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## Geographical Names in the Linguistic Awareness of the Intellectually Disabled Person. A Case Study

### SUMMARY

The article presents the linguistic capacities in defining geographical names of the moderately intellectually disabled male. The principal objective was to reconstruct, based on the subject's utterances, the concepts like desert (*pustynia*), ocean (*ocean*), mountains (*góry*), country/village (*wieś*) and town (*miasto*), which assumed the form of cognitive definitions. In view of the fact that the subject used commonsense knowledge and utilized colloquial language, we tried to show that the resultant explications of meanings are the outcome of "good" and "expanded" categorization constructed on the basis of "linguicized experiences".

**Key words:** cognitive definition, seasons of the year, intellectual disability, categorization

"The human mind is essentially  
linguicized human experience".  
S. Grabias (2012, 26)

### INTRODUCTION

The statement by S. Grabias (2012, 26), which is the motto of the present article, emphasizes the great role of language in the objectification of reality, in filtering sensory stimuli reaching the brain, and in the encapsulation of individual experience. According to Grabias, "the cognitive role of language in describing speech disorders is becoming of paramount importance. It manifests itself in the question: how does a person, who cannot for some reasons learn his/her ethnic language or can use it only in some dimension, interpret him/herself

and the world?” (2012, 26). The theoretical stance which ascribes an active role to language in the process of perceiving reality will define the course of further discussion in the present article, relating to the linguistic and cognitive capacities of an adult male with moderate intellectual disability.

The article will use concepts of cognitive linguistics and will represent the position according to which language influences the image of reality, the image depending on the previously adopted conceptual apparatus, by means of which our experiences are copied. We will begin by referring to one of the most important stances ascribing to language an extremely creative role in knowing the world: from the J.G. Herder’s belief to the “linguistic picture of the world”.

According to the German philosopher, language is a form of thinking because language contains the knowledge that is the experience of many generations, “(...) we learn to think with words, it is language that determines the limits and outline of all human cognition” (Schaff 1964, 15). Herder’s views were continued by W. von Humboldt, who believed that we perceive the world subjectively but the subjectivism “manifests itself in the language of the whole nation” (Grabias 1997, 42). Language – in von Humboldt’s view – is “a factor that transforms the world into the mental, cognitive, objectively existing representation of the material world” (Anusiewicz 1994, 25). The worldview contained in language is continually transformed, the source of the changes being the subjectivity of personal observations. The Herder–von Humboldt conception was adopted and developed by the proponents of the “word-field theory”, and first of all by the trend represented by J. Trier and L. Weisgerber. Trier’s best-known statement on the role of language in creating the reality said:

We throw a net of words over that of which we have only a dark and complex inkling so that we could order and contain it in fixed concepts. The formation of concept by means of words is a structuring process of explaining from the position of the *whole*. Language *does not reflect* real being but *creates* intellectual symbols. (after Schaff 1964, 18)

Also, according to American ethnolinguists E. Sapir (1951) and B. Whorf (1957), language orders reality in human minds and imposes on individuals the ways of interpreting this reality because the received “kaleidoscope flux of impressions (...) has to be organized by our minds – and this means largely by the linguistic systems of our minds”<sup>1</sup> (Whorf 1957, 213).

B. Bernstein, a language sociologist, combined in his considerations the views of von Humboldt, the Sapir–Whorf thesis, and the knowledge on the struc-

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<sup>1</sup> More rigorous opinions on the role of language in creating reality can be found in the views of Polish logician K. Ajdukiewicz (1960) and in the so-called general semantics of A. Korzybski (1958).

ture of society, which generates separate language codes, and he thereby created the theory of elaborated and restricted language codes (1980). From our point of view, this theory is fairly important because some studies on the language of intellectually disabled adults show that the “set of features” distinguished by Bernstein for the restricted language code can be found in the behaviors of these persons.

A number of propositions found in literature and defining how mentally disabled persons speak/use language, echo the properties attributed to/distinguished for the restricted variant of speaking in Bernstein’s sociolinguistic theory. Therefore, the analysis of language behaviors, “typical” of mentally disabled patients in the context of sociolinguistic inspiration, gains a new view constructed by other meanings. It turns out that the thus seen way of communication and conversation appears as observed not only among the majority of the subjects in the studied group of intellectually disabled patients because, while we try to see in it (the way) the properties/manifestations of the restricted code, it should be concluded that it is a speaking variant that is characteristic also of different circles of persons without disabilities. (Krzemińska 2012, 224)

Those functioning on the concrete level depend in their behaviors on the observation field (specific information) unlike the persons characterized by an abstract attitude. The concrete/specific system is characterized by “vertical” search for information, outside the brain’s cognitive structures, through exploring the environment in order to supply new information from outside. Persons whose thinking has the hallmarks of concreteness repeatedly include the situational contexts into their utterances, interjecting the words and remarks concerning the environment in which the conversation is taking place. To them, a case of cognitive dissonance is each disruption of a characteristic stereotype – “an island of stability” in the changing world, a stereotype produced in the course of personal experience. “As s/he acquires greater experience, a concrete person becomes connected with it more and more closely, which increasingly diminishes his/her chances of striving for new life solutions” (Obuchowski 1970, 133).

Consequently, persons functioning on the concrete level are unable to interpret the phenomena of the surrounding world by means of concepts representing certain properties in common because the “hierarchical system is associated with language in the strict sense” (Obuchowski 1970, 134). A person who functions on the hierarchical (abstract) level is oriented towards developing and transmitting knowledge, as well as creating “the model” of the world through categorization of phenomena. The emergent “model” of the world reflects not only personal experience but “the whole of appropriately hierarchized, verbally expressed experience containing the historical experience of humankind, categorized by meanings” (Obuchowski 1970, 135).

The linguistic functioning of intellectually disabled individuals is perceived in literature in a dual way. On the basis of studies by such authors as, *inter alia*, H. Borzyszkowska (1985), M. Piszczek (1995), or J. Lausch-Żuk (1997) we know that in the population of persons with deeper intellectual disability there are serious retardations, disorders impeding speech and communication development in general. Other researchers argue that these persons, despite retarded speech development and concomitant speech defects, are able to communicate effectively with the people around them and produce texts appropriate for the situation. Intellectual disability is then perceived in many dimensions, in the context of considerations on the social functioning of humans in general (cf. *inter alia*: Kościelska 1995; Gustavsson, Zakrzewska-Manterys 1997; Krause 2005; Krzemińska 2012).

The literature on the functioning of individuals with moderate intellectual disability says that most of them acquire communication abilities in early childhood. With regard to school abilities, they are able to achieve the level of the second form of elementary school (Bobkowicz-Lewartowska 2011, 47). Some of them learn reading and writing skills to a limited extent and simple language communication (Ossowski 2012, 21). They have difficulties understanding social rules, which can adversely affect their contacts with peers. In adult life, most of them are able to perform uncomplicated work that does not require special qualifications (Bobkowicz-Lewartowska 2011, 48). They are able to execute simple orders based on instructions (Ossowski 2012, 21).

The perception skill in those persons is limited. They perceive primarily concrete features, failing to distinguish between substantial and unsubstantial ones. Their dominant attention is involuntary, while they have difficulties focusing free attention. They find it easier to focus attention while performing simple, mechanical actions. In intellectually disabled persons the ability to remember is substantially limited, which has an effect on the slow pace of learning. Their dominant thinking is perceptual, the conceptual-verbal thinking being poorly developed. They have observable problems with producing concepts. "These persons define well-known simple concepts by describing the object or the material of which the object is made, the manner of use or sometimes the superior genus and specific difference" (Kaczorowska-Bray 2012, 44). They also have difficulties with cause-and-effect reasoning. At the age of 15, these individuals achieve the age of intelligence equal to 7–8 years of age (Bogdanowicz 1985).

## RESEARCH PROBLEMS

The concept of the linguistic picture of the world appeared in the studies by Polish linguists in the nineteen-eighties as "the interpretation of reality contained in the language, which can be presented as a set of judgments about the world"

(Bartmiński 1999, 103–120). In the linguistic picture of the world pertaining to geographical names, an interesting phenomenon will be the process itself of arriving at this picture, the interpretation of reality resulting from the linguistic and cognitive capacities of the tested man, which are definitely poor. When studying the literature assessing the functioning of mentally disabled persons, we find the opinions like: limited ability of abstract thinking, concreteness of utterances, limited imagination, lack of curiosity and mental passivity, as well as scanty lexicon, frequent digressions and difficulties in expressing thoughts. We think, however, that as a result of the acquired experiences, the subjective interpretation of the world and education, the studied man developed his conceptual system, and the semantic interpretations of the collected words will be appropriate.

In the analysis of the collected material, an important position is occupied by the “cognitive definition”<sup>2</sup> – a result of the subjective conceptualization of the “differently modeled” object in the language of the mentally disabled person<sup>3</sup>. We expect somewhat more limited conceptualizations (as far as specific aspects are concerned), which will, as a result, make up a comprehensive picture of the concepts being defined. Following the analysis of the collected utterances by the studied man, based on the reconstruction of the cognitive structure of a concept, it will be possible to show the cognitive content consolidated in the subject’s language (Niesporek-Szamburska 2004, 15). The content will be largely decided by the subjective point of view resulting from popular knowledge (although the subject is an efficient language user who can read and write). The knowledge stored in the mind of the subject will influence “the content of words and whole utterances, also determining the ordering of the world, distinction of typical categories, distinction of the prototype (as the best copy of a category) as well as facets as homogenous sets of features ascribed to an object in the explication, and it will decide about evaluation”<sup>4</sup>.

Meaning in the cognitive interpretation comes down to the description of “conceptual structures” contained in the human mind (Wiśniewska-Kin 2007, 33). The interpretation of reality included in the meaning presents a certain way of see-

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<sup>2</sup> The most important features of the definition are: the requirement of content adequacy or the adjustment of the definition content to popular knowledge; the requirement of structural adequacy – the definition seeks to reproduce such relations between its constituents as has been established by the collective awareness of language users; the categorization constituent is not obligatory (Bartmiński 2006).

<sup>3</sup> M. Michalik (2001, 17–27) studied the abilities of intellectually disabled pupils in producing the linguistic-cultural definitions of the four elements: earth (*ziemia*), water (*woda*), fire (*ogień*), and air (*powietrze*). The studies showed that in their utterances, the pupils usually used peripheral rather than prototypic elements of meaning.

<sup>4</sup> U. Jęczeń discussed the subject of the ability to build a cognitive definition in the articles: “*Marzenia*” i “*niepełnosprawność*” w świadomości językowej mężczyzny upośledzonego umysłowo. *Perspektywa kognitywna* (2016, 607–611).

ing a specific fragment of reality, it is realized “within a certain cognitive model” in which a significant role is played by the “subjective point of view” (Bartmiński 1999, 105), categorization<sup>5</sup>, prototype<sup>6</sup>, stereotyped thinking<sup>7</sup>, and evaluation.

We have applied the above concept of meaning to the analysis of the utterances of an adult with intellectual disability. In the article, we will try to present how meaning is given to concepts, what is the internal semantic structure and “hierarchy of semantic features within the definition of a concept created by a person” (Wiśniewska-Kin 2007, 34). When presenting the research material, we intend to prove that some adults with intellectual disability have greater language and cognitive abilities than can be inferred from some opinions presented in the discussion.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

The collected language material comes from a 27-year-old man with a certified moderate degree of intellectual disability. The man finished junior high school in 2007, and since 2013 he has attended the Occupational Therapy Workshops, travels by bus to daily classes by himself and returns home by himself after classes. He works in a group doing handicrafts.

The subject lives with his parents. He can read and write in large letters. In his free time, he watches TV and reads books. He likes travelling very much.

The presented research results are a segment of the fundamental research on the linguistic way of presenting geographical names, such as: river (*rzeka*), desert (*pustynia*), island (*wyspa*), ocean (*ocean*), mountains (*góry*), sea (*morze*), lake (*jezioro*), village/countryside (*wieś*), town (*miasto*) and park (*park*) as presented

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<sup>5</sup> Categories emerge as a result of the process of formation of concepts, the categorization process is subjective; its foundations should be sought in “the sense experience, i.e. in perception processes because this experience precedes and determines the development of conceptual structures” (Tabakowska 1995, 40). “For human beings, categorization is primarily a means of comprehending the world (...) Categorization is a natural way of identifying a kind of object or experience by highlighting certain properties, downplaying others, and hiding still others” (Lakoff, Johnson 1988, 150 and 190–191), similarly on the subject R. Langacker (1995).

<sup>6</sup> According to the theory proposed by E. Rosch “we categorize things in terms of prototypes” (Rosch 1975a, 192–233; 1975b: 303–322; 1978), a prototype is the best specimen in a category.

<sup>7</sup> Representatives of cognitive linguistics pointed out yet another important aspect of thinking, according to which, in the consciousness of language users, not only the image of a typical specimen (prototype) is established, but also its assessment, the so-called “emotional component of the meaning of a word” (Wiśniewska-Kin 2007, 42) – a stereotype. The authors of the article adopt the understanding of stereotype after J. Bartmiński and J. Panasiuk, who claim that stereotype is “a set of judgments associated with a given concept, established in language” (Bartmiński, Panasiuk 1993, 375), it is connected with evaluation, which is also an important component of cognitive definition and the subjectification of meaning.

by the subject. The starting point here is the analysis of specific utterances obtained during an individual interview with the subject.

Based on the obtained material, the characteristics of five concepts were distinguished. As has been established before, to describe the meaning of such words as *desert*, *ocean*, *mountains*, *countryside*, and *town*, the model of cognitive definition as interpreted by Bartmiński was adopted. It is a type of open definition, it points to the features that are more and less fixed in language, even individual, occasional and poetic uses. The structure of the cognitive definition is characterized by a categorial, facet-based ordering of definitional sentences. Questions about the meaning of particular words appeared in conversations, during which the researcher tried to limit his utterance, and asked questions in such a way that the subject would continue his utterance. In addition to the basic questions, such as “What is/are a desert/ocean/mountains/village/town?” [*Co to jest pustynia/ocean/góry/wieś/miasto?*], auxiliary/additional questions were used in order to extract from the mental lexicon of the tested man the information relating to the evaluation of the defined phenomena, as well as prototypical or stereotyped terms and associations. The following questions appeared in the conversation (we will illustrate them using the example of the term *pustynia*/desert).

*Co to jest pustynia?* [What is a desert?]

*Jak wygląda pustynia?* [What does a desert look like?]

*Czy znasz jakieś pustynie? Czy potrafisz podać ich nazwy?* [Do you know any deserts? Can you give their names?]

*Z czym Ci się kojarzy słowo “wyspa”?* [What do you associate the word “island” with?]

We were guided by the idea remembered from L. Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations* [Polish translation 1972] concerning the term “language-game”. The “term ‘language-game’ is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity”. In order to understand any utterance, the **context** is necessary. This is how we understand getting at the meaning of a word – by using it. Only in a conversation/dialogue, owing to the all-embracing context, we can learn the meaning of a word. This approach reconciles pragmatic and semantic rules. It is not an approach contrary to Wittgenstein’s injunction: “**do not ask** what the meaning of a word is; ask what its use is” because each use has its user, and each user consciously emphasizes the subjective point of view, which, owing to the context, renders the way of how the speaker views the world.

The semantic explications of desert (*pustynia*) were constructed based on three categories (facets). Firstly, “desert” is defined by the superior category (*genus proximum*) as *the place where there is a lot sand / miejsce, gdzie jest dużo piachu*. The category that we called characteristic features was filled with such

statements as: *nie ma tam roślin / there are no plants there; mogą tam często rosnąć kaktusy / cactuses can often grow there* (flora); *może tam występować burza piaskowa / there can be sandstorms there* (atmospheric phenomena); *mogą być wybudowane na niej piramidy / pyramids can be built in it* (ancient buildings); *jest tam gorąco; upalnie / it is (scorching) hot there; nie ma tam wody / there is no water there; wyschły wszystkie studnie / all wells have dried up* (atmospheric conditions); *na pustyni można jeździć wielbłądem / you can ride a camel in the desert, maszerować na piechotę / walk on foot* (the way of travelling across the desert). The last questions concerning associations (category: associations) with the tested word activated the following cognitive path: *Pustynia kojarzy mi się z / I associate a desert with: piaskiem/sand, upałem/heat, zmęczeniem/tiredness, trudem i podróżą na wielbłądzie / hardships and travelling on a camel, or dźwiganiem ciężkich toreb / carrying heavy bags*. The questions about associations were deliberately asked because association is an important and difficult mental process with which intellectually disabled persons have great problems. Association (Latin *accociatio*) is the process of combining at least two mental phenomena so that the appearance of one caused a tendency for the others to occur. The phenomenon of the emergence of associations had already been pointed out by Plato in the antiquity. Aristotle, on the other hand, formulated the laws of association, dependent on the existing conditions: contact in time and space, similarity, contrast, and causality<sup>8</sup>. In *Słownik języka polskiego* [The Dictionary of Polish] by L. Drabik, A. Kubiak-Sokół and E. Sobol (2016), the concept is explained as: “a combination of impressions, ideas and other mental phenomena in such a way that the appearance of some in one’s consciousness will make one aware of the others”.

The subject rightly associated “desert” with sand/heat/tiredness, as well as with a camel. In the interview, he gave the proper names of two well-known deserts: *Sahara* and *Gobi*, stressing that *Sahara is the largest desert / Sahara jest największą pustynią*.

*Słownik języka polskiego* (SJP) [The Dictionary of Polish] ed. by W. Doroszewski gives the following definition of *pustynia* (“desert”): “A large area entirely devoid of vegetation or sparsely covered (with perennials, low shrubs or short-lived herbs) because of lack of water (annual precipitation below 25mm)” (SJP 1965, 743, vol. VII).

“Desert” (a cognitive definition) as presented by the subject:

A desert is a place where there is a lot of sand. There are no plants in it. Cactuses can sometimes grow there. There can be sandstorms in the desert. Pyramids can be built in it. It is scorching hot there. There is no water in it. All wells have dried up. The largest desert is Sahara. Gobi is also a desert. You can ride a camel in the desert or walk on foot.

<sup>8</sup> [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asocjacja\\_\(psychologia\)](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asocjacja_(psychologia)). The issue of association was studied in Poland by J. Konorski. He devoted a fragment of his book to the problem: *Integracyjna działalność mózgu*, Warszawa 1969.



The assumption of a cognitive definition is to adopt the interpretation perspective adequate for the language user's competence and to refer to his/her popular (commonsense) knowledge. The subject (adult male) pointed out the most important semantic aspects of desert, referring to far more information than in a lexicographic definition.

Ocean, in the consciousness of the studied man, is a *place where there is a lot of water / miejscem, gdzie jest dużo wody*. The category of characteristic features (properties) with subcategories was described as follows: *it is deep / jest głęboki; it is larger than seas and rivers / jest większy niż morza i rzeki* (size); *ships with sailors sail on it / pływają po nim statki, na których są marynarze; you can net fish in it / można łowić w nim ryby przy użyciu sieci* (usefulness); *whales live in it / żyją w nim wieloryby; sharks swim in it, which have sharp teeth and catch their prey / pływają w nim rekiny, które mają ostre zęby i łapią swoje ofiary* (inhabitants – animals); *the ocean is made up by rivers and seas / ocean tworzą rzeki i morza*. Ocean produced the following associations in the subject's awareness: a lot of water; ships which sail on it; in the ships there are sailors and captains. In the case of this concept, associations are rather limited, produced only by contact in space. In the subject's mind, no mental processes occurred that would elicit emotions or attitudes connected with the word "ocean", e.g. fear or admiration. In his utterance, there were no adjectives defining the size and vastness of the ocean, its power, force, majesty and beauty, at the same time.

Doroszewski gives the following definition of "ocean": "A vast, unbroken expanse of salt water, which occupies almost three quarters of the globe, and surrounding lands on all sides; (e.g. the Atlantic Ocean, Pacific, etc.)" (SJP 1963, 599, vol. V).

"Ocean" in the consciousness of the subject (adult male):

Ocean is a place in which there is a lot of water. It is deep, larger than a river and sea. Ships with sailors sail on it. You can net fish in it. Whales live in the ocean. Sharks swim there, which have sharp teeth and catch their prey. There is the Atlantic Ocean. Ocean is made up by seas and rivers.

The exemplification material used to distinguish the definition of "ocean" is appropriate but it seems incomplete. There was no information about the fact that ocean is filled with salt water. The subject stressed such features of the ocean as: size – it is deep, larger than a river and sea; there is a lot of water; animals that live in it – whales, sharks; usefulness – ships sail on it; you can net fish in it; he also named one ocean, giving its proper name – the Atlantic Ocean. The definition was constructed based on popular rather than scientific knowledge, which is why we can conclude that it is "a good definition". Referring to T. Rittel's words (1995, 81) "a component of a good (in cognitivist terms) definition of an object or con-

cept is the most banal categorization, which is maximally close to the experience, feelings and intuitions of a common man”.

Mountains/*góry*, in the subject's consciousness, are interpreted as *high peaks/wysokie szczyty*. The semantic category defined as characteristic features is filled with such expressions as: *high/wysokie, steep/strome, there can be snow on their tops / na ich szczytach może leżeć śnieg* (drawing attention to the appearance of the mountains); *it is cold in the mountains / w górach jest zimno, the higher we go, the colder it is / im wyżej idziemy, tym jest zimniej* (thermal expressions); *it can be slippery there / może tam być ślisko, you have to be careful / trzeba tam uważać and wear special shoes with crampons while climbing / podczas wspinaczki nosić specjalne buty z kolcami* (the need to keep safe in the mountains). When trying to reconstruct the cognitive definition we also find in the collected language material the category like “the way of spending time in the mountains”. According to the 27-year-old man, in the mountains we can: *rest, walk, travel by a cableway, go skiing, watch ski-jumping (odpoczywać, spacerować, jeździć kolejką, jeździć na nartach, oglądać skoki narciarskie)*. This place is associated with: *a high summit atop which I stand and watch houses and trees from above / wysokim szczytem, na którym staję i oglądam z góry domy i drzewa*; with *a high ski-jump where there are contests / z wysoką skocznią narciarską, na której są zawody*; with *snow and a risk of avalanche / ze śniegiem i zagrożeniem lawinowym*.

Doroszewski explains the meaning of the lexeme “mountain”/*góra* as follows: “In scientific terms: a prominence of the earth's crust, at least 300 meters high above sea level, of complex structure due to orogenic or volcanic activity; in non-scientific sense: any higher elevation of the terrain, standing out against environment situated below ” (SJP 1965, 1257, vol. II).

The cognitive definition provided by the subject:

Mountains are high peaks. They are high and steep. There can be snow lying on the tops. It is cold in the mountains. The higher we go, the colder it is. It can be slippery in the mountains. You have to be careful and wear special shoes with crampons while climbing. The Tatras, Beskids, Himalayas are mountains. In the mountains you can rest, walk, travel by a cableway, go skiing, and watch ski-jumping.

The foregoing definitions differ very much from each other. The first, lexicographic one, is a scientific definition; the other, a cognitive definition, is based on commonsense knowledge, observation of the surrounding world, personal experience (trips to the mountains) and knowledge from school, from books (the proper names provided). Only one feature of the mountains – we will recognize it as prototypic – was repeated in the subject's definition: “a higher terrain elevation” in the dictionary definition, and the *high peaks / wysokie szczyty are high and steep / są wysokie i strome* – this is how the feature of height was verbalized in

the subject's definition. The reference here to Z. Muszyński's thesis, according to which "semantics as a science of the meaning of words is a discipline that investigates the »**subjective mental states, personal representations of the world**«" (Muszyński 1996, 30; authors' emphasis) proves that cognitive definitions constructed with reference to personal cognitive and linguistic capacities of language users are "the linguistic illustration of the functioning of concepts (...) in cultural space" (Michalik 2001, 5). The foregoing definition of "mountains" does not appear to differ significantly from the functioning of the lexeme in the language awareness of average language users.

While defining the lexeme "countryside/village"/*wieś*, the subject filled the following semantic categories: the superior category – *the place where many farmers live/miejsce, gdzie żyje wielu rolników*; characteristic features (properties) with subcategories – *it is outside town/znajduje się poza miastem, there are many fields, grasses, and forests there/jest tam dużo pól, traw i lasów* (location); *there are a lot of hectares of land cultivated by farmers/jest tam dużo hektarów ziemi, którą uprawiają rolnicy*; *there are houses there, next to which there are barns and cellars for storing grain and vegetables/są tam domy, przy których znajdują się stodoły i piwnice do przechowywania zboża i warzyw* (usefulness); *the air is cleaner than in town/powietrze jest tam czystsze niż w mieście*; *the water is clean there, you can take it straight from the well / woda jest tam czysta, można ją brać prosto ze studni* (virtue and advantages of living in the country). The characteristics of the countryside named by the subject also include the following categories: country animals – *cows, horses, hens, swine and dogs live in the country / na wsi mieszkają krowy, konie, kury, świnie i psy*, as well as the activities performed by people living in the country – *farmers work on land / rolnicy pracują na roli, they harvest corn / ścinają oni zboże, they do haymaking / robią sianokosy, they go on a tractor or in a horse-drawn cart / jeżdżą traktorem lub koniem z wozem, they also plant vegetables and fruits, which they later gather / sadzą również warzywa i owoce, które później zbierają*. The cognitive process defined as *association* activated the following images in the man's mind: *silence/cisza*; *farmers who work hard on land to earn money for a living / rolnicy, którzy ciężko pracują na roli, aby zarobić pieniądze na życie*; *forests/lasy*; *fields/pola*.

The definition of the "countryside" is more elaborate than the previous definitions. It appears that the collected linguistic material can be classified as a type of "expanded categorization", which can be found in the cognitive description beside good and complete categorization. According to Rittel (1995, 81),

a component of the expanded definition (...) is the interpretive perspective that can show a profound, internal relationship between language and the culture of the community that uses this language. Consequently, the concept of "good definition" needs to be expanded to-

wards adjusting its content not only to popular knowledge but also to sociolinguistically and culturally determined meanings, and to the speaker's individual use, i.e. the subjective interpretation of the world.

The lexicographic definition is very specific and succinct: “an agricultural settlement” (SJP 1967, 1078, vol. IX).

The concept of the typical “countryside”/*wieś* reconstructed based on the subject's utterances has the following form:

The countryside is outside town, there are a lot of grass, fields and forests there. All around there is land cultivated by farmers. There are houses, next to which there are barns and cellars for storing grain and vegetables. The air is cleaner than in town, and the water is clean, you can drink it straight from the well. In the country, various animals live: cows, hens, swine, and dogs. Farmers work on land in the country. They harvest corn and cut grass (haymaking). They go by tractor or in horse-drawn cart. They plant different vegetables and fruits. The countryside is associated with silence, forests, and fields.

The sentences defining “town”/*miasto* are grouped into the following categories (facets), which name the almost homogeneous characteristics attributed to the object in the explication: characteristic features – *there are many different buildings there / jest tam wiele różnych budynków, there are many streets in which there are plenty of cars / jest tam dużo ulic, na których znajduje się pełno samochodów; there are a lot of parking lots, where a car can be left / jest tam wiele parkingów, na których można zostawić samochód; there are a lot of schools where you can learn / jest tam wiele szkół, w których można się uczyć; there are also hospitals and churches there / są tam też szpitale i kościoły; there are also parks, in which you can go walking or sit on a bench and rest / są tam parki, po których można spacerować albo usiąść na ławce i odpocząć (spatial development); in town more people live than in the country / w mieście mieszka więcej ludzi niż na wsi; people in town get up in the morning and go to work / ludzie w mieście wstają rano i idą do pracy (population); you can walk in town and visit various places / po mieście można pochodzić i pozwiedzać różne miejsca; you can go to the cinema and theater or to different festivals / można tam chodzić do kina i do teatru albo na różne festiwale (the way of spending free time); in town you can go by car, by hired bicycle, by bus or trolleybus if you have a ticket / po mieście można jeździć samochodem, wypożyczonym rowerem, autobusem lub trolejbusem, gdy ma się kupiony bilet (means of transport). Associations – *with my home, in which I live / z moim domem, w którym mieszkam; with Lublin / z Lublinem; with the cars going around town / z jeżdzącymi po mieście samochodami; with noise / z hałasem, with the Old Town, in which you can go walking / ze Starym Miastem, po którym można spacerować.**

The dictionary definition of the lexeme “town”/*miasto* is as follows: “A built-up area in a planned way, densely populated, subordinate to a separate administration; a commercial, industrial and cultural center” (SJP 1963, 618, vol. IV).

The foregoing empirical material shows a more expanded description. The content that is repeated in both definition pertains to: “population density” – “densely populated” (SJP) and *in town more people live than in the country* in the subject’s utterances; as well as to the fact that “town” is seen as “a commercial, industrial and cultural center” (SJP) – this feature was described in the exemplification by enumeration, emphasizing the feature “a lot of” public facilities, such as streets, schools, hospitals, churches, buildings, parking lots. Moreover, the subject gives the proper names of Polish towns as examples: *Lublin* (his home town), *Warszawa*, *Kraków*, *Częstochowa*, and *Gdańsk*.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the introduction, we emphasized that intellectually disabled persons use the restricted code in their utterances. The functioning at this level manifests itself *inter alia* in: inconsistency of observations, a tendency to perseveration, inability to hierarchize phenomena and make generalizations. The picture of the world as seen by persons functioning at the concrete level of information organization is one-sided; this means that these persons usually confine themselves to describing their own experiences. Admittedly, definitions of geographical names are constructed in colloquial language, in which concrete words predominate. The interlocutor (the subject) used popular, commonsense knowledge, while the main tool serving to categorize phenomena is the personal point of view. But, according to literature, the categorization process is subjective, and its foundations should be sought in the sense experience of a particular language user (Tabakowska 1995, 40). And “linguicized human experience” determines man’s mental capabilities, which in the case of our interviewee are good enough and do not seem to fundamentally differ from the capacities of an average language user because the presented definitions can be recognized as “good” (according to the terms proposed by Rittel 1995, 66–86), in the case of our tests these are the definitions of the concepts of desert/*pustynia*, ocean/*ocean*, mountains/*góry*, and as “expanded ones” – town/*miasto* and countryside/*wieś*. The subject did not construct a “complete” or “elaborated/developed” definition, “which would contain all constituents of a semantic category, embracing a prototype consisting of typical features (...), and connotations expressed by evaluations and associations” (Rittel 1995, 82). Although in some definitions there were directly expressed evaluative connotations, e.g.: *It is scorching hot there* (desert), *it is cold in the mountains; the air is cleaner*

than in town (countryside); farmers work hard; more people live in town than in the country, we did not report any metaphorical uses or “cultural patterns” like “Promethean fire”. We observed that the subject’s line of thinking assumes the characteristics of stereotypical thinking, e.g.: *There is a lot of sand in the desert; ocean is deep; mountains are high; cows, hens and swine live in the country; there are many streets in town.*

We have chosen the cognitive method to analyze the material because it enables the analysis of that which is important to man, that which is established in his/her language, supported by observations, perceptual sensations and mental reflection within the abilities of a specific language user. That is why this methodology can be also applied to studying persons with intellectual disabilities.

The article is about the functioning of an adult with intellectual disability. Literature on the subject presents difficulties that such persons experience in expressing their thoughts and understanding other people. The collected material shows that “difficulties in expressing one’s thoughts do not necessarily affect”<sup>9</sup> Łukasz, our subject. We can only surmise that the characterized person is “someone exceptional”. “In any community there are creative, unusual people, and there are also those called »ordinary, average«” (Krzemińska 2012, 15).

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<sup>9</sup> Similar conclusions were arrived at by D. Krzemińska in her studies presented in the book: *Język i dyskurs codzienny osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną*, 2012.

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