain. The last and logical consequence of this process is the enlargement of the EU. On May 1\textsuperscript{st} 2004, eight Eastern Bloc countries became members of the European Union; Bulgaria and Romania followed on January 1\textsuperscript{st} 2007. Among them are five countries with a Slavonic population: Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria. Further Slavonic states are waiting in the queue: Croatia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, probably Serbia and maybe even the Ukraine are further candidates. This, as we all hope, irreversible act initiates and stablises cooperation and further integration in all spheres. At the same time, it means that Slavonic languages became official languages with equal rights like the other 16 official idioms of the Union. Every document of the European institutions must be translated into all of these new European languages. This fact alone should provoke appropriate measures for the intensification and for the broadening of language teaching. Unfortunately, nothing happens to answer to this enormous challenge other than political actionism. The use of English will not be sufficient for the intensification of the contacts between the member states of the EU. Long-lasting cooperation needs a better and more profound mutual understanding, and that presupposes the knowledge of the respective languages, because only then can the problems be understood and resolved in an adequate and satisfying way. Naturally, you may order a cappuccino in Warsaw using English, but it will not be sufficient to begin a serious conversation on literature or to cooperate long term.

To summarise, the following consequences of 1989 for the future of Slavonic languages in Europe need to be underlined. The statement \textit{slavica non leguntur} should become invalid and the programmes for Slavonic languages should not be reduced but reinforced. Politicians and society need finally to recognise the new importance of the Slavonic languages in post-1989 Europe. With the last enlargements of the EU in 2004 and 2007, several Slavonic countries became members of this community and their languages acquired equal rights in the official sphere. After the end of Cold War, Russia too turned out to
be very important not only for Western business and the energy supply, but also as a partner for creating new and better perspectives for the future of Europe. Unfortunately, education policies in our countries have not yet found a practicable answer to the challenges of the Slavonic languages and have even reduced programmes for financial reasons. Therefore, our aim has to be to promote the knowledge of Slavonic languages and cultures in our countries and to avoid the negative effects of ignorance in this field. This will carry fruit only if our governments, the EU and the Eastern European countries formulate and pursue a common initiative to enlarge the knowledge of Slavonic languages.

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EuroComSlav: 
Slavic Languages for a Multilingual Europe of the Future

Lew N. Zybatow

1. Preliminaries or a Prelude to “Quo vadis, Slavic Studies?”

“Slavic Studies after the EU Enlargement: Challenges and Prospects” – this is the name of the Interdisciplinary Conference held 2006 in the part of the world, from where Kyrillos and Methodios once started and successfully completed their great historical mission to bring the peoples of the Slavic world a common Slavic written language. Both the names and the region are highly symbolic and bear implications for the question of “quo vadis modern Slavic studies”. “Modern”, of course, needs clarification. I do not believe, for example, in the magic solution – proposed by someone in the discussion – namely that we should say, now it is time to stop constantly referring to Kyrillos and Methodios and then we will – as if by magic – immediately turn into proponents of a promising, modern Slavic studies. What about the modernity of Kyrillos? Does not everyone have his own Kyrillos? My Kyrillos is a pioneer, an innovative scientist for his time, creating and implementing new ideas of his own and – for this reason – facing and overcoming many a difficulty. That is why Kyrillos does not infer an old monument but a scientific spirit that is forever young, inquiring, ground-breaking and creative. That is why Kyrillos was and is a creative and modern scientist – contrary to many a contemporary, “modern” slavist, who, for example, shows no interest in the remarkable progress in modern linguistic theory and its implications for Slavic languages, to simply reiterate the well-known collection of old-fashioned quotations and scientific fairy tales instead of trying to verify them in reality, by scientific truth.

That is why I am deeply moved by the excellent idea of the University of Macedonia – now, more than 1000 years later, to again take the initiative and pose the question – from the same place, but in a completely changed world, at an Interdisciplinary Slavic Studies Conference in Thessaloniki – of the place and importance of the Slavic languages in Europe.

“Slavic Studies after the EU Enlargement: Challenges and Prospects.” This is a real challenge for all slavists. They have witnessed big, manifold extra-linguistic and linguistic changes within the Slavic world, in the Slavic languages and on the Slavic linguistic map. Slavic ethnic groups have arrived in Europe politically; linguistically and culturally they seem to remain terra incognita to Western Europeans. And if this situation does not improve, a European house that is merely political may one day prove to be built on sand. But if the
The idea of a European nation with a European identity can only be materialised as a multicoloured mosaic of various ethnic, religious and linguistic identities, only as a unity in diversity, then good old Slavic philology is really facing big challenges and will have to rearrange and modernise its tasks, missions and activities. It will have to abandon its ivory tower of the exotic, old-fashioned, here and there scientifically hopelessly backward Slavic philologies and embrace modern interdisciplinary, empirically-based linguistic, literary and cultural studies. Modern Slavic studies need modern scientific approaches, need a shift from the traditional, purely accumulative and descriptive philological approach to empirical and interdisciplinary explanatory scientific investigations – as, for example, Klaus Steinke does in one of his latest interdisciplinary project drafts called “Between Integration and Segregation”, combining interdisciplinary investigations with empirical sociolinguistic field work and promising relevant scientific results.

One of the new challenges – to my mind – is the practical task of paving the way to better access to Slavic languages for Europe and for the world in general. In the age of the global village, of the enlarged European Union, of the open world of the World Wide Web, university Slavic departments are called upon to question the traditional philological language acquisition approaches and to search for more effective practical contributions to help Slavic languages to a better European presence or provide easier access to Slavic languages in general. The striking results of innovative language acquisition research based on multilingual intercomprehension and the constructivistic and cognitive-based language teaching paradigms are already being received well within both Romance and Germanic studies, but, as far as I can see, have not yet arrived in Slavic studies. This is all the more regrettable as interest in the Slavic world and Slavic languages is stronger today than ever before. Everyone I talk to regrets not speaking Russian or another Slavic language. But the enlarged European Union means nearly 500 million EU citizens with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds living, communicating and working together. And the structure of such a big, multicoloured European house can only be peaceful, reliable and lasting, if Europe succeeds in maintaining and strengthening its multilingual and multicultural-based democratic foundations. Since a common European identity does not mean one sole leading language for all Europeans, but instead implies an understanding of the European diversity of languages and cultures, both as a great creative potential and as a stable democratic foundation, one of the central tasks of democratic and tolerant education in Europe is to develop a culture of European multilingualism.

One realistic approach to such a culture of European multilingualism, based on a constructivistic Eurocomprehension strategy, was developed by the inter-
national EuroCom-Research-Group. The EuroCom project was awarded the “European Seal for Innovative Language Projects” research award by the European Commission and the Austrian government. Various tests with EuroCom learners proved that after having finished a EuroCom intercomprehension course of only one semester, the EuroCom learners had reached the B2 level of reading competence of the Common European Reference Framework for Languages.

2. EuroCom

EuroCom stands for EuroComprehension and is the copyrighted name of a method for acquiring interlingual receptive reading competence in a number of genetically related languages. It makes optimum use of a learner’s existing knowledge of a language of the same subgroup as the language he wishes to learn. EuroCom also activates special cognitive inference and learning strategies.

EuroCom, developed by an international team of researchers, pursues a very practical aim – giving Europeans a realistic means of becoming multilingual. EuroCom is actually a trinity comprising EuroComRom (coordination: HÖRST KLEIN/TILBERT STEGMANN – Frankfurt/Main), EuroComSlav (coordination: LEW ZYBATOW – Innsbruck) and EuroComGer (coordination: BRITTA HUEISEN – Darmstadt) and aims at achieving multilingual comprehension within the three main European language groups: Romance, Slavic and Germanic. Nearly all Europeans speak a language from one of these groups as either their first or at least second language. EuroCom is also supported by the EuroCom-Didact module (coordination: FRANZ-JOSEPH MEISSNER – Giessen), the didactic bases of EuroCom, dealing with modern theories of language acquisition and multilingualism research.

The EuroCom concept combines different but complementary fields: language policy, language teaching and linguistics. The aspect concerned with language policy (achieving European multilingualism in a modular fashion) influences teaching concepts (teaching receptive competence via interlingual transfer bases), while its implementation requires intercomprehension research (i.e. linguistic research into how to make optimum use of the relations between genetically related languages).

According to declarations of intent published by the European Commission (1995, 1997), European multilingualism has three main aims:

1. A differentiated consideration of foreign language competence (i.e. receptive multilingualism).
2. The focused acquisition of partial competence with the option of modular expansion (i.e. the modular approach of receptive reading competence in languages for special purposes).

3. The acquisition of competence using kinship between languages (i.e. intercomprehension research, such as Romance intercomprehension research).

Whereas there is a long tradition of intercomprehension research in the Romance languages, no Slavic intercomprehension research has yet been done in Europe; neither German slavists nor slavists from Slavic-speaking countries ever showed an interest in the intercomprehension concept. As strange as it might seem, German slavists seem not to have bothered about whether people also want to learn the Slavic languages for practical purposes. None of the existing comparative presentations of the Slavic languages in German – such as PANZER (1996), REHDER (1986) or REHDER (1990) – are based on the intercomprehension approach. Moreover, some leading German slavists consider Slavic intercomprehension – unlike EuroComRom in the Romance languages – to be impossible.

Such attitudes are all the more paradoxical as work on Slavic intercomprehension does exist. Since the 1980s fundamental, practically-oriented works have been published in the United States, primarily, TOWNSEND (1981)¹ and GRIBBLE (1983).

What is the difference between these books and the non-intercomprehensive books on Slavic languages like PANZER (1996), REHDER (1986; 1990) or COMRIE/CORBETT (1993)? The differences are:

1. a well-prepared, explicit comparison on the relevant linguistic levels,
2. an applied design serving the practical understanding of the language and not a merely philological description,
3. the use of original, existing texts in the target language that help bridge the gap between the primitiveness of texts and the intelligence of (adult) learners typical of traditional language learning books.

CHARLES GRIBBLE (1983: 12) writes:

“…from the very beginning the student is reading Bulgarian which was not written for a textbook, but which is intended for native speakers of the language and is interesting for the message conveyed, and not just because of the grammatical material presented.”

The American pioneers of Slavic intercomprehension anticipated and used many of the strategic points that were theoretically founded and practically implemented within the EuroCom Strategy at the end of 1990s.

¹ See also Revised and Expanded Edition in TOWNSEND/KOMAR (2000).
The EuroCom Strategy is based on the cognitive and constructivistic language acquisition hypothesis that when learning a second, third, fourth etc. language, the learner does not – so to speak – “switch off” the previous languages he knows. On the contrary, this language competence stimulates the constructivistic language learning process in a decisive way! EuroCom tries to adequately use the various kinds of learner pre-knowledge to show him how much of the “completely new” language he already knows, without knowing that he knew it at all.

For this purpose, EuroCom organises those areas where the learner encounters familiar items in any other new language into seven categories called the “seven sieves”. After a language has been ‘sifted’ seven times for familiar aspects, the information contained in an original text in the new language turns out to be easily deducible. The meaning of the remaining parts of the text can then also be inferred relatively accurately.

As the coordinator of EuroComSlav I would like to present EuroCom’s seven sieves for Slavic languages and show how the EuroCom strategy is applicable to both Romance and Slavic languages.

3. The Seven Sieves of EuroCom for the Slavic Languages

Sieve 1: International Vocabulary

Let us start with sieve 1 – international vocabulary – and look at a short text in Ukrainian (1) and in Polish (3):

(1)

Відомий американський політолог Збігнев Бжезинський, почесний громадянин Львова, приїде в Україну разом із Папою Римським Іоанном Павлом ІІ, який планує відвідати нашу країну 23 – 27 червня. Про це повідомив директор оргкомітету з питань підготовки візиту і Папи Римського до Львова Іван Рудницький. За його словами львівські власті направили запрошення 200 почесним гостям, у тому числі американцю польского походження З. Бжезинському. Він займав посаду радника з національної безпеки президента США Джіммі Картера з 1977 по 1981 рік. (“Молодь України”, 08.05.2001)

(2) International vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ukrainian</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>політолог</td>
<td>Politologe</td>
<td>political scientist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perspektywy</td>
<td>Perspektiven</td>
<td>perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>katalog</td>
<td>Katalog</td>
<td>catalogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aktualne</td>
<td>aktuell</td>
<td>current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trendy</td>
<td>Trends</td>
<td>trend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mody</td>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>fashion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oferta</td>
<td>Offerte</td>
<td>offer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>egzemplarz</td>
<td>Exemplar</td>
<td>copy/issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>telefon</td>
<td>Telefon</td>
<td>telephone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) Polish text:

Quelle
mail order international
Perspektywy 2000
Jedno spojrzenie
i wiesz wszystko!
Nowy katalog Quelle
Wiosna/lato już się ukazał
Aktualne trendy mody,
bogata oferta –
na 160 stronach!
Zamów bezpłatny egzemplarz
Telefon:
0-61 879 39 01

(4) International Vocabulary
Sieve 1 can be used to identify the international vocabulary in the new languages, here Ukrainian and Polish. International vocabulary means foreign loanwords, the meaning of which foreign readers can surmise on the basis of their native language. As we can see, the internationalisms listed here can easily be deduced from the Ukrainian and Polish texts.

One very important fact in this respect is that the use of internationalisms is clearly on the rise in all the Slavic languages. This has been apparent in everyday language ever since the Slavic world opened itself to the West. It can be observed in the language of the Slavic media and in the new terminology used in various specialist fields such as economics, finance, technology and the like. In other words, for the EuroComSlav project this trend means that in the future, using sieve 1 on Slavic languages will bear more and more fruit.

### 3.2 Sieve 2: Pan-Slavic Vocabulary

Sieve 2 looks for common Slavic words, termed the pan-Slavic vocabulary by KLEIN/STEGMANN (2000). (6) lists the lexical items of the following Bulgarian text that can be easily understood with some knowledge of Russian.

(5)

Реклама в списание “Славянин”:
Велико Търново. Старата българска столица Велико Търново е град с богато историческо минало, с неповторимо амфитеатриално разположение и живописна природа, с множество уникални паметници на културата и динамична съвременност.
В старинната част на града се експонират и съхраняват ценните стенописи на църквите “Петър и Павел”, “Св. 40 мъченици”, “Св. Димитър” и други паметници на средновековната живопис, които са гордост на българската култура.

(6) Pan-Slavic vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bulgarian</th>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>в</td>
<td>в</td>
<td>in</td>
<td>in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>българска</td>
<td>български</td>
<td>Bulgarisch</td>
<td>Bulgarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>столица</td>
<td>столица</td>
<td>Hauptstadt</td>
<td>capital city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>град</td>
<td>город</td>
<td>Stadt</td>
<td>town/city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>с</td>
<td>с</td>
<td>mit</td>
<td>with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>богат</td>
<td>богатый</td>
<td>reich</td>
<td>rich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Неповторим</td>
<td>неповторимый</td>
<td>unvergleichlich</td>
<td>unique</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is remarkable that as opposed to the Romance languages, where EuroComRom lists only 500 pan-Romance words, our EuroComSlav homepage lists 1500 pan-Slavic terms (according to Miklošič 1945, Lekov 1955, Kopecčný 1981).

The second sieve used to filter out pan-Slavic vocabulary thus has an even higher yield in EuroComSlav than does the corresponding pan-Romance vocabulary in EuroComRom. Why is this so? The reason is that, compared to the pan-Romance vocabulary, the pan-Slavic vocabulary coincides much less often with the international vocabulary. As a result, the sieve for the pan-Slavic vocabulary taps a much larger additional lexicon than does the corresponding sieve in EuroComRom.

### 3.3 Sieve 3: Sound Correspondence

This sieve is designed to enable EuroComSlav users to identify common lexical features regardless of their separate historical phonetic development. The important fact is that the phonetic shift – an area that has been described in greater detail than any other in the Slavic languages – does not need to be explained at great length. Instead, merely the main types of phonetic correspondences that result from this shift and that are didactically relevant will have to be deduced and presented in a way that is as economical and effective as possible for the user.
For instance, to mention but one example, the phenomenon of liquid metathesis, that addresses the transformation of the Late Common Slavic -or- and -ol- between two consonants, will not have to be explained in its comprehensive diachronic context. Instead, it only needs to be made available to the EuroComSlav user in the correspondence types deduced, so that the user can infer simple transfer rules, such as from the Russian дорогой (= dear) to the Czech drahy, the Polish drogi or the Bulgarian драги etc.

(7) Sound correspondences for the Russian -oro- and -olo- between two consonants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Russian</th>
<th>Czech</th>
<th>Polish</th>
<th>Bulgarian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>дорогой</td>
<td>-ra/-rä-</td>
<td>-oro/-ró-</td>
<td>-oro-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Мороз</td>
<td>Cz. drahý, mráz, strana, prach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>сторона</td>
<td>Pol. drogi, mróz, strona, proch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bul. драги, мраз, страна, прах</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4 Sieve 4: Orthography and Pronunciation

The well-known fact that the Slavic languages can be divided into an East and a West Slavic group is of course not purely a graphemic matter, but EuroCom is chiefly interested in the graphemic aspect.

Since the Cyrillic script meets the demands of the Slavic phonetic systems better than does the Latin alphabet, learning Slavic languages via Russian is a useful way to imagine the sound of Slavic words written in the Latin alphabet. The pronunciation conventions of the ligatures and diacritics help us discover word kinships or, in other words, help us comprehend words spelled differently in various Slavic languages when their pronunciation is known.

The fourth sieve is thus designed to clarify the orthographic conventions for the originally Slavic sounds in the Slavic languages using the Latin alphabet. Organising and presenting the regularities in the most effective way is not easy and calls for the type of creative solutions we are looking for.

3.5 Sieve 5: Morphosyntax

Sieve 5 is designed to help the German EuroComSlav user detect all relevant grammatical phenomena. The Slavic languages are known to have a rich morphology of inflection and to be, so to speak, conservatively Indo-European. On the one hand, we have extensive interslavic grammar correspondences, e.g. between parts of speech such as adverbs and their derivations from adjectives etc. On the other hand, we also have deep contrasts. The question is, where should we incorporate information on the main typological differences?
In addition to the seven sieves, “mini-portraits” of each Slavic language are planned in EuroComSlav, which will provide information on the linguistic peculiarities of every Slavic language.

The information that can be obtained using sieve 5 cannot be shown exhaustively here, and so I will limit myself to illustrating how sieve 5 can be applied to a Ukrainian text.

(8) Рятуймо українську мову!

Триває жаве обговорення правопису української мови. Значна частина цього обговорення стосується іноземних слів. Направді біда не в правописі, а в тому, що українські слова замінюються іноземними, наприклад президент, адміністрація, парламент … Таким чином, наші державні діячі роблять українську мову упосліджену, бо викладають її із побутування в громадському та суспільному житті України.

Люди добрі! Рятуймо мову, а правопис прикладеться! Богдан Островський (“Літературна Україна”, 22.03.2001)

(9) Help for translation of text (8) from sieve 5

рятуймо 1. p. pl. imp.; cf. рятувати – to save
триває 3. p. sg.; cf. тривати – to last
жаве „-е“: short ending of an adj., nom. sg.
обговорення „-ення“: nominalisation suffix
правопису „-у“: noun ending, gen., masc. sg.
в правописі „-і“: noun ending, loc., sg.
в тому „в тому“: Ukrainian locative, Ru. в том
українські слова „-і“: plural ending of adj.
замінюються „-ся“: pass.
роблять „-ть“: verb ending, 3. p. pl.
упосліджену „-ою“: adj. ending, Instr., sg. fem.
із побутування nominalisation suffix
в громадському житті „-ому“: loc. ending of adj.

3.6. Sieve 6: Pan-Slavic Syntactic Structures or Core Sentence Types

The Slavic languages are usually said to have free word order. This is not to say that Slavic sentences do not have any basic syntactic structure; of course