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Creative and Conventional Use
of Knowledge Exemplified by a Cognitive Definition

*Language and non-linguistic knowledge complement
each other, and the omission of either component
produces an incomplete interpretation if at all.*

(Tokarski 2014, 24)

SUMMARY

The main goal of the present article is to show the place of cognitive definition in the description of the cognitive and linguistic abilities of older schoolchildren (aged 15–18) both intellectually normal and diagnosed with a mild intellectual disability. The article refers to the cognitive methodol-ogy because – the author believes – mutual relationships between cognitive processes and language are emphasized by cognitivists in a special way. The study highlights the important causes of problems in the conceptualization of conceptual structures in the group of intellectually disabled persons, such as: the disturbed development of cognitive processes, very limited amount of experiences and social interactions, lack of originality of associations and negligible influence of imagination. Similarities and differences in different ways of creating definitions were shown using the example of the word *deszcz* (rain).

Key words: mild intellectual disability, cognitive definition, creative and conventional use of knowledge

INTRODUCTION

The subject of the article is to show the place of cognitive definition in the description of the cognitive abilities of intellectually disabled[1] teenagers compared with the abilities of persons without diagnosed cognitive deficits. The ways of organizing individual experiences into concepts, the influence of knowledge and a more limited lexicon than specified by the developmental norm will determine the nature of these definitions. For several reasons, the operation of structuring experiences and different forms of use of knowledge by intellectually disabled persons deserves closer attention[2].

First, because the level of development of cognitive processes, both those more complex: speech and thinking, as well as the basic ones: perceptual-motor functions, memory and attention, is significantly lower in subjects with reduced mental skills than in intellectually normal persons. Intellectually disabled persons find it difficult to convey their thoughts by means of words, and their limited lexicon allows them to communicate with their close family and friends only regarding basic everyday matters[3]3. The presented deficiencies will certainly impact the way of organizing knowledge and the structure of concepts.

Second, according to the approach of contemporary psychology and special pedagogy the development of each child's cognitive activity is a social phenomenon because it takes place owing to the mutual interactions between the child and the adult. It is only through these exchanges that an increase in and diversity of experiences take place.

Furthermore, according to Stanisław Grabias, "a communicative act is at the same time a communication of knowledge about oneself and the world […] The analysis of communicative behaviors enables the logopedist to reach the speaker's intentions and the ways of their realization " (2019, 318). It follows from literature on oligophasia that the participation of intellectually disabled children and adults in social situation is limited; consequently, the diversity of linguistic behaviors of such persons is decidedly smaller as is their store of social experiences.

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[1] The author has in mind persons diagnosed with a mild intellectual disability/mild mental disability (MID)

[2] The author believes it is difficult to make summaries on the linguistic and communicative abilities of intellectually disabled persons because the term "oligophasia", which denotes speech disorders in oligophrenia, is very broad and "does not render the whole scale of linguistic and communication problems" (cf. Wątorek 2014, 51). Even in the group of MID persons the range of problems is very large, the only feature uniting these people is the IQ of 69-55 (on the D. Wechsler scale).

[3] For more on the subject, see inter alia the studies by: Tadeusz Gałkowski (1979), Alicja Rakowska (2003), Alicja Maurer (1988), Zbigniew Tarkowski (1999, 489-495), Mirosław Micha-lik (2006), Katarzyn Kaczorowska-Bray (2017).

Third, since intellectually disabled persons have a narrower repertory of social situations in which they take place, they produce their utterances using a limited code[4]. The text that is produced in such conditions is closely connected with a situation, and sentences are simple, usually elliptical, while it is often necessary to know the situational context in order to understand them (cf. Grabias 2019, 52). According to Stanisław Grabias "individualization of (linguistic) behaviors increases as participation in social life broadens: the wider the participation, the larger the possibility of choosing linguistic features and lower predictability of behaviors" (ibid, 263). It should be noted that both kinds of codes: elaborated and restricted, are equally necessary in different everyday situations because "the effectiveness of communication largely depends on the ability to adjust a specific utterance to the partner, situation and goal of conversation" (Wątorek 2014, 28).

Fourth, since in the group of mildly intellectually disabled patients there are seldom detected CNS disorders and genetic abnormalities, while the main cause of retardations/disorders in the acquisition of cognitive, social and linguistic skills is believed to be the adverse "environmental-cultural system" (ibid, 59) and the educational failure of parents, therefore the development and formation of cognitive-linguistic processes will be disturbed (lesser knowledge of the world and disharmonious speech development).

Finally, fifth, in view of the foregoing determinants of the cognitive, linguistic and social development of intellectually disabled persons, it can be said that their elicited cognitive definitions of a phenomenon will be limited and too vague (unclear, inconsistent) or lengthy and excessively analytical. They certainly will not be texts based "on the creative use of words" because such use of language requires "consciousness" or at least "a sense of convention, because the creative use of words is based on conventionalized meanings and always remains in some relation to them" (Filar 2016, 48). Conventionality and creation can be regarded as two poles of human linguistic and creative activity (ibid) or be treated as points on the scale of some continuum.

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[4] Differences between the restricted and elaborated code were described by Basil Bernstein (1980) and Stanisław Grabias (1997 and subsequent studies). Basil Bernstein wrote about the relationships between: the material and living conditions, frequency of interactions, linguistic development and educational achievements of pupils. He thereby proved that there is a clear relationship between different ways of expression and the children's school achievements. The subject of linguistic behaviors of intellectually disabled persons in the context of Bernstein's sociolinguistic theory of codes was discussed by Dorota Krzemińska (2012), while Agnieszka Wątorek (2014) referred to the concept of codes, discussing inter alia the causes of failures in the acquisition of linguistic competence by intellectually normal and intellectually disabled children.

METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Language is one of the fundamental instruments of cognition of the world[5]. Children who develop normally, have healthy brains and can hear acquire the language system, enrich their lexicon and learn new grammatical structures approximately by the age of six[6] (cf. inter alia Borowiec 2014, 9; Grabias 2015, 17). It is language that allows one to organize the richness and variability of the surrounding phenomena, interpret reality and get to know and assimilate the surrounding world

The paths of cognition may assume different (not only linguistic) forms. Jean Piaget's[7] assertion (1966) that before a child uses a word, it is preceded by his/her accumulation of experience concerning the section of reality to which the word refers, has been confirmed by contemporary studies[8].

Studies on the organization and linguistic expression of knowledge about the world are concerned with the problems of the relationship that exists between cognitive processes and language, between thinking and speech[9]. According to

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[5] Contemporary concepts oscillate between cognitive determinism and linguistic determinism. It appears that "the question itself about the existence of a relationship between cognitive and linguistic competence has lost its original sense for, if today we understand man as an indivisible biopsychical whole (thought is materialized/embodied – the cognitivists claim – U.J.),we cannot negate the processes that take place in him/her). We should rather ask which arguments support the relative distinction between and which ones support the integrity of speech and thinking" (Wątorek 2014, 39).

The author of the present article adopts the assumption of the inseparable connection of language with the world of human concepts, experiences, and culture in the broad sense (see also Filar 2016, 45-59). In his 1964 study Ward Goodenough wrote that culture is a form of what people store in their minds, their models of perception, association and interpretation of the world (after: Buchowski, Burszta 1993, 13).

[6] Studies by Helena Borowiec (2014) show that the developmental form of the organization of experiences becomes established approximately at the age of 10.

[7] Jean Piaget (the founder of genetic epistemology) opted for the separation of mental development from linguistic development. He maintained that speech develops based on prior cognitive achievements.

[8] Worth noting are the studies by Dan I. Slobin (1980, originally in 1971), Katherine Nelson (1974), and Melissa Bowerman (1973).

[9] These relations were observed by Lev Vygotsky (1978) and Stefan Szuman (1968), and described inter alia by: Maria Kielar-Turska (1989), Krystyna Gąsiorek (1991), Barbara Boniecka (1999), Barbara Górec-ka-Mostowicz (2005) and Helena Borowiec (2014).

The knowledge of the world that can be expressed through language is the subject of linguistic studies. The current results of research on the reconstruction of the linguistic picture of the world (LPW) by the scholars of the Bartmiński team are published in the journal "Etnolingwistyka"; the cognitive perspective in the studies on the language of children and young people was introduced by Jan Ożdżyński (1995); the studies on the structure of concepts in children with speech disorders - from the angle of cognitive linguistics - were also conducted in children with cleft lip and/or cleft

Eleanor Rosch the cognitive character of language manifests itself most fully in vocabulary, which characterizes the world in the way specific to every language.

In linguistic interpretations, for example by Jerzy Bartmiński (1990), the semantic representation of a word explains repeatable, typical features that assume the form of a bundle of semantic elements that occur naturally in our everyday experience. Linguistic considerations go even further, towards the "open understanding of meaning" (inter alia: Tokarski 2014, 228-235). The model of meaning offered by cognitivists noticeably differs from classical structuralist interpretations, "whereas it is closer to the reproduction of man's actual abilities to organize the world through language and openness to new cognitive contents" (ibid, 233). The term "cognitive" shows that the content provided in a definiens is cognitive rather than purely semantic as was the case in structural semantics. A full version of the lexicographic definition based on the assumptions of structural semantics was presented by Yuriy Apresyan (1972, 39−75; 1982). Moreover, the adjective "cognitive" is a clear reference to cognitive linguistics, which refers to "human (natural) categorization of the world's phenomena" (Bartmiński 1988, 170) as well as to the cognitive trend in other sciences, e.g. cognitive psychology, philosophy, psycholinguistics, artificial intelligence, and sciences of the brain (neurobiology, neuropsychology, and philosophy of the mind). Furthermore, the distinguishing of lexicographic definition and cognitive definition[10] is directly connected with two distinctive methodological stances in contemporary linguistics, which assume a different path of interpreting linguistic data: the autonomous stance and the holistic stance. Autonomous studies mark out clear limits of linguistic interpretation. They offer precise tools of linguistic description but at the same time they separate language from man, from his his/her internal world and the way of perceiving the external reality. Holistic researchers broaden this reflection with questions about the place of language within cognitive processes. For example, according to Andrzej Pawelec (2008, 114) the holistic vision of language is based on the observation that "language is essentially a social, supraindividual entity" (cf. Filar, Głaz 2016, 191−210). Cognitive linguistics is certainly a non-autonomous approach. For, as Ryszard Tokarski writes, "there cannot be a reasonable interpretation of an utterance without the necessity of referring to the full semantic picture of

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palate by Danuta Pluta-Wojciechowska (2011); and in the field of psycholinguistic studies - by Maria Kielar-Turska (1997).

[10] For more on cognitive definition and issues concerning language, human cognitive processes, different cognitive models (concepts, schemas, scripts,) in linguistic analysis, on the structures of knowledge in the mind and the narrative nature of utterance, see the author's article *Definicja kognitywna w diagnozie logopedycznej dzieci w normie oraz osób niepełnosprawnych intelektualnie* (Cognitive Definition in Logopedic Diagnosis of Normal Children and Intellectually Disabled Adults. Theoretical Assumptions) "Prace Językoznawcze" 2019, XXI/4, 77-95.

On cognitive definition in the logopedic diagnosis and treatment see Ewa Hrycyna (2017, 73−88).

objects, their properties, or, in broader terms, to the picture of the world specific to a given linguistic community or even one's individual perception of the world" (2004, 15). The cognitive definition[11] has become "an attempt to seek new forms of defining a word" (ibid, 310) and an answer to traditional scientific and lexico-graphic definitions[12], first of all owing to the "open formula" of interpretation of the meanings of words. The openness of the cognitive definition enables taking three types of rationality into consideration: popular, creative (artistic)[13], and the elements of scientific knowledge[14] present in the consciousness of language users. According to Ryszard Tokarski: "[…] popular rationality is an interpretation [emphasis by R. T.] of the world, an interpretation that consists in special "taming" of the world, in its internal categorization and evaluation according to the intersubjective needs of and expectations by a linguistic community. Scientific rationality – reflection [emphasis by R. T.] - is objectivistic […]. It does not show human preferences concerning the ways of organizing and describing the world, but it coolly […] answers the question about what the world is like" 2014, 103). The basic component of such a definition is the "judgment about an object" reconstructed from the obtained linguistic material, and having the nature of natural, popular conceptualization. Defining is an entirely different process than creating concepts. A child or an adult may have a well developed concept, which, as an element of knowledge, enables its use in diverse situations and the accurate identification of referents, while the speaker has problems providing its definition. In the discussions by some linguists (Langacker 1991, 108; Kopka 2002, 12) a concept is far richer in terms of contents than a meaning, while semantic knowledge

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[11] The formula of "cognitive definition" was introduced into linguistics by Jerzy Bartmiński (1988). According to his approach, it should "render an account of the way an object is understood by speakers of a given language, i.e. the way of the knowledge of the world – socially established and known through language and the use of language, the categorization of its phenomena, their characteristics and valuation" (2016, 42).

[12] The construction of a dictionary definition is hierarchical, "subordinated to the logical structure of giving the *genus proximum* and *differentia specifica* (Filar 2013, 44). The choice of *genus* determines the initial and further categorization of an object, which (categorization) depends on "the choice of the point of view and the complex type of rationality" (ibid). In this way the interpretive perspective is outlined which refers to the collective consciousness of a communication community. The content of the lexicographic (taxonomic) definition is scientistic, referring to scientific rather than popular knowledge. Such a definition belittles […] the explicative value […] and, consequently, despite many and indisputable good points, these definitions often do not help with interpreting the way of the functioning of expressions in the language and in texts" (ibid).

[13] This type of rationality provides special opportunities in interpreting artistic texts. We should mention here the monographs produced in Lublin's linguistic community, concerning the semantics of colors (by Ryszard Tokarski (1994); interpretation of bird names by Dorota Kępa-Figura (2004); the picture of love in the works of selected women poets (Wysocka 2009).

[14] Obviously, we are speaking here – as Ryszard Tokarski writes – of simplified rather than complete expert knowledge (Tokarski 2014, 313).

is a subsystem of conceptual knowledge. That is why linguistic literature sometimes introduces a distinction between conceptual knowledge and semantic knowledge (after: Tokarski 2014, 51) and between semantic development and conceptual development (Trzebiński 1999).

An indisputable value of cognitive linguistics and a research strategy of cognitive linguists is to describe language as an integral part of human perception of the world and, consequently, "not to separate man's purely linguistic abilities and capacities from other abilities such as visual perception, motor skills […]. Language abilities are a derivative of other human perceptual abilities" (Kalisz 1994, 65). These findings resulted in the adoption of a specific research procedure involving the need to take into account in linguistic analyses the research results of other disciplines investigating the human mind and cognitive processes (Libura 2000, 16).

After the adoption of these research assumptions and postulates of the cognitive method, it can be observed that they are becoming increasingly important in the description of speech disorders. This happens because designing of logopedic research involves taking account of the relationship between language plus linguistic behavior and biological determinants (Pluta-Wojciechowska 2015, 49). Moreover, "when describing speech disorders, linguistic methodology" – Jolanta Panasiuk maintains –"increasingly often gives up the atomistic understanding of language and the description of its relations towards the non-linguistic reality, focusing instead on its functioning in social relationships and in cultural contexts" (2018, 116). These assumptions of cognitive linguistics appear to be particularly conducive to this type of analyses. The use of cognitive methods and especially the cognitive definition to analyze utterances of children and adults at different stages of mental development seems to be justified for many reasons. Cognitive methodology lays emphasis on the processual acquisition of language as a result of the child's interaction with the social and cultural environment (Lakoff, Johnson 1988; Nowakowska-Kempna 1995; Niesporek-Szamburska 2004), whereas, while determining the meaning of a word, a great role is attributed to experience and sensory observation of the world. Moreover, in the process of profiling the meaning, attention is paid to the situational context "because the meaning of words is part of the context that actively shapes and determines it" (Nowakowska-Kempna 1993, 162), to the speaker's beliefs and his/her way of valuing the world. This methodology enables representing how language serves to express thoughts. Cognitivists believe that "language is an element of the human cognitive apparatus, which also includes the abilities to perceive and categorize, emotions, processes of abstraction and understanding. All these cognitive abilities cooperate with language and are influenced by it" (Tabakowska 2001, 11). According to the thesis that cognitivists representing different positions and orientations appear to adopt (cf. Szadura 2017, 106):

[Cognitivism comprises U.J.] […] many different approaches, methodologies and tenden-
cies that share common assumptions. The main one is the conviction that language is an in-
tegral part of human cognition and that any thorough analysis of linguistic phenomena sho-
uld be embedded in the context of knowledge on human cognitive abilities. That is why
cognitive linguistics sets itself the objective to provide an answer – within cognition – to qu-
estions about what it means to know language, how humans acquire it and how they use it
(Taylor 2002/2007, 4).

Unlike structuralism, cognitive semantics treats linguistic meaning in a spe-
cial way as "man's abilities to assign meaning to his/her experience" (Libura
2000, 20). Moreover, that which is especially significant from the standpoint of
organization of knowledge is the attribution a special role in thinking and under-
standing to **imagination** (my emphasis - U.J.) This is another important step in
the way of viewing human capabilities with regard to assigning meaning, under-
standing and organizing our experience. According to Mark Johnson (1987, 169)
there is no gap between reason and imagination but there is a continuum of cogni-
tive structure. "[…] Imagination is the 'ability' that enables the organization of
mental representations (ideas and perceptual data) into interconnected, coherent
and comprehensible wholes (Libura 2000, 22). Since imagination largely partici-
pates in the processes of understanding, it also participates in the act of creating
meanings. Viewing language as "**a broad symbolic continuum**" (emphasis by
K. Korżyk 1992, 36) and a presentation of meaning which takes account of all
human cognitive processes[15] and is highly subjective prompts one to use the as-
sumptions of cognitive semantics in logopedic studies, especially in the process of
assessing human cognitive skills (lexical, semantic and narrative skills), analysis
of lexis, the shape of conceptual structures in the human mind as well as the way
of constructing narrative utterances (Grabias 2019, 312-316).

Creative and Reproductive Use of Knowledge as Exemplified by Cognitive
Definitions

Research into the structure of concepts in children's mental vocabulary has
a long tradition[16]. The conceptualizations discussed in these studies[17] referred

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[15] For more on the main assumptions of cognitive semantics and on the belief that language is
an integral part of human cognition and that any thorough analysis of linguistic phenomena should
be embedded in the context of knowledge about human cognitive abilities, see the article by Urszu-
la Jęczeń (2018, 83-100).

[16] E.g.: Jean Piaget (1932), Krystyna Gąsiorek (1991), Maria Przetacznikowa (1994), Jan
Ożdżyński (ed.) (1995), Mirosław Michalik (2002, 17-27), Bernadeta Niesporek-Szamburska
(2004), Barbara Górecka-Mostowicz (2005), Barbara Boniecka (2010), Helena Borowiec (2014),
Alina Maciejewska (2015).

[17] Conceptualization is equivalent to meaning in cognitivism (cf. Nowakowska-Kempna
1993, 162).

mainly to children of preschool and early-school age, less often to junior and senior high school students.

The following analysis of the collected linguistic material will show possible connections, similarities and differences in the structure of concepts derived from the utterances of six teenagers (aged 15 to 18) diagnosed with a mild intellectual disability, with analogous studies carried out by Anita Plucińska (1995, 127–137) in the group of intellectually normal adolescents from the first and second grades of secondary school[18]. The goal of the analysis is to reconstruct the cognitive structure of the concept of "rain [*deszcz*]"[19].

Will the presented explications[20] show features typical of selected phenomena, or will there appear occasional judgments, confirmed individually; will these be only popular definitions based on commonsense knowledge, or scientific terms or poetic expressions resulting from the creative presentation of reality?

The whole of the cognitive description will encompass bundles of features grouped around characteristic subcategories (facets)[21], such as: superordinate category/essence of phenomenon; appearance; accompanying phenomena; usefulness/agentive actions; associations with mood.

– **Definition of rain in the utterances of adolescents diagnosed with an intellectual disability.**

Essence of the phenomenon/ superordinate category: *deszcz, pada deszcz*;

Appearance: *deszcz, kropla wody z nieba, deszcz to krople które spadają z nieba, jak krople co spadają z góry.*

Accompanying phenomena: *robi się ciemno i się łyska, jest pochmurno, kiedy chmura czarnieje, bierze się, od gór paruje woda, utwarza się chmura i pada deszcz po kilku godzinach czy chwilach i tyle, w lecie na wiośnie i na jesień i czasami w zimie, burze.*

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[18] Consequently, the two studied groups were of a similar biological age.

[19] The linguistic material was collected for an M.A. thesis. The author would like to thank Weronika Wacławskia for making it available to her.

[20] Defining and explicating can be treated as synonymous with describing, determining, and explaining because each of these terms could be used when one wants to expound the semantic content of some other concept (Boniecka 2001, 159).

[21] The basic component of a cognitive definition is the "judgment about an object" – reconstructed from the obtained linguistic material - which has a nature of a natural popular conceptualization. The mechanisms that "create conceptual variants" comprise "point of view", "perspective", "profiling", and "profile". (Bartmiński 1990, 109-127). An important role in this type of defining is played by such mechanisms as categorization and a combination of categories (aspects/facets/domains). The distinction and arrangement of facets reflect the semantic structure of a reconstructed concept.

Usefulness/agentive actions: *tak bo by było sucho bez deszczu, nie wiem, przynosi wodę, raczej potrzebny do tego żeby rzeki sobie pływały i ten tego robi-ły tam te te ee, tak bo jak jest sucho rośliny to nawilża glebę i rośliny rosną dalej, jest dla roślin dla warzyw dla owoców.*

Associations with mood: *nie wiem, z wodą, no że tam może polać to wtedy dzięki temu potoki i rzeki płyną w sumie ale czasami może przeszkodzić nam w planach kiedy na polu coś robimy; z płaczem; deszcz mi się kojarzy jak tak mocno wieje jest pochmurno a potem deszcz; smutek.*

The high school students diagnosed with an intellectual disability did not provide the superordinate category in the definition of "rain (*deszcz)*", which does not need to be an error because, Jerzy Bartmiński argues, unlike in the taxonomic definition, the categorization constituent is not obligatory in the cognitive definition. "A definition can be built without it" (Bartmiński 1988, 178); nevertheless, many scholars believe, it is the "genus" that determines the preliminary and further categorization of a phenomenon and thereby provides the interpretive perspective; consequently, when it appears in a definition, it facilitates the identification of the concept. In their utterances, the students focused attention on such elements as structure, e.g.: *krople wody, krople spadające z nieba*, the dominant colors during the rain e.g: *jest ciemno, łyska się* (a dialectal utterance/neologism), *jest pochmurno.*

Children of older school age have very limited associations with rain; they associate rain with for example 'crying' [*płacz*], 'water' [*woda*]. These students recognize the usefulness of the phenomenon, emphasizing that rain: *nawilża glebę, dostarcza wodę do rzek* as well as *jest potrzebny dla roślin i warzyw.* This knowledge may come from everyday experiences or result from the teaching process, which is evidenced by the verbs *nawilża, dostarcza* used in the expressions. Students "don't like rain", naming such reasons as: *ból głowy, przymus niewychodzenia z domu podczas deszczu oraz zakaz kąpieli w rzece.* How limited are their associations connected with rain, based on stereotyped thinking[22] arisen from sensory stimuli: *ciemno, łyska się, pochmurno, od gór paruje woda.* Colloquial expressions appear in the utterances: *no że tam może polać, żeby rzeki sobie pływały i ten tego robiły, woda musi aż tak popłynąć, przyjdzie ta nowa woda.* There are also syntactic errors, e.g. in the category of the time of appearance: *w lecie na wiośnie i na jesień i czasami w zimie.*

– Definition of rain in the utterances of intellectually normal adolescents
Essence of the phenomenon/superordinate category: *zjawisko, pogodowe/ przyrodnicze/at-mosferyczne, zjawisko fizyczne występujące w górnych partiach*

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[22] A "stereotype" is sometimes regarded as the minimal semantic knowledge of an average interlocutor (on the subject, see Chlewiński 1999, 89).

atmosfery[23]; the author also recorded such terms as: *deszczyk, kapuśniaczek, ule-wa, deszcz zenitalny, kwaśne deszcze.*

Appearance: *krople* [drops] (the word was usually complemented by an appropriate epithet, which give the expression a poetic effect) *srebrne, przeźroczyste, jasne, kryształo-we, drobne, liczne, jak stworki z bajek;* in other utterances "rain" is conceptualized as: *kuleczki, łzy, łzy nieba, strugi, smugi.*

Accompanying phenomena: *tęcza, burza, błoto, powódź, ciemność, wezbrane rzeki, zalane ulice.*

Usefulness/agentive actions: *deszcz pobudza do życia, ożywia, powodu-je wzrost; deszcz daje życie roślinom, spulchnia ziemię, deszcz to początek życia; deszcz zmywa z nas wszystkie troski.*

Associations with mood: *deszcz przynosi radość; deszcz pomaga mi odnaleźć nadzieję;* however, A. Plucińska writes, "in most studies, the prevailing circle of associations was that connected with the archetype of melancholy and hopelessness" (Plucińska 1995, 131), which is demonstrated by the selected examples: *smutek, tęsknota, cierpienie, szarość, pustka, samotność, nuda, senność, deszcz kojarzy mi się ze łzami, mnóstwem łez; kiedy pada mogę marzyć.*

In the definitions given by high school students, interpretive subjectivism and the originality of associations dominate, while responses are constructed based on intersubjective knowledge and conventionalized linguistic facts, which are characteristic "building blocks of cognition" (after: Rumelhart 2007, 431-455), without which creative linguistic activity is impossible (Filar 2016, 52). Conceptualizations of "rain" are elaborated, enriched with the superordinate genus: *zjawisko* [phenomenon], in the utterances there were also scientific terms: *opad atmosferyczny* [precipitation] or *zjawisko pogodowe* [weather phenomenon]. The students' definitions contain expressions referring to the intensity of rainfall: *deszczyk, kapuśniaczek, ulewa.* The utterances contained highly interesting poetic devices, even metaphorical expressions, such as: *deszcz to łzy nieba, kropelki są jak jakieś stworki z bajek.* Each definition was full of expressions associated with mood and emotions evoked by rain, e.g. *deszcz przynosi radość, deszcz kojarzy mi się z mnóstwem łez, przynosi nadzieję.*

CONCLUSION

Despite the similar age [of the subjects], the produced definitions of "rain" are entirely different. This is what S. Szuman wrote about the vocabulary development in children:

"Differences in the development of lexicon of individual children are determined by differences in the environment they live in and are brought up in,

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[23] The expressions come from the article by Anita Plucińska (1995, 127-137).

and by each child's individual ability to reflect reality (1968, 28). Family and the environment have a highly significant impact on the development of cognitive and linguistic abilities in children and adolescents. Building a cognitive definition is based on the knowledge accumulated in the mind, and on experiences: individual, social and cultural. This knowledge, stored as cognitive schemas or scripts (depending on the methodology of description) is not ''closed' but flexible and dynamic. The human mind can analyze, process and use it depending on needs.

The determinants of the psychosocial development of children with a mild intellectual disability are not favorable. They have a worse start in life, usually a lower social status, while parents often show little interest in the development of their children and in satisfying their needs (cf. Wąto-rek 2014; Kaczorowska-Bray 2017). These adverse upbringing factors combined with the delayed acquisition of linguistic competence have an impact of the children's active attitude to language combined with the lack of ability to produce elaborated but also original linguistic constructions. Intellectually disabled persons do not have creative abilities in language nor are they able to think metaphorically[24]. This is largely connected with the functioning of the memory of intellectually disabled persons, with recalling visual images that are conducive to remembering words[25], and, consequently, to building longer utterances, including definitions. Most scholars assume that intellectually disabled persons are characterized by a cognitive deficit concerning attention, the impairment of the basic elements of the memory system, especially the coding and storing of data, and thinking and perception disorders[26]. They have problems with abstract thinking, therefore they cannot create abstractions and generalize.

The ability to define also results from education and social maturity. Therefore the answer to the question: "what are children and adult language users thinking (when they use a specific word)?" contributes a lot of crucial information on a person's cognitive and linguistic functioning. It allows assessing the content of the lexicon, "provides an insight into the internal structure of a concept, taking into account its relations to other concepts" (Hrycyna, 2017, 80), thereby enabling the complete and methodical programming of logopedic therapy (ibid).

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[24] Metaphors, according to the conception of Lakoff and Johnson (1980, Polish edition 1988), first of all express human thinking activity and only then – secondarily as it were – they are expressed in language.

[25] Studies by Allan Pavia (1986).

[26] For more on the subject, see the studies by e.g. : Irena Obuchowska (2005), Zbigniew Tarkowski (2005), Alicja Rakowska (2003), Stanisław Siwek (2007).

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