

## I. RESEARCH ARTICLES

DOI: 10.17951/et.2016.28.151

Roman Gawarkiewicz  
(University of Szczecin, Poland)

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF LINGUISTIC AWARENESS OF  
POLES AND RUSSIANS.  
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF POLISH AND RUSSIAN  
ASSOCIATIVE DICTIONARIES\*

The article presents a comparative analysis of selected linguistic material from Polish and Russian associative dictionaries. A description is offered of the core of Polish and Russian linguistic awareness, i.e. an awareness with respect to those units that enter into the greatest numbers of connections with other units of a given associative network, presented in the form of a reversed associative dictionary (from reaction to stimulus). It is concluded that Polish and Russian concepts identified as very close on the semantic plane are often characterised by significant semantic differences, which are especially conspicuous in associative networks of names for emotions, values, and human actions. The young people from Poland and Russia that took part in the study differ significantly in their judgements as to what and to what extent they consider good or bad, vital or insignificant, active or passive. Young Poles have a stronger tendency to view and evaluate reality through the prism of hedonistic values. Their accounts more rarely contain characteristics related to community life (an important role is only played by one's kin). The linguistically shaped world of young Russians is different: the central position there is occupied by associative networks where the dominant characteristics relate to communities, collective work, and the need for material and financial security.

KEY WORDS: linguistic worldview, associative units, core linguistic awareness, Poland and Russia

---

\* The article appeared in Polish as "Archeologia świadomości językowej Polaków i Rosjan. Analiza porównawcza na materiałach polskiego i rosyjskiego słownika asocjacyjnego" in *Etnolingwistyka* 28, pp. 151–167. The present English translation has been financed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, project titled "English edition of the journal *Etnolingwistyka. Problemy języka i kultury* in electronic form" (no. 3bH 15 0204 83).

Personal identity and the process of identity shaping are fundamental issues in the current debate on the assimilation and integration of immigrants, both in Europe and worldwide. The contemporary quest for personal identity is primarily based on ethnic and national elements, and understood as “a state of collective awareness” (Mikułowski Pomorski 2004: 11), with the individual being reduced to the role of an “owner” and/or “user” of group ideologies. The starting point in the discussion on personal identity is the claim that all differences and conflicts of interest may be successfully neutralised by sharing a common attitude towards vital aims, ideas, or interests. In the debate on the future of Europe and further development of the European Union, negotiating European identity is considered one of the fundamental issues, a three-stage process that consists in “differentiation, crystallisation of self-representation, and recognition by others” (Therborn 1998: 351).<sup>1</sup>

Constructing identity in the process of human communication along with that schema is a challenge, both from a socio-cultural perspective and as an educational task, especially in the context of the melting pot of cultures and languages. As aptly observed by Franciszek Gruzca,

... specific attitudes of particular people and communities towards other people and communities, the state of reciprocal willingness or aversion to co-exist and to find a common language for communication, plus, finally, answering the question of who one is ready to co-exist and communicate with (and how determined one is to achieve this) always results from many factors, the most important of which are: (i) people’s life experiences and self-reflection on those experiences, (ii) viewpoints taken over from others and derived from shared local traditions, (iii) the knowledge obtained in the process of formal education, and existential, or “material”, calculations. (Gruzca 1996: 13)

Therefore, it can be concluded that differences among nations primarily arise in people’s minds as a result of social interaction in a national *milieu*. The speaking subject, *homo loquens*, lives in a culture shaped by his or her choices – but these are themselves influenced by the awareness of cultural artefacts. Relating to such dependencies, Ivan A. Ilyin says:

Show me your faith and prayer, show how you express kindness and heroism and who you worship; show me the way you sing, dance, and recite poems; what it means to you to “know” and “understand”; show me how you love your family and who you consider to be the leader, the genius, or the prophet. Tell me all this and I will tell you which nation you are the son of, since everything depends not on your conscious choice but on the spiritual structure of your subconsciousness. (Ilyin 1993: 237)

Against this background, I put forward the claim that the analysis of the communication process, in particular intercultural communication, cannot be detached from mental, emotional, and psychological differences

---

<sup>1</sup> English translations of quotes by A.M.-H. [translator’s note]

between nations.<sup>2</sup> Without assessing the differences that result from our one's own perception of the world, no-one is able to transgress their limitations. Otherwise we would be doomed to living in an illusionary world in the Redfieldian sense, in which one immediately becomes part of an isolated community of people with similar viewpoints (Redfield 1947).<sup>3</sup>

In such a situation, communication with others is no longer based on mutual understanding and acceptance of disparate axiological norms, nor does it relate to a broadly understood acceptance and tolerance of alternative lifestyles. Instead, it is based on superficial opinions, the so-called "etiquettes" that thwart successful communication and increase the distance between the communicating parties. According to Clark Moustakas,

both etiquettes and categorisation give us a misleading impression of knowing the other person. The truth is that we catch their shadow rather than the essence. Being convinced of knowing both ourselves and others [...], we cease to see what is happening in front of us and inside us. And being unaware of that, we make no effort to engage in communication with reality. We continue to use etiquettes to perceive ourselves and others stereotypically; these etiquettes function as substitutes of our lives, our unique feelings, and our personal interactions. (Moustakas 1971: 7–8).

Therefore, I suggest that "improvement of interpersonal communication, as well as strengthening natural human tendencies to communicate with others" (Grucza 1996: 12) should be treated as the pivotal aim in further development of contemporary humanities and social sciences.

The method that might prove helpful in successful communication between nations, e.g. between Poles and Russians, is a free association test, widely used in psycholinguistics. The test allows for a reliable diagnosis of how the two nations differ in their perceptions, a factor that is crucial in communication breakdowns.

The application of the association test has been used as a diagnostic device in the study of processing information in the human brain since Francis Galton's first cognitive experiment. The test allows us to study images entertained in people's linguistic awareness,<sup>4</sup> defined by Evgeniy Tarasov as "the entirety of awareness levels, shaped and expressed by means of linguis-

---

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Bartmiński's (2010), Chlebda's (2010), and Puzynina's (2010) arguments for the inclusion of intercultural studies in reconstructing the linguistic and cultural portrait of Europe (the project EUROJOS).

<sup>3</sup> Robert Redfield, an American cultural anthropologist, was the founder of the theory of folk society.

<sup>4</sup> Some linguists identify linguistic awareness with linguistic competence (see Porayski-Pomsta 1999: 70–71), or treat it as an element of ethnocultural awareness (Gyrochkina 2001: 122–123; Ufimtseva 2008).

tic devices: words, multi-word units, sentences, texts and associative fields” (Tarasov 2000: 26).

The study of associations with a view to revealing the wealth of meanings hidden in linguistic expressions is very much in line with contemporary anthropological linguistic research, pursued by, among others, Jadwiga Puzynina (1992, 1997), Jerzy Bartmiński (2007), Walery Pisarek (2002), Michael Fleischer (2003, 2004), or Anna Wierzbicka (1997). The ethno-psycho-linguistic character of the research derives from the assumption that the description of the world as it is perceived and conceived of is preserved in language. Therefore, ethno-psycho-linguistic studies purport to describe the way entities, value systems, viewpoints, and socially maintained attitudes are conceptualised and categorised.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, a new trend in the linguistic enterprise enabled linguists to launch a new direction of inquiry, with a comparative focus on the ethnocultural linguistic awareness of speech and cultural communities.<sup>6</sup> Of key importance here is the notion of linguistic worldview, i.e. of the world interpreted through the prism of language and linguistic semantics: besides categorial features, it includes the stereotypical ones. The linguistic worldview is defined as “a language-entrenched interpretation of reality, which can be expressed in the form of judgements about the world, people, things or events. It is an interpretation, not a reflection; it is a portrait without claims to fidelity, not a photograph of real objects” (Bartmiński 2009: 23). It is not only entrenched in language but also “accessible *via* language, its grammatical structure and lexicon, with the whole gamut of its meanings” (Bartmiński 2007: 24). The tools used in the description of the linguistic worldview prove successful in analysis of the linguistic data collected in questionnaires, with a significant role being played by two principles: the principle of frequency and the classification of associations (Ciechanowicz 1975: 520–533).<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> As observed by Edward Sapir, “the physical environment is reflected in language only in so far as it has been influenced by social factors. [...] Hence, any attempt to consider even the simplest element of culture as due solely to the influence of environment must be termed misleading” (Sapir 1985 [1912]: 90).

<sup>6</sup> This issue has been the subject of in-depth discussion at the Institute of Linguistics and Institute of Psychology, Russian Academy of Sciences (Ufimtseva 2000; Ufimtseva and Ushakova 2005).

<sup>7</sup> Gustav Aschaffenburg classified associations into four types: (i) *innere Assoziationen*, based on the link between a word (stimulus) and personal experience (an individual interpretation on the part of the respondent); (ii) *äußere Assoziationen*, mechanically preserved collocations, multi-word units, and antonyms; (iii) *klang Assoziationen*, associations based on phonetic similarity to the stimulus word; (iv) *Restgruppe*, other associations expressing the lack of reaction to the stimulus (Aschaffenburg 1899: 1–83).

The psycholinguistic analysis of associations of an individual speaker is an important contribution to the development of linguistic research on associations,<sup>8</sup> and this in the context of cultural-comparative analysis of human cognitive processes. The idea is based on theoretical and methodological grounds with respect to human cognition, i.e. the way people select, interpret, memorise, and use the information they receive from the environment. Non-linguistic phenomena are entrenched in the awareness of an individual conceptualiser through their causal, temporal, and spatial parameters being linked with the emotions evoked by these phenomena. Schemas have mental representations, or, in van Dijk and Kintsch's (1983) parlance, "mental models" that are always accessible and facilitate both reflection upon the surrounding world and processing of the information that relates to it. As observed by Georg Gissing, "it is the human mind which creates the world about us, and, even though we stand side by side in the same meadow, my eyes will never see what is beheld by yours" (Gissing 1903: 99).

My personal attitude as well as, I daresay, the attitude of many contemporary linguists dealing with associative reactions, stems from the interest in combining the logical process of thinking with language as an instrument in the transmission of thought. Research on verbal associations, defined by Ufimtseva as "the presentation of a verbal stimulus [that] entails the appearance of verbal reaction" (2008: 16), helps obtain extensive knowledge on associative norms and offers a possibility to diagnose both similarities and differences in the role of language in linguistic perception of the world, all in accordance with a specific cultural background of respondents.

The empirical studies are the basis for a multi-aspectual analysis of associative reactions within two realms:

1. the cultural sphere that is "obligatory for a specific cultural formation – it influences the meaning of a given linguistic sign (or a complex of signs). [...] A sign (a word, multi-word unit, or utterance) may have a different meaning in different cultural communities" (Fleischer 2003: 27);
2. the connotative (emotive) aspect – it transgresses the boundary of pure meaning of a given sign and refers to all emotional and cognitive processes that illustrate the evaluative attitude of an individual towards the sign (Kurcz 1976: 176).

---

<sup>8</sup> It is language community that conditions the existence of "associative community" and simultaneously derives from it. Robert Kwaśnica formulates the problem in the following way: "What we perceive and the way we perceive it is language-dependent: language becomes a decisive factor of our perception and decision regarding objectively existing elements. [...] Language determines the way we understand the object being perceived" (Kwaśnica 1991: 37).

This model of meaning is dynamic and subject to change. In simplified terms, we obtain “our” subjective meanings in the process of learning as well as during communicative interaction within a given speech community. Research on associations points to the existence of both shared associations with their hidden meanings and individual associations, distinct for each individual, identifiable in each linguo-cultural community.

Below we present the analysis of selected linguistic material from two associative dictionaries: *Polski słownik asocjacyjny z suplementem* (Polish Associative Dictionary with a Supplement, PSA 2008) and *Russkiiy assotsyativnyy slovar'* (Russian Associative Dictionary, RAS 2002).<sup>9</sup> Both dictionaries contain the linguistic material collected in an experiment carried out with two groups of students of various specialisations, each group consisting of 500 respondents (250 men and 250 women). The respondents were given questionnaires with 100 stimulus words, prepared by the team of researchers directed by Natalya Ufimtseva, Russian Academy of Sciences. Each respondent was given the questionnaire in his or her native language with a different arrangement of the same stimulus words. The experiment yielded some 50,000 word-reactions in each language being investigated. Dictionary entries were then elaborated on with the aid of a specially designed computer program. The layout of the entries is identical in both dictionaries. The dictionaries consist of two parts each: in the first part all reaction words are placed next to the stimulus word, relative to the frequency of their occurrence and in decreasing order. The second part is arranged in the reverse manner, i.e. from reaction words to stimulus words, where the complete alphabetical list of linguistic reactions is presented, along with the relevant statistical data.

Lexical associations, including those available in associative dictionaries, had been subjected to comparative analysis before (Ufimtseva and Ushakova 2005; Gawarkiewicz 2008, 2011; Iwan 2008; Pietrzyk 2008; Rodziewicz 2008, 2014; Ramdan 2013), with the aim to establish associative fields for stimulus words, with regard to their content entrenched in the consciousness of the speakers. These analyses reveal both individual and collective, culture-dependent aspects of categorisation of associative words: they stress the cultural differences that transpire through language in the process of conceptualisation. Dictionary entries equipped with connotative meanings complement statistical and normative data offered in lexicographic dictionaries, thus rendering them fully-fledged resources.

---

<sup>9</sup> Both dictionaries were produced as a result of international research on associations conducted out under the auspices of the Institute of Psycholinguistics, Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow. Other dictionaries in the series are the Spanish-Russian NAER (2001) and the Slavic SAS (2004).

The analysis of those units, in Polish and Russian, that enter into the greatest number of connections with other units of a given associative network (presented in the form of a reversed associative dictionary, Ufimtseva 2000: 213) also provides interesting information. According to Ufimtseva, the core of linguistic awareness is a central sphere of culture that relates to collective subconsciousness shaped in the initial stage of ethnogenesis and “ensures coherence in the behaviour of all members of a given ethnos in certain situations that are representative of a given culture” (Ufimtseva 2005: 206). Therefore, in the first stage of the present research, the core of linguistic awareness of Poles and Russians was identified. Here we offer an abridged version of the analysis, limited to the first thirty words. Table 1 presents the list of those thirty most frequently elicited reactions among Russians and Poles (the overall number of reactions is given in brackets, whereas the number of the stimuli that triggered the reactions is given without brackets). By analysing similarities and differences between particular words used by Russians and Poles, it was shown that the core of linguistics awareness of Russians and Poles contains fourteen equivalent reaction words (46.67%): *radość/padosť* ‘joy’, *człowiek/человек* ‘a human (being)’, *miłość/любовь* ‘love’ *dom/дом* ‘home’, *życie/жизнь* ‘life’, *szczęście/счастье* ‘happiness’, *dobro/добро* ‘good’, *śmierć/смерть* ‘death’, *dziecko/ребёнок* ‘child’, *przyjaciel/друг* ‘friend’, *siła/сила* ‘strength’, *ja/я* ‘I; me’, *czas/время* ‘time’, *zło/зло* ‘evil’.

A significant position in the linguistic awareness of Polish and Russian speakers is occupied by humans (*człowiek/человек*), their home (*dom/дом*) and children (*dziecko/ребёнок*). However, the Polish associative words *rodzina* ‘family’, *ciepło* ‘warmth’, or *spokój* ‘peace, calm’ do not appear among the young Russians. Significant differences are also found in the sphere of human activity.

Two forms, *есть* ‘eat’<sup>10</sup> and *жить* ‘live’, are qualified as the most significant reaction words in the linguistic awareness of the Russian respondents. Unsurprisingly, the former is mainly triggered by two stimulus words, i.e. *пить* ‘drink’ (54) and *хотеть* ‘want’ (51), and rarely by such stimuli as *хлеб* ‘bread’ (14), *сила* ‘strength’ (12), or *быстро* ‘quickly’ (8).

In the Russian associative network referring to people’s typical activities, an important position is ascribed to the following semantic relationships: *жить – хорошо* ‘live – well’ (64) and *жить – хотеть* ‘live – want’ (29). Russian respondents conceptualise *жить* in the following way: *надеяться* ‘hope for’ (8), *думать* ‘think’ (7), *помогать* ‘help’ (5), *есть* ‘eat’ (2) and

<sup>10</sup> As will transpire from the discussion below, the Russian *есть* can mean ‘eat’ or ‘there is’, each playing its own distinct role in the experiment. [editor’s note]

Table 1. The core of Polish and Russian linguistic awareness

	Poles		Russians	
	associative word	number of reactions and stimuli	associative word	number of reactions and stimuli
1	<i>radość</i> 'joy'	(488) 51	<i>жизнь</i> 'life'	(363) 54
2	<i>człowiek</i> 'a human (being)'	(581) 47	<i>человек</i> 'a human (being)'	(1244) 53
3	<i>miłość</i> 'love'	(702) 44	<i>дом</i> 'home'	(514) 48
4	<i>dom</i> 'home'	(549) 42	<i>любовь</i> 'love'	(253) 48
5	<i>życie</i> 'life'	(387) 39	<i>радость</i> 'joy'	(248) 48
6	<i>szczęście</i> 'hapiness'	(475) 35	<i>хорошо</i> 'well'	(384) 46
7	<i>spokój</i> 'peace, calm'	(226) 35	<i>друг</i> 'friend'	(365) 45
8	<i>nadzieja</i> 'hope'	(165) 35	<i>счастье</i> 'hapiness'	(334) 40
9	<i>przyjemność</i> 'pleasure'	(90) 30	<i>нет</i> 'no'	(102) 40
10	<i>dobro</i> 'good'	(320) 27	<i>есть</i> 'eat'	(334) 37
11	<i>rodzina</i> 'family'	(536) 26	<i>плохо</i> 'badly'	(329) 35
12	<i>ciepło</i> 'warmth'	(288) 26	<i>свет</i> 'world'	(175) 35
13	<i>kobieta</i> 'woman'	(286) 26	<i>деньги</i> 'money'	(341) 34
14	<i>seks</i> 'sex'	(147) 26	<i>большой</i> 'big'	(333) 34
15	<i>strach</i> 'fear'	(140) 26	<i>ребёнок</i> 'child'	(240) 33
16	<i>wolność</i> 'freedom'	(60) 26	<i>мир</i> 'peace'	(151) 33
17	<i>śmierć</i> 'death'	(316) 25	<i>я</i> 'I, me'	(100) 33
18	<i>praca</i> 'work'	(121) 25	<i>добро</i> 'good'	(250) 29
19	<i>dziecko</i> 'child'	(346) 24	<i>жить</i> 'live'	(184) 29
20	<i>przyjaciel</i> 'friend'	(197) 24	<i>красивый</i> 'beautiful'	(135) 29
21	<i>sila</i> 'strength'	(106) 24	<i>смерть</i> 'death'	(365) 27
22	<i>ja</i> 'I, me'	(55) 24	<i>сила</i> 'strength'	(99) 27
23	<i>czas</i> 'time'	(204) 23	<i>всегда</i> 'always'	(82) 27
24	<i>złość</i> 'anger'	(189) 23	<i>сильный</i> 'strong'	(279) 26
25	<i>pomoc</i> 'help'	(115) 23	<i>много</i> 'many'	(186) 26
26	<i>szkoła</i> 'school'	(41) 22	<i>всё</i> 'everything'	(120) 26
27	<i>zło</i> 'bad, evil (n.)'	(462) 21	<i>зло</i> 'bad, evil (n.)'	(347) 23
28	<i>smutek</i> 'sadness'	(196) 21	<i>любить</i> 'love (v.)'	(160) 23
29	<i>zabawa</i> 'play'	(66) 21	<i>время</i> 'time'	(144) 23
30	<i>uśmiech</i> 'smile'	(235) 20	<i>день</i> 'day'	(285) 22

*numь* 'drink' (2), and, most importantly, stress the collective character of the activity (*вместе* 'together', 22). By contrast, young Poles consider sexual activity and money-earning more important than Russian respondents, which is confirmed by a high position of associative words *seks* 'sex' and *praca* 'work' on the ranking list.

In the awareness of young Poles, sexual activity is a direct consequence of love (*miłość*, 31), symbolised by the red colour (*czzerwony*, 10). Moreover, sexual activity is more frequently associated with the lexeme *kobieta* 'woman'



(33) than with *mężczyzna* ‘man’ (10), and with *noc* ‘night’ (10), rather than with *wieczór* ‘evening’ (5). Work (*praca*) is conceptualised differently: Poles work during the day (*dzień*, 16), often with the use of the hands (*ręce*, 62) but above all for money (*pieniądze*, 12). Moreover, earning money is more frequently the domain of men (*mężczyzna* ‘man’, 11; cf. also *mąż* ‘husband’, 4).

The analysis of the core indicators of Polish and Russian linguistic awareness reveals significant differences with respect to emotional categories. In the Polish variant, nine associative words describe emotions and feelings, whereas in case of the Russian variant only three words are mentioned.

Emotional associative equivalents of joy (*radość* – *радость*), love (*miłość* – *любовь*), and happiness (*szczęście* – *счастье*) are important, although their position on the two ranking lists varies. The stimulus words used in the associative questionnaire for Polish respondents triggered three positively-valued reactions: *spokój* ‘peace, calm’, *nadzieja* ‘hope’, and *przyjemność* ‘pleasure’, as well as three negatively-valued words: *strach* ‘fear’, *złość* ‘anger’, and *smutek* ‘sadness’. Neither positive and negative reaction words have any corresponding units found in the linguistic core generated by young Russians.

The analysis also concerns the way Polish respondents approach peace and calm. According to the survey, calm is invoked by the image of rural dwelling, a village (*wieś*, 56) and home (*dom*, 44), whereas the family is recalled less frequently (*rodzina*, 7). Calm is also associated with specific times of the day, such as the evening (*wieczór*, 16) and the night (*noc*, 14).

Considering the concept of hope (*nadzieja*), Poles indicate the following associations: *światło* ‘light’ (39), *wiara w Boga* ‘faith in God’ (less frequently *Bóg* ‘God’, 6), *miłość* ‘love’ (4), or *nowy dzień* ‘new day’ (5). Hope is symbolised by the colour green (*zielony*, 36).

Some Polish respondents consider pleasure (*przyjemność*) to be a direct consequence of good (*dobro*, 18). The source of pleasure is connected with eating (*jeść*, 13), less frequently with a conversation (*rozmowa*, 13), meeting people (*spotkania*, 8), work (*praca*, 3), memories (*wspomnienia*, 4), or helping others (*pomaganie innym*, 2).

Hedonistic categories are manifested in two other connotations recalled by Polish respondents, i.e. *zabawa* ‘play’, and *uśmiech* ‘smile’. It has to be noted here that neither appears in the Russian data. The former is the best characterisation of such concepts as *radość* ‘joy’ (11), *wesoły* ‘cheerful’ (11), *spotkanie* ‘meeting’ (5), *gość* ‘guest’ (5), and *noc* ‘night’ (3). The latter word reflects the sense of such stimulus words as *radość* ‘joy’ (80), *wesoły* ‘cheerful’ (58), *dziecko* ‘child’ (12), and *babcia* ‘grandma’ (4).

Negative emotional categories, *strach* 'fear', *złość* 'anger' and *smutek* 'sadness', have a strong position in the core of Polish linguistic awareness: Poles apparently have a strong tendency towards negative assessment of the world in comparison to Russians.

According to Polish respondents, the most frequent reaction to *strach* 'fear' and *złość* 'anger' is *krzyk* 'scream' (56 and 37, respectively). Anger also leads to *nienawiść* 'hate' (88). The source of these negative emotions is *wróg* 'enemy' (11 and 34, respectively) and *kłamstwo* 'lie' (3 and 4, respectively). Few Polish respondents fear bad things that may happen in their lives: *zło* 'evil' (14) and *śmierć* 'death' (13).

*Smutek* 'sadness' is at the opposite pole of *radość* 'joy' (68), rather than *szczęście* 'happiness' (5). The feeling of sadness is usually evoked by *śmierć* 'death' (46), but also by *wstyd* 'shame' (17), *zło* 'evil' (4), and *czarny* 'black' (3).

In the core of Polish awareness the associative word *ciepło* 'warmth' occupies an important position and is conventionally related with two stimulus words, namely *ogień* 'fire' (91) and *światło* 'light' (12). Additionally, *ciepło* is associated with other linguistic stimuli: *dom* 'home' (82), *rodzina* 'family' (32), *matka* 'mother' (22), and *babcia* 'grandma' (17). The concept of family is additionally strengthened with a female element by recalling the connotations of *kobieta* 'woman', a reaction word produced in response to the following stimuli: *mężczyzna* 'man' (132), *żona* 'wife' (58), *matka* 'mother' (29), *córka* 'daughter', (9) and *babcia* 'grandma' (6). Interestingly, family was more often recalled by the Polish than by the Russian respondents.

A significant difference in the core of Russian and Polish linguistic awareness is observed for emotional and evaluative connotations. As revealed in the questionnaire, Russians have a tendency to offer a plus/minus valuation, based on the binary scales of *хорошо/плохо* 'good/bad' and *нет/есть* 'there is/there isn't'.

With the use of these scales, a substantial number of the young Russians consider the associative word *хорошо* 'good' to be an accurate definition of such concepts as *жить* 'live' (71), *есть* 'eat' (12), *думать* 'think' (11), *помогать* 'help' (3), *говорить* 'talk' (2), *успеть* 'to be on time' (2), and *вместе* 'together' (13). A certain portion of the Russian respondents express their positive assessment of the world by using the following words (in diminishing order): *счастье* 'happiness' (74), *Бог* 'god' (42), *справедливость* 'justice' (8), *деньги* 'money' (5), *время* 'time' (3), *друг* 'friend' (3), *любовь* 'love' (3), and *работа* 'work' (3). Some Russian respondents within the same circle rank the concepts considered fundamental for a positive assessment of social relations in the following way: *добро* 'good' (23), *справедливость*

'justice' (10), *деньги* 'money' (9), and further: *семья* 'family' (5), *работа* 'work' (3), *любовь* 'love' (3).

The opposite pole of valuation focuses on two associative words, i.e. *плохо* 'bad' and *нет* 'there isn't'. The former is usually a reaction to such stimuli as *зло* 'evil' (40), *обман* 'deceit' (18), *война* 'war' (17), *смерть* 'death' (12), rather than to socially unacceptable modes of behaviour, evoked through *жадный* 'greedy, mean' (3), *враг* 'enemy' (3), *дурак* 'idiot' (4), *глупый* 'stupid' (2). The latter refers to those values and goods whose deficit makes life more difficult: *справедливость* 'justice' (14), *время* 'time' (8), *деньги* 'money' (8), *счастье* 'happiness' (8).

Other connotations, i.e. *много* 'plenty', *всегда* 'always', *всё* 'everything', *большой* 'big', *сильный* 'strong', and *красивый* 'beautiful', also occur within the emotional and evaluative category, and are ranked as important concepts in the core of Russian linguistic awareness. What is interesting, they have no equivalents in the Polish ranking.

According to the majority of Russian respondents, the associative word *много* 'plenty' best illustrates the following activities: *обещать* 'promise' (29), *думать* 'think' (26), *говорить* 'talk' (20), *есть* 'eat' (15), and *пить* 'drink' (9). The lexeme *много* is also considered the best defining expression for the concept *деньги* 'money' (45), while it is rarely recalled with reference to *счастье* 'happiness' (4).

With regard to such word-reactions as *всегда* 'always' and *всё* 'everything', it can be concluded that young Russians, as opposed to young Poles, appreciate collective work (e.g. *всегда/всё делать вместе* 'always act together/do everything together', 25 and 8 respectively). Few respondents include in their set of stable values such notions as God (*Бог*, 17), justice (*справедливость*, 6), life (*жить*, 3; *жизнь* 'live', 2), hope (*надежда*, 3), good (*добро*, 3), and helping others (*помогать*, 2), despite the fact that some people may experience bad life (*плохо*, 5). It was also observed that three adjectives, *большой* 'big', *сильный* 'strong', and *красивый* 'beautiful' have a tremendous impact on the Russian linguistic worldview. The first in this series, *большой* 'big', best characterises the following concepts: *палец* 'finger' (54), *рот* 'mouth' (45), *город* 'city' (44), and *дом* 'home' (38). The adjective *сильный* 'strong' is an attribute of faith (*вера*, 68), of a man (*мужчина*, 37), sometimes of voice (*голос*, 12), occasionally of a nation (*народ*, 5) and fire (*огонь*, 5). Beauty is often associated with youth (*молодой* 'young', 26), surprisingly with being male (*мужчина* 'man', 16; *мальчик* 'boy', 6), with a child (*ребёнок*, 4), voice (*голос*, 10), home (*дом*, 10), or city (*город*, 4).

The analysis of the core Polish and Russian linguistic awareness proposed here is two-fold. On the one hand, it shows how associative networks are

created. On the other hand, it points to similarities and differences in logical connections and dependencies that arise between various concepts linked by associations. As a result, it appears that Polish and Russian concepts identified as apparently close to each other on the meaning plane very frequently exhibit significant semantic differences. The differences are especially conspicuous in associative networks of names for emotions, values, and human actions. As has been observed, young people from Poland and Russia taking part in the study differ significantly in their judgements as to what and to what extent they consider good or bad, great or inconspicuous, active or passive.<sup>11</sup>

Obviously, the results of the associative study cannot be regarded as the basis that allows us to formulate ultimate judgements or opinions. Nevertheless, the study implies that young people from Poland have a stronger tendency to view and evaluate the world through the prism of hedonistic values. Their accounts more rarely contain characteristics related to the lives of communities – in this context an important position is occupied only by the members of one's family. The linguistically shaped world of young Russians is different: the central position there is taken by associative networks where the dominant characteristics relate to communities, collective work, and the need for material and financial security.

The differences in viewpoints may act as barriers to effective communication between young Poles and Russians. The description of differences proposed here may serve as an interesting source of inspiration for further improvement of intercultural communication skills. As observed by Efim Passov, the efficiency of successful intercultural communication depends on a variety of mediating factors which either facilitate or hinder the communication process, and which indicate the level of knowledge and communicative skills of interlocutors. This leads us to conclude that the participants in intercultural communication should have the following skills:

- extensive knowledge of a different culture; the ability to receive, analyse, compare and evaluate it;
- emotional attitude towards that culture;
- the ability to interpret cultural values;
- the ability to go beyond the cultural borders; the ability to perceive not only cultural differences but also the points of convergence that bridge cultures;

---

<sup>11</sup> Osgood et al. proposed three dimensions of emotions, and describe their value thus: "First, does it refer to something *good* or *bad* for me? Second, does it refer to something *strong* or *weak* with respect to me? And third, does it refer to something which is *active* or *passive*?" (Osgood, May, and Miron 1975: 189).

- the ability to adopt the viewpoint of a different culture: this allows us to assess events from that perspective and so understand covert motifs of behaviour;
- the ability to change self-assessment while engaging with other cultures and willingness to neglect imaginary perception and stereotypes referring to other cultures;
- the ability to perceive details of a given culture, indispensable to understand the essence of cultural phenomena;
- the ability to perceive stable and variable elements of a given culture; the skill to recognise tradition and innovation in various aspects of life;
- the ability to perceive the humorous aspects in a foreign culture;
- the ability to synthesise and generalise personal experience in intercultural communication (Passov 2003).

The knowledge, abilities, and attitudes listed above become significant elements in the dialogue of cultures, as well as in the dialogue of people representing different cultures. In contemporary political and social circumstances, the people are forced to engage in close and frequent intercultural interactions. The ability to do so, with all the intricacies involved, allows both individuals and social groups to improve intercultural relationships – respect for the identity of a different culture immediately brings advantage to one's own culture. All this brings us to the notion of intercultural communicative competence (cf. Wielecki 1995: 117), defined as “the ability to adopt cultural relativism while communicating with the cultural Others, as well as the ability to apply the knowledge of various cultures” (Zuber 1999: 28). Intercultural communicative competence, in turn, facilitates the so-called synergistic communication, an idea developed by Stephen R. Covey:

When you communicate synergistically, you are simply opening your mind and heart and expressions to new possibilities, new alternatives, new options. You are not sure when you engage in synergistic communication how things will work out or what the end will look like, but you do have an inward sense of excitement and security and adventure, believing that it will be significantly better than it was before. (Covey 2015)

*translated by Agnieszka Mierzwińska-Hajnos*

## References

- Aschaffenburg, Gustaw. 1899. Experimentelle Studien über Assoziationen. In: *Psychologische Arbeiten*, Band 2. 1–83. Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann Verlag.
- Bartmiński, Jerzy. 2007. *Stereotypy mieszkają w języku. Studia etnolingwistyczne*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS.

- Batmiński, Jerzy. 2009. *Aspects of Cognitive Ethnolinguistics*. London and Oakville, CT: Equinox. [paperback 2012, Sheffield and Oakville, CT: Equinox]
- Bartmiński, Jerzy. 2010. Jak rekonstruować językowo-kulturowy obraz Europy. *Etnolingwistyka* 22: 121–127.
- Chlebda, Wojciech. 2010. W stronę językowego obrazu Europy. Analiza słownikowo-tekstowa. *Etnolingwistyka* 22: 85–103.
- Ciechanowicz, Anna. 1975. Swobodne skojarzenia słowne. Przegląd literatury. *Psychologia Wychowawcza* 4: 520–533.
- Covey, Stephen R. 2015. *The Stephen R. Covey Interactive Reader*. Miami: FranklinCovey Co.
- Fleischer, Michael. 2003. *Polska symbolika kolektywna*. Wrocław: Dolnośląska Szkoła Wyższa Edukacji Towarzystwa Wiedzy Powszechnej.
- Fleischer, Michael. 2004. *Europa, Niemcy, USA i Rosja w polskim systemie kultury*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego.
- Gawarkiewicz, Roman. 2008. DOM w językowym obrazie świata młodzieży polskiej i rosyjskiej. In: Roman Gawarkiewicz, Izabela Pietrzyk, and Barbara Rodziewicz (eds.) *Polski słownik asocjacyjny z suplementem*. 235–246. Szczecin: Print Group.
- Gawarkiewicz, Roman. 2011. *Komunikacja międzykulturowa a stereotypy. Polacy – Niemcy – Rosjanie*. Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego.
- Gissing, Georg. 1903. *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*. Westminster: Archibald Constable and Co Ltd.
- Grucza, Franciszek. 1996. O przeciwstawności ludzkich interesów i dążeń komunikacyjnych w interkulturowym porozumieniu się oraz naukach humanistyczno-społecznych. In: Franciszek Grucza and Krystyna Chomicz-Jung (eds.) *Problemy komunikacji interkulturowej: jedna Europa – wiele języków i kultur. Materiały z XIX Sympozjum ILS UW oraz PTLIS (Warszawa – Bemowo, 14–16 lutego 1994)*. 11–32. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego
- Gyrochkina, Alla G. 2001. Etnokul'tura iazykovoe soznanye. In: Filologia i kul'tura: Materyaly III Mezhdunarodnoy nauchnoy konferentsii 16–18 maya 2001, ch. 3. Tambov: Izd-vo TGU.
- Ilyin, Ivan A. 1993. *Put' k dukhovnomy obnoveniyu. Put' k ochevidnosti*. Moskva: AST.
- Iwan, Krystyna. 2008. Kontsept DEVOCHKA vazykovoy kartine mira polyakov i russkikh. In: Roman Gawarkiewicz, Izabela Pietrzyk, and Barbara Rodziewicz (eds.) *Polski słownik asocjacyjny z suplementem*. 247–260. Szczecin: Print Group.
- Kurcz, Ida. 1976. *Psycholingwistyka*. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.
- Kwaśnica, Robert. 1991. Rzeczywistość jako byt sensu. Teza o językowym tworzeniu rzeczywistości. *Język a kultura* 1: 47–99.
- Mikułowski Pomorski, Jerzy. 2004. Negocjowanie tożsamości zbiorowej w Europie. In: Jerzy Mikułowski Pomorski (ed.) *Narody wobec Europy. Negocjowanie tożsamości*. 11–30. Kraków: Akademia Ekonomiczna w Krakowie.
- Moustakas, Clark. 1971. *Individuality and Encounter: A Brief Journey into Loneliness and Sensitivity Groups*. Cambridge, MA: Howard A. Doyle.
- NAER 2001. *Normas asociativas del español y del ruso*. Maria Sanchez Puig, Yuriy G. Karaulov, Galina A. Cherkasova. Moscú : Academia Rusa de Ciencias, Sección de Literatura y Lengua; Madrid : Universidad Complutense de Madrid.
- Osgood, Charles E., William H. May, and Murray S. Miron. 1975. *Cross-Cultural Universals of Affective Meaning*. Urbana–Chicago–London: University of Illinois Press.

- Passov, Efim. I. 2003. Dyalog kul'tur: sotsyalnyy i obrazovatel'nyy aspekty. [www.Gramota.ru/mirrs.html?method08.htm](http://www.Gramota.ru/mirrs.html?method08.htm) [access June 15, 2016]
- Pietrzyk, Izabela. 2008. Konotacje barw w języku Rosjan i Polaków. In: Roman Gawarkiewicz, Izabela Pietrzyk, and Barbara Rodziewicz (eds.) *Polski słownik asocjacyjny z suplementem*. 261–277. Szczecin: Print Group.
- Pisarek, Walery. 2002. *Polskie słowa sztandarowe i ich publiczność*. Kraków: Universitas.
- Porayski-Pomsta, Józef. 1999. Komunikacja językowa. In: Stanisław Dubisz (ed.) *Nauka o języku dla polonistów*. 19–66. Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza.
- PSA 2008. *Polski słownik asocjacyjny z suplementem*. Roman Gawarkiewicz, Izabela Pietrzyk, and Barbara Rodziewicz. Szczecin: Print Group.
- Puzynina, Jadwiga. 1992. *Język wartości*. Warszawa: PWN.
- Puzynina, Jadwiga. 1997. Struktura semantyczna „narodu” a profilowanie. In: Jerzy Bartmiński and Ryszard Tokarski (eds.) *Profilowanie w języku i w tekście*. 259–276. Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS.
- Puzynina, Jadwiga. 2010. Z problemów opisu językowego obrazu świata – pytania i wątpliwości. *Etnolingwistyka* 22: 39–51.
- Ramdan, Mohcine A. 2013. Wortassoziationen: Ein interkultureller Vergleich zwischen dem Deutschen, dem Arabischen und dem Französischen. *Zeitschrift für interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht* 18: 34–61.
- RAS 2002. *Russkiy assotsyativnyy slovar'*. Yuriy I. Karaulov, Galina Cherkasova, Natalya V. Ufimtseva, Yuriy Sorokin, and Evreniy F. Tarasov. Moskva: AST-Astrel'.
- Redfield, Robert. 1947. The folk society. *American Journal of Sociology* 52(4): 293–308.
- Rodziewicz, Barbara. 2008. Konotacje tanatologiczne w świadomości językowej Polaków i Rosjan. In: Roman Gawarkiewicz, Izabela Pietrzyk, and Barbara Rodziewicz (eds.) *Polski słownik asocjacyjny z suplementem*. 279–291. Szczecin: Print Group.
- Rodziewicz, Barbara. 2014. *Wartości. Polacy – Niemcy – Rosjanie*. Szczecin: Volumina.pl Daniel Krzanowski.
- Sapir, Edward. 1985. Language and environment. In: *Selected Writings of Edward Sapir on Language, Culture and Personality*. Ed. David G. Mandelbaum. 89–103. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.
- SAS 2004. *Slavyanskiy assotsyativnyy slovar': russkiy, beloprusskiy, bolgarskiy, ukraiński*. Natalya V. Ufimtseva, Galina A. Cherkasova, Yuriy I. Karaulov, Evgeniy F. Tarasov. Moskva: Institut yazykoznanya RAN.
- Tarasov, Evgeniy F. 2000. Aktualnye problemy analiza yazykovogo soznaniya. In: Natalya V. Ufimtseva (ed.) *Yazykovoe soznanye i obraz mira*. 24–32. Moskva: Institut yazykoznanya RAN.
- Therborn, Goran. 1998. *Drogi do nowoczesnej Europy*. Warszawa–Kraków: PWN.
- Ufimtseva, Natalya V. (ed.). 2000. *Yazykovoe soznanye i obraz mira*. Moskva: Institut yazykoznanya RAN.
- Ufimtseva, Natalya V. 2005. Arkheologiya yazykovogo soznaniya: pervye rezul'taty. In: Natalya V. and Tatyana H. Ushakova (eds.) *Yazyk. Soznanye. Kul'tura*. 205–216. Moskva–Kaluga: Ejdos.
- Ufimtseva, Natalya V. 2008. Assotsyativnye slovari slavyanskikh yazykov. In: Roman Gawarkiewicz, Izabela Pietrzyk, and Barbara Rodziewicz (eds.) *Polski słownik asocjacyjny z suplementem*. 15–31. Szczecin: Print Group.
- Ufimtseva, Natalya V. and Tatyana N. Ushakova (eds.). 2005. *Yazyk. Soznanye. Kul'tura*. Moskva–Kaluga: Ejdos.
- van Dijk, Tuen A. and Walter Kintsch. 1983. *Strategies of Discourse Comprehension*. New York: Academic Press.

- Wielecki, Krzysztof. 1995. Kompetencje do komunikacji międzykulturowej: problemy polityczne i edukacyjne. In: Alina Kapciak, Leszek Korporowicz, and Andrzej Tysza (eds.) *Komunikacja międzykulturowa, zbliżenia i impresje*. 115–121. Warszawa: Instytut Kultury.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 1997. *Understanding Cultures through Their Key Words: English, Russian, Polish, German, and Japanese*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zuber, Marcelina. 1999. Komunikowanie międzykulturowe. [w:] Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska (ed.) *Studia z teorii komunikowania masowego*. 24–41. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego.