

## Preface

The reason for this volume is that English has become the language of science, even within Slavic Studies, and I have noticed that especially my papers published in German are not read half as much as my papers published in English. Sometimes they are cited in ways that make it obvious that the colleague has not read more than the title because they do not understand the language of the paper.

However, I do think that some—certainly not all!—of the papers I have written in German or Russian during the last quarter of a century might still benefit readers and prevent them from doing the same work again. These are the papers I collected in this volume.

All these papers are witnesses of the time they were written in, and I did not try to update or modernize them, because that would basically have meant to rewrite them completely. Only in a few cases did I find some adjustment or comment unavoidable; these places are marked with “D. B. 2026”. Misspellings and similar obvious mistakes were corrected tacitly, and the citation format was unified according to the Generic Style Rules for Linguistics. In general, however, you have to take these papers as texts of their time, not of 2026. I marked the original page breaks, so feel free to refer to the original publications (in addition to or instead of the translations).

The subjects of the papers are very diverse, reflecting my varying interests over seventeen years: false friends, Serbo-Croatian standard varieties, histories of concepts, biaspectual verbs, ‘definiteness’ in Russian, diglossia in 18th-century Russian, the sociolinguistics of writing. Since this makes a thematic grouping impossible, the papers are here presented in chronological order (with one exception).

The good thing about doing this now, rather than ten years ago, is that translating has become so much easier. For this volume, I heavily relied on DeepL (the company behind it, incidentally, being based just 3½ km from my university office in Cologne). Even though the machine provides excellent results, I checked every sentence thoroughly and changed about every other one, aligning the texts with my own voice and adjusting them to an English-speaking audience. Two of the papers collected here were actually originally written in English but then turned out to be published in Russian and German, respectively, so that I could use my original English wording wherever the published version did not deviate from it.

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