

Swiss French community on the Black sea coast: Several generations of language contact

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Poster

Our poster will present preliminary results of my research into Swiss French-speaking colony of Chabo/Chabag on the Black sea (Odessa region, Ukraine) coast from 1822 to 1960 with special angle focus on their language. It is based on the data collected in different archives and during the surveys made in the 1920s-1950s.

For two hundred years, French and a local dialect of the canton of Vaud ('patois vaudois') have been spoken in Southern Russia-Soviet Union by the descendants of Swiss immigrants.

We will present a general overview of the social and cultural environment the Swiss settlers of Chabo lived in. We'll provide some general background on the colony, its history and its languages. It will help reconstructing sociolinguistic situation that does not exist anymore (since quite virtually all Swiss settlers left between 1940 and 1960s), but that the ex-colonists living in Switzerland remember. Samples from interviews made in the 1930s, in the 1950s and in the 2010s will be provided to sample situations on language contacts French-Russian-Ukrainian-German-Moldavian. We will examine different kinds of phenomena of language contact through lexicon (borrowings), phonology and syntax and show a diachronic change in settlers' French language due to contact situations.

We will highlighting both the unique aspects of the linguistic and sociolinguistic situation of the Swiss colony of Chabo throughout its history and show how the Swiss French colonists of Chabo managed to maintain their heritage language, what changes it underwent and which political and social conditions impacted it.

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