The two questions to ask, a half-century after the initial rejection of behaviorism by cognitive science, is not whether behaviorism is false (it is) but (1) to what extent does our intelligence rely on reflex-like input-output or a modular mechanism, and (2) to what extent is our cognitive life shaped by the type of learning mechanisms studied by behaviorists?

See also: Functionalist Theories of Language.

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Belarus: Language Situation

U Schasny, Minski rayon, Belarus

Belarusian, as the language has been termed in English since the creation of an independent state of Belarus with the collapse of the USSR in 1991, is also variously known as Byelorussian or White Russian (or Belarusan, per Ethnologue), and along with Russian and Ukrainian is a member of the eastern branch of the Slavonic language family. It is written in the Cyrillic script and is one of the two official languages of the republic of Belarus, along with Russian.

The exact number of speakers of Belarusian is difficult to quantify because of hazy and subjective definitions of what constitutes Belarusian as distinct from dialects of Russian. Census figures in contemporary Belarus are somewhat misleading, as although 85.5% of the population of the republic listed Belarusian as their first language in the 1979 census (and Ethnologue, in its 2000 edition, provided a 1993 figure of 98%, or 7 905 000), what is defined as 'Belarusian' may be more like Russian than the acknowledged literary standard of Belarusian. Consistently weak institutional support for the literary language in Belarus has served to confuse the situation.

Nevertheless, Belarusian as a distinct language from its neighbors has a long, if somewhat checkered, history. The area in which the Slavonic dialects that fused into the Belarusian language sprang up was defined by the Pripyat', Dvina, and Dnepr rivers, and the tribes that inhabited this area were known to medieval chronicle writers as the Krivichi, Radimichi, and Dregovichi. The borders of the modern Belarusian state roughly correspond to this linguistic area, with some overlap of the language westward into Latvia and Lithuania.

Linguistic and archaeological evidence suggests, in fact, that the Slavic-speaking tribes conquered and absorbed Baltic-speaking populations within this area and spread westward, and in fact by the 11th century the important trading city of Polotsk (Polatsk) was the dominant political and economic force along the Dvina and Daugava rivers as far as the Baltic sea. The Russian city of Smolensk is also thought to have been founded by the Krivichi tribe. For a time in the 15th century a language that was recognizably proto-Belarusian was in use as the official administrative language of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which stretched as far as the Black Sea.

Legal codes of the Duchy, and the partial Bible translations by Francis Skaryna in the 16th century, constitute the first evidence of a Belarusian literary language. But the flowering was not to last, as its use was suppressed with the advent of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth starting in 1569 – Polish was used exclusively on its territory for administration from 1696 on.

It was the disbanding of this commonwealth at the end of the 18th century that gave rise to a second flowering of Belarusian literature, and under Polish influence, the Latin script was in use for the ensuing century, even into the 20th century, though not uniformly, and use of the traditional Cyrillic script continued throughout, until being made the official orthography early in the Soviet period in the 1920s.

Features of the Language

Belarusian is written in a version of Cyrillic that is almost identical to Russian, with the addition of the dotted vowel İ. Characteristic of Belarusian are the affricates *ts* and *dz* in some positions where Russian has *t* and *d*. Syllable-final *w* is found, corresponding to Polish *ł*. Representation of unstressed vowels as spoken (particularly the *o/a* distinction) is more faithful in Belarusian spelling. As in Russian, words have movable stress. The grammar and syntax of Belarusian are not markedly different from that of Russian.

Codification and Status

A grammar of Belarusian did not appear until 1918, with that of Branislaw Tarashkevich. The norms set out in that volume, which was a conscious attempt to synthesize the literary language from a variety of dialects, helped to codify the official language of the Belarusian SSR. The Cyrillic script in its native form was set by decree in 1933, but also at this time, under Stalinism, the grammatical and spelling norms were aligned closer to Russian. The Stalin era inaugurated a demotion in the status of Belarusian that to this day has never truly been reversed. Schools and the press almost exclusively used Russian, and still do, with literary Belarusian marginalized as an 'academic' language. To some extent the written language has been kept alive by an active diaspora living in the West, while the spoken language of the home was, by implication, reduced to the status of a 'Russian dialect.'

Nationalist activity within the country in the dying days of the USSR, however, saw the achievement of a higher status for the language, culminating in a Language Law of 1990 that gave the language sole official status in the country. Under the present neo-Soviet administration of Belarus, the legislative achievements of the nationalists have been largely undone, especially as the result of a referendum in 1995, by which Russian was given equal official status. For the foreseeable future, then, the majority language will officially be a pariah in its own country.

See also: Belorussian; Russian; Ukraine: Language Situation.

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Belorussian

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Belorussian (*belaruskaja mova*; Belarusian, Belarusan), which together with Ukrainian and Russian forms the East Slavic branch of the Slavic languages, is the native language of some 8 million speakers in the Republic of Belarus. The standard language is based on the central dialect of the Minsk region. In an earlier form known as Old Belorussian, West Russian, or among contemporaries simply as *rus'skij*, Belorussian served from the 15th through the late 17th centuries (when it finally yielded to Polish) as the chancery language of the multiethnic Grand Duchy of Lithuania (which in 1569 became part of the Polish Commonwealth). Thereafter, with political bans on publication in the language, Belorussian went into a period of decline. It was not until the first decades of the 20th century that Belorussian experienced a revival, with roots not in the distant literary traditions of the Grand Duchy, but in the vernacular of the countryside. The first legal Belorussian periodical, *Naša Niva* '*Our Cornfield*' (1906–1915), attracted contributions from leading intellectuals of the day and did much to promote structural and orthographic uniformity in the language. The first attempt at a normative grammar of the language was Branislaŭ Taraškevič's *Belaruskaja hramatyka dlja škol* '*Belorussian grammar for schools*' (1918). The consolidation of grammatical norms continued well into the 20th century.

Belorussian, which is written in the Cyrillic alphabet, shares a number of phonological features with both Russian and Ukrainian. As in standard Russian, unstressed *o* is pronounced *a* (*ákanne)*, and (as in certain Russian dialects) unstressed *e* becomes '*a* (*jákanne*). Unlike Russian, these features are reflected in the orthography (in the case of *jákanne*, only in pretonic position), which is set up on the phonemic, rather than morphophonemic, principle: *nažý* 'knives' (sg. *nož*) and *zjamljá* 'world' (pl. *zémli*). Most consonants occur in phonemically opposed palatalized–nonpalatalized pairs. East Slavic *t*ʲ and *d*ʲ have assibilated to *t͜s*ʲ and *d͜z*ʲ: *dzéci* [ˈd͜zʲet͜sʲi] 'children' (Rus. *déti* [ˈdʲetʲi]); palatalized *r*ʲ has been lost: *rad* 'row' (Rus. *rjad*). As in Ukrainian, the palatal affricates *č* and *šč* are pronounced hard, East Slavic *g* is a fricative [ɣ], and *v* becomes [w] (in transcription from Cyrillic, *ŭ*) in closed syllables: *halóŭka* 'head, dim.' (*halavá* 'head').

Morphological characteristics of the noun include [illegible] loss of a distinct neuter plural: *aknó* 'window' (pl. *vókny*; Rus. *oknó*, *ókna*); the alternation of stem-final velars and dental affricates in certain case forms: nom. sg. *ruká* 'hand' (dat. sg. *rucé*); and a tendency toward the spread of the first declension genitive plural marker -*oŭ* (unstressed -*aŭ*) to other declensions: *zímaŭ* (Rus. *zim*) 'of winters'.

The verb has two regular conjugation patterns, illustrated in the present tense by *nésci* 'to carry' (I) and *rabíc'* 'to do, make' (II): 1SG *njasú*, *rabljú*; 2SG *njaséš*, *róbiš*; 3SG *njasé*, *róbic'*; 1PL *nesëm*, *róbim*; 2PL *nesjacé*, *róbice*; 3PL *njasúc'*, *róbjac'*. Like Ukrainian, but unlike Russian, the third-person ending (lacking in the singular of pattern I) is palatalized. As in Ukrainian, there is a change of the masculine past tense marker *l* to *w*: *znaŭ* masc.'knew' (fem. *znála*).

To a greater extent than in Ukrainian, the lexicon reflects the historical influence of Polish, chiefly from the period of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Since the late 18th century unification with Russia, the influence of Russian has prevailed.

See also: Balto-Slavic Languages; Belarus: Language Situation; Polish; Russian; Slavic Languages; Ukrainian.

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Ben Yehuda, Eliezer (1858–1922)[*]

R Sivan

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Popularly known as ‘the father of Hebrew speech’ or ‘the reviver of the Hebrew language’ Ben Yehuda coined hundreds of new words in Hebrew, most of which are accepted and used today in speaking and in writing. He composed a monumental 16-volume Hebrew dictionary *Thesaurus Totius Hebraitatis* and an additional introductory volume *Prolegomena*.

He came to Ottoman Palestine from Russia with the first wave of modern Jewish pioneers beginning a new period in Jewish history, that of Zionism, having changed his foreign family name of Perlman to the Hebrew name Ben Yehuda. Immediately upon docking in Jaffa, and after kissing the soil of the Holy Land, both Ben Yehuda and his wife swore that from then on they would speak only Hebrew between themselves. From Jaffa they went directly by horse-drawn wagon to Jerusalem.

Ben Yehuda lived in Jerusalem for some 40 years, fulfilling the decision he had publicly proclaimed:

> To revive Hebrew speech, to return to the language of our forefathers, the language we did not use in speech while in exile, to revive it in our mouths and to speak it . . . Just as the Jews cannot truly be a nation unless they return to the land of their forefathers, they cannot truly be a nation unless they return to the *language* of their forefathers and use it, not only in writing on holy or intellectual matters but also, and especially, in speaking, young and old . . . on all matters of living . . . like all the nations, each nation in its national tongue.

Thus were fused together the movement to revive Hebrew-speaking and the nascent Zionist national movement.

Hebrew began to return to life in speech among the small Jewish community in the country composed of the old Jewish settlements (the *Yishuv*) plus the Diaspora Jews who came from exile, speaking Yiddish, Ladino, Arabic, Russian, German, etc. Together with a small band of lovers of Hebrew and scholars of the language, teachers, and writers, Ben Yehuda encouraged the spread of Hebrew speaking, helped in setting up Hebrew schools and kindergartens, searched Hebrew sources (e.g., the Bible, Talmudic literature, later literature, the Prayer Book) for words for daily needs, and created new words. Ben Yehuda also helped found The Hebrew Language Council in 1889, and served as its first president until his death in 1922. The Council also functioned in the British Mandate period 1918–1948, and with the establishment of the State of Israel became the Academy of the Hebrew Language in 1953.

Ben Yehuda created approximately 225 Hebrew words for his *Thesaurus*. He noted them with the sign ∽. About 70 percent of them were absorbed and accepted into the language, and they are still used in the 1990s in speaking and in writing. The words filled a need in the reviving language. They were not words on ‘weighty, high, or abstract matters,’ as Ben Yehuda notes, ‘but for matters most ordinary, for use in everyday life.’ These words spread also to the books and periodicals published in Hebrew, in Israel and abroad, in the 1880s and 1890s and the early decades of the 20th century.

Some examples of Ben Yehuda’s neologisms are

1. Nouns: *maxlava* (dairy), *zehut* (identity), *mapuxit* (harmonica), *maxlec* (corkscrew), *vaada* (committee), *xavita* (omelette), *aviron* (airplane), *mitriya* (umbrella), *ofna* (fashion), *yozma* (initiative).
2. Adjectives: *kiconi* (extreme), *akiv* (consistent).
3. Participial forms: *moomad* (candidate).
4. Verbs (cited in 3rd MASC sg pt form): *ixel* (wish for), *higer* (immigrate, emigrate – from Arabic), *hitgander* (dress up, show off), *zimzem* (hum).

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[*] translated from the Hebrew by J Fellman.