

II. REVIEWS

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A NEW PUBLICATION
FROM POLISH COGNITIVE LINGUISTS*

Review of Agnieszka Libura, Daria Bębeniec, and Hubert Kowalewski (eds.), *Dociekania kognitywne*, Kraków: Universitas, 2018, pp. 245. ISBN: 97833-242-3163-8. Paperback.**

The book *Dociekania kognitywne* [Cognitive Investigations] is the tenth volume in the series “Cognitive Linguistics. Studies and Analyses” edited by Jolanta Antas, Zofia Berdychowska, Marcela Świątkowska, and Elżbieta Tabakowska, published in Cracow by Universitas.¹ The present volume has been edited by the three linguists: the Polish philologist Agnieszka Libura and the two English philologists Daria Bębeniec and Hubert Kowalewski, and, thus, presents a good example of cooperation of their academic centres, Wrocław and Lublin, respectively. As the editors make clear, the book may seem reminiscent of Ludwig Wittgenstein’s *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), as well as Anna Wierzbicka’s *Dociekania semantyczne* (1969, published in English as *Semantic Primitives*, 1972), which locates the book within the research on language as a key to understanding culture. Indeed, one way or another the subsequent chapters bear witness to these inspirations, reflecting the current state of research and showing the multifariousness of cognitive linguistic research in Poland.

The opening chapter comes from Jerzy Bartmiński (“O profilowaniu pojęć z punktu widzenia etnolingwistyki kognitywnej”; Eng. “On profiling from the perspective of cognitive ethnolinguistics”). This is a summary account of the

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** The volume includes some of the papers delivered at the conference “Cognitive Linguistics in the Year 2015” (Lublin, 24–26 September, 2015) organised by the Department of English Studies and the Department of Applied Linguistics, UMCS, Lublin.

¹ The earlier volumes in the series are: Przybylska 2002; Kopka 2002; Żabicka 2002; Kinowska 2003; Jäkel 2003; Korwin-Piotrowska 2006; Przybylska 2006; Wiraszka 2015; Karczewski 2016.

research pursued in the Lublin School of Ethnolinguistics on profiling the base images, as these come to be entrenched in language, or, more specifically, in the linguistic worldview. Bartmiński first finds it absolutely justified for the attribute *cognitive* to be used in reference to the linguistic research identified with the journal *Etnolingwistyka* and, thus, defines the place that the Lublin-based ethnolinguistics occupies in mainstream cognitive linguistics. He then presents some of the most fundamental methodological assumptions of the school and its basic operational concepts (linguistic worldview, stereotype, cognitive definition, point of view and perspective, profile and profiling, the conceptualising and speaking subject, values). It is against this background that the author proceeds to what takes up most of his contribution, which is the problem of profiling in reference to selected base images, both from the level of rural folk culture (KONŃ ‘horse’, OGIENŃ ‘fire’, WODA ‘water’, GWIAZDA ‘star’, ZŁOTO ‘gold’) and the level of national awareness (MATKA ‘mother’, RODZINA ‘family’, LUD ‘people’, DOM ‘home’, PRACA ‘work/labour’, HONOR ‘honour’, the latter three having been researched in a comparative perspective within the international research project EUROJOS²). As the author concludes, the concept of profiling allows for a systematic interpretation of multiple pictures of the world because “profiles are different subjective visions of the world (i.e. of a given object or an event), or different subjective variants of the linguacultural worldview” (p. 40).

Barbara Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (“Kulturowe modele znaczeń emotywnych”; Eng. “Cultural models of emotive meanings”) focuses on cultural aspects of semantic examination of the language of emotions. As she assumes, verbal communication does not make it possible for meanings to be communicated perfectly in the way they are intended. Because of this unavoidable load of subjectivity and selectivity, verbal communication works by semantic approximation and amounts to communicating near-intended meanings. This, in turn, entails reconceptualisation. If so, one cannot do without cultural models and scenarios. Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk follows Geert Hofstede in postulating five questionnaire-derived dimensions/indexes of any culture (index of power distance in regard to power structures and social hierarchies; index of uncertainty avoidance; index of individualism and collectivism; index of achievements and relations; index of short- and long-term objectives). The actual analysis is based on the Polish and English indices of individualism and collectivism. The author also follows Pierre Nory’s conception of memory zones which – to some extent – are believed to correspond to universal feelings and emotions. Yet, Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk suggests completing Nory’s original set of zones with a language zone, which she finds responsible for several zones of cultural memory. She then comments on a typical scenario of an emotive event and describes her methodology, which includes both the data derived from parallel Polish-English and English-Polish corpora and the data derived from questionnaires

² These have been published by Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press as Volumes 1, 3, and 5 of *Leksykon aksjologiczny Słowian i ich sąsiadów*, LASiS [“The Axiological Lexicon of Slavs and their Neighbours”], that is, respectively, vol. 1: HOME, vol. 3: WORK/LABOUR, and vol. 5: HONOUR. Two further volumes, on EUROPE and FREEDOM/LIBERTY, are meant to appear soon.

specially designed for the purpose (online questionnaire of sorting and categorising feelings/emotions).

The object of research is a study of Polish and English names of emotions, such as *szczęście/happiness*, *wina/guilt*, *wstyd/shame*, *strach/fear*: the analysis shows that interlingual equivalence goes beyond individual lexemes and involves entire conceptual clusters. At the same time, corpora-derived evidence is shown to present a whole array of research possibilities: (1) as illustrative material, (2) as the basis for collocational patterns to be generated and their frequencies to be calculated (in Polish and in English), (3) as data for descriptions of the construction of meaning and Polish/English metaphors of emotions. In her conclusions, Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk in the first place appreciates the role of emotions (as a factor accompanying the conceptual triad at the centre of the conceptual system) and the significance of divergences in how emotions happen to be parametrised in different cultures. Naturally, a related issue is the methodology of description. The author herself favours corpus-based and statistically-oriented research. Yet, in this respect, as she points out, research results should always be assisted with a thorough culture-evidenced semantic analysis.

Corpus-derived evidence – next to dictionary data – can also be found in Marta Falkowska's exploration of the lexical field of "empathy" in contemporary Polish. As the author asserts, the word *empatia* 'empathy' involves both intellectual and emotional components, and corresponds to near-synonyms such as *rozumienie* 'understanding', *wyrozumiałość* 'lenience', *litość* 'pity', *miłosierdzie* 'mercy', *wyczucie* 'sensitivity', *takt* 'tact', *solidarność* 'solidarity', *współczucie* 'sympathy'. By means of structuring the field of "empathy", Falkowska concludes that at its centre lies the notion of WSPÓŁODCZUWANIE (Eng. 'sympathy, compassion', lit. 'shared feeling').

Related to that study is Marta Dobrowolska-Pigoń's inquiry into the domain of STRACH 'fear'. The object of her research are semantic attributes of the Polish corpus-derived "fear" verbs and their relative frequency in syntactic constructions. This is the methodological basis for reconstructing the semantics of the "fear" verbs and for diagnosing their position within the domain, central or peripheral. The key assumption has to do with the vagueness of categorial boundaries (as evidenced in cognitive psychology and linguistics, notably in the analyses proposed by Agnieszka Mikołajczuk). And, thus, the actual profiling of a given emotional state depends not only on the meaning of the verb used and the situation of use, but also on the syntactic construction it is described in. For example,

of all the verbs represented in the corpus that are most frequent and seem to be closest to the centre of the STRACH domain, [the verb *bać się* 'to be afraid/scared'] most often appears in genitival constructions profiling the prototypical emotional state of fear: the trajectory indicates the subject of the emotion, whereas the landmark points to the thing or event constituting the identified threat. (p. 111)

In her questionnaire-based study, Ewa Kowalska-Stasiak examines how students – future teachers – conceptualise the process of TEACHING/LEARNING. She sets her analysis in the context of common-sense pedagogy,³ which relates to Bruner

³ In cognitive psychology, everyday/common-sense knowledge (Pol. *wiedza potoczna*)

and Olson's research on perception of knowledge, the learner, the teacher, and the teaching/learning process itself.⁴ On the basis of her material, she succeeds in reconstructing four models of TEACHING/LEARNING: (1) learning by imitation, as in practical skills acquisition; (2) learning by being exposed to trying teaching out, as in declarative knowledge acquisition; (3) teaching children as thinking agents, as in the development of intersubjective exchanges; and (4) teaching children as knowing agents, as in "objective" knowledge management. In practice, these four idealised models combine to build a complex super-model that embraces interactions between all the participants of the teaching/learning process.

Marta Chojnacka-Kuraś takes up the problem of how MARRIAGE is conceptualised in the present-day Catholic religious discourse, i.e. in the body of texts generated in/by a given religious community. The author reconstructs a three-subject model of marriage: wife-husband-God, all three subjects being set in an extended frame of the Catholic marriage unity. As the analysis is based on merely three texts (two monographs, Nosowski 2010 and Kiedio 2014, and the 2009 report of the "WIEŻ Laboratory" Institute of Social Analyses and Dialogue titled "Marriage: Reactivation"), it is questionable whether the inquiry can yield representative results.

The German category HAUS 'house' is researched by Hanna Kaczmarek and Elżbieta Pawlikowska-Asendrych, with the data excerpted from dictionaries, corpora, and questionnaires. As the authors aim to reconstruct the whole net of semantic correspondences of HAUS, they consider several domains: SPACE, PLACE, PART-WHOLE RELATION, CONTENT, ACTIVITY, and VALUE. Surprisingly, however, there is no acknowledgement of the *LASiS* 1 volume (*The Axiological Lexicon of Slavs and their Neighbours*, 2015), a now major contribution to the ethnolinguistic comparative studies of the concept HOUSE/HOME. Should the authors have consulted the lexicon, they would have found not only a thorough description of the concept in terms of both its universality and its cultural specificity (see Bartmiński in *LASiS* 1: 15–34), but, first of all, Monika Grzeszczak's informative contribution on the German HAUS and HEIM (*LASiS* 1: 311–342).

Józef Marcinkiewicz addresses the problem of grammatical number transfer from Lithuanian to Polish. The transfer appears to involve a conceptualisation clash between divergent (Polish *versus* Lithuanian) defective declension patterns (*plurale versus singulare tantum*), with semantic considerations being the key motivation. Having analysed samples of both written and oral translations, Marcinkiewicz presents a convincing set of examples that make him conclude that the way quantity is marked in languages bears witness to different conceptualisations and worldviews.

Translation-related problems can also be found in Paulina Nalewajko's Polish-English examination of combat episodes in Andrzej Sapkowski's *Wiedźmin* ("The Witcher"). In her analysis, she reconstructs Sapkowski's narrative strategy of

is understood in terms of hidden and implicit knowledge resources that can be applied to novel situations and remains related to both explicit and implicit kinds of memory; cf. Nęcka, Orzechowski, Szymura 2013; Wojciszke 1991.

⁴ Cf. Bruner 1996; Olson and Bruner 2008.

iconicity (in Polish) and suggests ways of how this original iconicity could be reflected in English.

Finally, Krystyna Waszakowa examines mental integration processes (as originally envisaged by Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner) that involve derivatives of *biopenetracja* 'biopenetration'. The processes can be applied to the interpretation of lexical composites as on-line textual structures. The author focuses on processes that ultimately result in novel concepts, blends: this emphasises the dynamic nature of meaning and a close relationship between semantics and discourse.

Generally, the volume is an interesting sample of research within Polish cognitive linguistics. It can be taken as a summary of the present state of the research and as evidence of attempts on the part of Polish cognitivists to develop new methodological tools. Given that nearly all the contributors use, in one way or another, corpus-derived data, this kind of inquiry must be regarded as a sign of the times. However, the methods of excerpting and analysing the data is sometimes questionable.

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