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## **CATEGORIZATION OF FOREIGNER GROUPS BY THEIR LABELING (BASED ON THE ANALYSIS OF THE POLISH PRESS DISCOURSE)<sup>1</sup>**

**Keywords:** Polish press discourse, attitudes, media image, labeling, metaphors in press discourse, foreigners, the Babel Tower of Łódź

This socio-cultural analysis will be focused on defining logical criteria serving the authors of press articles for labeling different ethnic groups connected with the School of Polish for Foreigners at the University of Łódź who live in Dormitory No. 14 (the so-called ‘Babel Tower of Łódź’, i.e. BTL). Also, the naming strategies applied in the description of dark-skinned people and the press image of foreign students’ residence will be discussed, as embodied in conventionalized expressions and metaphors. The collection of press texts consists of 150 articles written between 1989–2003 such as news, reports, and essays in which the main or subordinate topic is either the inhabitants of the Babel Tower of Łódź or the Babel Tower itself. This analysis shows that journalists, by repeating the same patterns of labeling ethnic groups, are most responsible for producing negative mental scripts in the readers’ minds.

### **1. AIMS**

The present paper is a part of a more extensive research that attempts to describe the media image of groups of foreigners living in Poland between 1989 and 2003. After 1989, words “were set free” and thus press columns could become a place of social dialogue, a forum of socially important issues.

As foreigners have been coming to Łódź to learn Polish for more than 50 years<sup>2</sup>, it seems interesting to characterize them along a number of parameters,

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<sup>1</sup> Main parts of this text are based on an article and parts of a book originally written in Polish; see: Zarzycka (2003) and Zarzycka (2006; chapter 3.3 and 5).

<sup>2</sup> First groups of foreign students arrived in Łódź in the academic year 1952/1953; they were a 132-person group of North Korean candidates for the university studies in Poland. The School of

also taking into account their presentation in texts shaping public opinion. After 1989, Łódź stopped being a multicultural city, inhabited by Jews, Germans, Russians, and Poles. Now, the foreign residents of Dormitory No. 14, the so-called Babel Tower of Łódź (further: BTL), can be regarded as “new strangers” and we hope that this study will show how they have been situated on the “mental map of Łódź”<sup>3</sup>.

## 2. THE FREQUENCY OF THE “FOREIGNER TOPIC” AND THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AUTHORS

Our research shows that the “foreigner topic” has appeared in press columns quite often. The average number of articles referring to the BTL, and published in the course of the year, was between 5 and 12. However, in 1998, we could observe an increase in the media interest in the problem of the foreigners, which resulted in more than 30 texts, some very long and detailed. The reason for such a big number of press texts published in 1998 was a tragic death (suicidal, as it was proved later) of a Nigerian student, an inhabitant of Dormitory No. 14. Exactly at that time journalists created the most negative metaphors of BTL. They will be presented (see: table 1) and discussed in the conclusions.

The authors of the gathered articles were usually professional journalists, the majority of whom represented local newspapers of Łódź. Nevertheless, 20% of the texts were written by freelance authors such as lecturers of the BTL and foreigners, i.e. students or graduates of this school.

## 3. THE LOGICAL CRITERIA OF LABELING GROUPS OF FOREIGNERS

In our opinion, the act of labeling is a very important socio-linguistic activity, in which important pieces of information on attitudes of those who create labels toward those labeled are embodied. Moreover, we consider every act of labeling

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Polish for Foreigners at the University of Łódź was established in 1958 and, from the start, it specialized in preparing foreign students, many of them from less developed countries, for university education in Poland (after: Łaciak, Rakowski 2005). Until now more than 20 thousand students from more than a hundred countries have studied at the School.

<sup>3</sup> In her article on naming strategies applied by the oldest generations of Łódź inhabitants to the members of multicultural society of the city, Maria Kamińska (2005: 249) suggests that nowadays, the linguistic research on strangers to Łódź should focus on discussing the naming strategies concerning foreign students exactly from the School of Polish for Foreigners: *Obecnie funkcjonowanie Studium Języka Polskiego dla Cudzoziemców, gdzie uczy się wielu studentów “kolorowych”, stanowi nową okazję do językowego manifestowania się ksenofobii łodzian. Jednak jest to temat do osobnych rozważań i opartych na innych źródłach.* Our research responds to this suggestion.

an image of linguistic habits of a society in a certain moment of its history. Thus, we may regard the press labeling of foreigner groups as a significant indicator of attitudes and biases against strangers which exist in contemporary Poland.

The analysis carried out will be aimed at extracting from the press materials expressions referring to the foreigners living in the Babel Tower of Łódź and, arranging them according to the logical criteria they have been based on.

Let us start our review with **general expressions** which refer to all non-Polish students. They are, usually, the noun equivalents of phrases that can be paraphrased as ‘those, who are from not our / alien / foreign / country’; e.g. *cudzoziemcy*, *obcokrajowcy* (foreigners). In the Polish press discourse compound words are used very often, with or without a hyphen, such as: *studenci obcokrajowcy* / *cudzoziemcy* and *studenci-obcokrajowcy* / *cudzoziemcy* (‘foreign students’ and ‘students-foreigners’). All of them have been commonly used in the contemporary Polish language. There are some general expressions relating exclusively to the students connected with the BTL, such as: the periphrasis *sluchacze Studium Języka Polskiego dla Cudzoziemców* (the students of the School of Polish for Foreigners) and the metaphoric expression *mieszkańcy “(Łódzkiej) Wieży Babel”* (‘the inhabitants of the Babel Tower [of Łódź]’).

In short press reports which have discussed the present situation in the language center there are many expressions based on **the national / state criterion**. Thus, the students are labeled according to their nationality or place of descent, i.e. *studenci z...* (students from...) + name of their country, such as: *studenci z Sudanu, Syrii, Palestyny* (the students from Sudan, Syria, Palestine) and their adjectival variants: *studenci sudańscy, syryjscy, arabscy* (the Arabian / Syrian / Iraqi students). Among frequently used expressions, we have to include also such forms as: *mieszkańcy Nigerii, Sierra Leone, Kamerunu* (the citizens of Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Cameroon), one-word noun expressions such as: *Chińczycy, Koreańczycy, Kurdowie* (the Chinese, Koreans, Kurds). Possibly because they sound very formal in Polish, much more rare are **genitive expressions** created according to the model: *obywatele* (citizens) + name of the country in Gen. form, such as: *obywatele Iraku* (the citizens of Iraq). However, other analytic constructions, such as *Arabowie z Iraku / Kuwejtu* (Arabs from Iraq, Kuwait) are quite frequent, too.

**The ethnic-state criterion** is used in the case of an ethnic group living in not one but many states, e.g. *Kurd / Kurdowie z Syrii* (a Kurd / the Kurds from Syria) or *Kurdowie z tureckimi i syryjskimi paszportami* (the Kurds with Turkish and Syrian passports), “Dziennik Łódzki”, 30–31 May 1998; **the locative construction** in the first example, as well as attributive construction in the second one (see: underlined parts of expressions) are the elements which specify the meaning of these expressions. The same we may say about other “mixed” criteria (formally it appears as a compound word linked with a hyphen). Sometimes the specification of meaning proceeds through the application of the tribe criterion, as in the text *Kabulski gang* (a gang from Kabul):

*Szajkę spajala plemienna solidarność. Jej członkowie wywodzili się z tego samego regionu Afganistanu. [...] Wszyscy poza jednym, który przechowywał narkotyki, są Pasztunami („Kurier Polski”, 2 January 1995).*

(The gang was united by tribal solidarity. Its members came from the same region of Afghanistan. All of them, except one, were Pashtuns.)

The application of the **geographic criterion** is revealed through the expressions such as: *studenci / słuchacze / przybysze z Azji / z Afryki (z Czarnego Lądu) / z Ameryki Łacińskiej (Południowej) / z Bliskiego (Dalekiego) Wschodu; z krajów arabskich* (the students / course participants / newcomers from Asia / Africa (from The Dark Continent) / from the Latin (South) America / from the Middle/Far East / from Arabian countries and *Azjaci* (Asians); *Afrykańczycy / Afrykanie* (Africans); *Arabowie* (Arabs) etc. The label *Amerykanie* (Americans) refers only to North-Americans; if someone comes from Canada she / he is labeled as *Kanadyjczyk / Kanadyjka* (a Canadian). Also, more extended expressions have been created according to this criterion, see for example a honorific expression *goście zza wschodniej granicy* (guests from outside the Eastern border), “Express Ilustrowany”, 1 October 2001, referring to the 48 teachers from Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine, Belarus.

Sometimes, a mixed, **geographic-cultural criterion**, very often intersected with **the national criterion**, is applied; see the expressions: *Arabowie z Kuwejtu / Iraku*; (the Arabs from Kuwait / Iraq) which served the author of the article on summer in the BTŁ to accentuate the difference in the material status of Arabian students who came from the rich (i.e. the oil republics) and poor countries:

*Problemami z finansami i wyjazdem na wakacje nie mają Arabowie z Iraku i Kuwejtu, którzy jeżdżą nie tylko do rodzinnego domu, ale również do Francji, RFN („Dziennik Łódzki”, 25 July 1991).*

(The Arabs from Iraq and Kuwait who go [on holiday] not only home but to France and Germany as well, do not have any financial problems.)

Sometimes authors of reports on the BTŁ refer to the foreign students' religious affiliation, applying **the religious criterion**, as in following cutout:

*W Studium Języków Obcych (sic!) dla Cudzoziemców Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, gdzie kształcą się studenci z 60 krajów, są buddyści, ateści, wyznawcy religii animistycznych z Afryki, islamu oraz różnych gałęzi chrześcijaństwa („Express Ilustrowany”, 28–30 December 1990).*

(In the School of Foreign Languages [sic!] for Foreigners at the University of Łódź, where there study students from 60 countries, there are Buddhists, atheists, animists from Africa, and the followers of Islam and various branches of Christianity.)

The labels based on **the race criterion** are manifested in expressions such as: *Murzyni* (the Blacks); *studenci z Czarnej Afryki* (the students from Black Africa); *kolorowi* (the people of color); “*czarne piętra*” (“black floors”) versus “*białe piętra*” (“white floors”) (from the reader's letter; “Gazeta Wyborcza”, Łódź, 19

January 1990). The first three labels are very often applied in the Polish language toward dark-skinned people while the last two expressions are metaphors referring to tenants' arrangement in the Dormitory No. 14, where most foreigners are accommodated. It should be explained here that the lower floors of this 11-floor building have been designed for Polish residents while the top ones for foreign students, among whom reside many black students and "students of color".

Considering all the contextual factors, we may say that metaphors of "black and white floors" are based on **the ethical criterion**, too, because black floors, as opposed to white ones, are those where something tragic happens (see our explanation in a footnote nr 3). Although the metaphors discussed here are not conventionalized, they are interesting examples of how the mental images of foreigners have been created in the press readers' minds.

Among other "mixed" criteria we may find **the race-linguistic criterion**, present in a following expression: *studenci o różnych kolorach skóry, mówiący różnymi językami* (students of various colors, speaking various languages).

The application of **the geographical-racial criterion** can be noticed in the labels such as: *Azjaci* (Asians), because the inhabitants of Asia are usually representatives of the yellow race, *Afrykańczycy* (Africans), because in Africa there usually live representatives of the black race, *Europejczycy* (Europeans), because the inhabitants of Europe are usually white. Labeling of groups of foreigners according to this criterion proceeds when a piece of press discourse describes a situation which involves at least two members of different races and, at the same time, geographical regions. Therefore, when we read the following piece of report about a street-fight we may expect that the reporter, used the lexeme 'Asians' in order to accentuate the difference in race traits of the fight participants:

[...] *Po kilku minutach kolega S. również opuścił dyskotekę. Zobaczył, że parę metrów dalej bije się kilkanaście osób- Polaków i Azjatów [...]* („Gazeta Wyborcza”, Łódź, 11 May 1998).

(After some time S's companion left the discothèque. He saw that, a few meters farther, several Poles and Asians were fighting.)

Our observation, supported by anthropological research, proves that usually Poles do not recognize specific subgroups of Asians (i.e. the Chinese, Koreans, the Japanese) or Africans (the Ethiopians, Nigerians etc.), and they usually stretch the label 'Asians' or 'Africans' over every person of prototypical looks, coming from Asia or Africa.

Moreover, the labels based on **the geographical (state) – cultural criterion** can be distinguished, such as: *Afro-Amerykanie / Afroamerykanie* (African-Americans). At this point of our analysis, we have to admit that sometimes, e.g. when a label 'Arabs' or 'students from Arabian countries' etc... appeared in press texts, it was difficult to decide on which criterion the expressions have been based; on the geographical-cultural criterion or race criterion? As Ewa Nowicka (1990: 157),

a cultural anthropologist dealing with the problem of Poles' attitudes toward different foreign groups, stated, Poles tend not to include Arabs among the representatives of white race.

Politics, similarly to race, very often becomes an important logical basis of naming strategies. Thus, **the political criterion**, serves the press authors to create the expression such as *obywatele byłych krajów socjalistycznych* (the citizens of former socialist countries). However, in the collected press materials, the mixed, **political-geographical criterion**, has been used much more often. It is manifested in the labels of citizens of the continents or states which were divided because of political reasons; the lines of this division are: East-West and North-South. Compare such expressions as: *wschodni Europejczycy / Europejczycy ze Wschodu* (Eastern Europeans / Europeans from the East), *studenci / cudzoziemcy z Zachodu / z Europy Zachodniej* (the students / foreigners from the West / from the Western Europe), *Polonia wschodnia / zachodnia* (the Eastern/Western Polonia); *obywatele pochodzący z państw byłego Związku Radzieckiego* (the citizens of the former Soviet Union), *osoby / studenci z terenów / krajów byłego ZSRR* (the people / students from the territories / countries of the former USSR).

The same criterion works when there have been created such labels as: *Niemcy z byłej / dawnej NRD* (Germans from ex-/former GDR) versus *Niemcy z zachodniej części kraju / z byłej RFN* (the Germans from Western part of the state / from ex-GFR) or *mieszkańcy dawnej Czechosłowacji* (the inhabitants of the former Czechoslovakia). Very often, all the people living outside the Eastern border of Poland, not only in Russia, are labeled as *Ruscy*; sg. *Ruski* (colloquial form of Russians / Russian). Also, in some press texts students from Vietnam have been distinguished according to **the political-geographical criterion**, such as: *Wietnamczycy "północni" i "południowi"* (the "North" / "South" Vietnamese) and their variants without quotation marks. The last nominative strategy has been applied by the author in order to comment on the behavioral differences among Vietnamese from the South and from the North.

*De facto*, every expression can be created with an author's different intention e.g. the ethnonims 'European' or 'Asian' can be applied to accentuate cultural roots of a person, not only her / his affiliation to a specific geographical region.

Our research has proved that the expression based on **the economical-geographical criterion** i.e. *studenci / młodzież z Trzeciego Świata* (students / the youth from the Third World) ("Sukces", 7 July 1994) applied to people of the less developed countries, which was widespread in 70's or 80's of the previous century, has been occasionally present in the texts written in 90's or later. Nowadays, the "politically correct" term applied in this situation is *studenci / młodzież z krajów rozwijających się* (students / the youth from the developing countries).

**The identification criterion has become the basis for many expressions concerning people of Polish origin, i.e. the members of Polish colonies, such as: *Polonia (z różnych stron świata)* (People of Polish origin from different parts of the**

world) / *Polonusi* / *polonusi* (colloquially: people of Polish origin); *rodacy* (fellow-citizens); *polonijni studenci* / *studenci polonijni* (students of Polish origin); *nie-cudzoziemcy* (non-foreigners); *Polacy z* (Poles from) + name of a country; e.g. *Polacy z Kazachstanu* / *z krajów arabskich* (Poles from Kazakhstan / from Arabic countries). Some expressions are periphrases of *Polonia* (= Polish colony abroad), i.e. *dzieci emigrantów* (emigrants' children) or paraphrastic definitions of this lexical unit, as in a following piece of press discourse: [*Polonia*=] *osoby, których przynajmniej jedno z rodziców jest narodowości polskiej* ( *Polonia* = people who have at least one of the parents of Polish nationality) ("Gazeta Wyborcza", Łódź, 6–7 July 1991).

While the expressions cited above can be applied to many groups of people of Polish descent, there are many more specific labels which have been created according to the mixed **identity-geographical** or **identity-political criteria**. See for example such expressions as: *Polonia radziecka* (the Soviet Polonia) serving to identify all people of Polish origin who lived in the states outside the Eastern border, which in the past belonged to the USSR; *młodzież polonijna z byłych republik radzieckich* (the youth of the Polish origin from former Soviet Union); *Polonia ze Wschodu* / *z Zachodu* (*Polonia* / People of Polish origin from the East/ from the West). The notions of 'East' and 'West' can be, depending on the situation, included in the semantic spheres of politics, economics or geography. The effect of this ambiguity is that some labels lack precision.

The labels which are motivated by **the identity criterion** differ from each other in key (emotional sign) and affiliation to a stylistic register. For example, an expression *reprezentant* / *przedstawiciel Polonii* (a representative of Polonia) may be treated as neutral and formal, *Polonus* / *polonus* (a member of Polonia) as colloquial or ironic, depending on the context, *rodak* (a fellow-citizen) as a stylistically neutral label of a positive key, emphasizing the author's attitude and association to a described person, *nasi młodzi rodacy ze Wschodu* (our young fellow-citizens from the East) as a label of a positive key, belonging to a rhetorical style, while *Polak z Kazachstanu* as stylistically neutral expression of positive key and with high factor of an author's self-identification to a described person.

An interesting problem for a linguist are self-labels created by the students of Polish origin, who come to the BTL from Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and other states situated outside the eastern border of the Polish Republic and, who are disappointed with how they have been treated in Poland. Among expressions which are very often listed by them are: *Polaki* ('Poles' in Russian) which was a label given to the Poles in their Russian-speaking countries; *Ruscy* / *ruscy* / *Ruskie* / *ruskie* (colloquially: Russian; the Soviet), which is a widespread label given by Poles living in Poland nowadays to people coming from the Russian-speaking countries situated outside the Eastern border, also *Polacy drugiej kategorii* (the second-rate Poles), see for example:

[...] *Dziewczyny z Kijowa, bardzo dobrze mówiące po polsku, powiedziały w czasie zajęć – na Ukrainie jesteśmy „Polaki”, a w Łodzi „Ruskie”* [...] („Gazeta Wyborcza”, Łódź, 6–7 July 1991).

(Girls from Kiev, who are very fluent in Polish, said, “In Ukraine we are «Polaki» [Polish] but in Łódź we are «Ruskie» [Russian]).

#### 4. DEFINING BLACK PEOPLE

In our collection of press materials there are many expressions, general or created occasionally, relating to the groups of black students, usually Africans, learning at The School of Polish for Foreigners in Łódź. Among the expressions most often used by the authors of press articles, we may enumerate e.g.: *ludzie / studenci o różnych kolorach skóry* (people/students of various skin colors), [*ci, którzy*] *przyjechali z Afryki* ([those who] came from Africa), *studenci pochodzący z Afryki* (students coming from Africa), *afrykańscy studenci / studenci z krajów afrykańskich* (African students / students from the African countries), *studenci z Sudanu, Nigerii, Etiopii...* (students from Sudan, Nigeria, Ethiopia...), *Afrykanie / Afrykańczycy* (Africans), *Murzyni* (Blacks; neutral or offensive, depending on the speaker’s or author’s intention), *grupa Murzynów* (a group of Blacks); *Nigeryjczycy, Etiopczycy* (the Nigerians, Ethiopians) + other ethnonyms; *czarnoskórzy studenci / mężczyźni* (dark-skinned students / men; literally: black-skinned...) + their sg. forms. We observe that these labels have been based on the **geographical criterion**, as well as on the **national / state** and **race criteria**. All of them, including the labels with a lexeme *Murzyn*, are generally regarded by Poles and the majority of Polish linguists likewise, as neutral, although we hold a different view on this matter<sup>4</sup>.

Among the more rarely used expressions, there are some typical colloquial labels and phrases, such as: *dzikus* (savage), *czarnuch* (nigger), *smoluch* (sloven = dirty; filthy); *zachowywał się, jakby wczoraj zlał z drzewa* (He behaved as if he had climbed down the tree yesterday). All of them are the manifestations of bad feelings and prejudice against black people; in our collection of press texts, there were a taxi driver’s statements, cited in “Gazeta Wyborcza”, Łódź, 28 February 1992, in the article on Poles’ attitudes toward foreign students studying in Łódź. Also, the labels belonging to a formal stylistic register are quite rare, see the following examples: *egzotyczny goście* (exotic guests), *absolwenci Afrykanie* (African graduates); both expressions have been applied to dark-skinned graduates of Polish universities who attended a conference held in Łódź in 1994; i.e. to people of high status.

<sup>4</sup> In our opinion the labeling practices should respect the views of the defined subjects. And, as a matter of fact, there are no black people in Poland who accept the label *Murzyn*; see more about this in the note No. 8.



Also such labels as: *sluchacze / studenci z Czarnej Afryki / z Czarneho Lądu* (course participants / students from Black Africa / Dark Continent<sup>5</sup>), *czarni* (blacks); *czarni / czarnoskórzy studenci* (black; dark-skinned students) are not so often used by the authors of press articles as the expressions listed in a first paragraph of this section.

Among colloquial labels, which are present in the press texts, we may enumerate also some expressions, such as: *Bambo*, diminutive *Murzynek Bambo* (a little Black, named Bambo), *Murzynek* (little black boy), *czarny koleżka* (black buddy) which are the labels of a nice but very ethnocentrically portrayed black hero of Julian Tuwim's child verse entitled *Bambo*. In our collection of press texts, the labels *Bambo / Murzynek Bambo* have been applied by the reporters for a description of a cute black child of a family living in Dormitory No. 14 but an expression *czarny koleżka* (black buddy) was applied to Gino – the black drug dealer who, as the reporters settled, lived in the dormitory illegally. Although Polish users of the labels listed above do not regard them as racist or contemptuous, black visitors who are familiar with Polish culture and sociolinguistic peculiarities of communication in our speech community, reject these labels, regarding them as a manifestation of Poles' stereotypical thinking about black people<sup>6</sup>.

As the most neutral labels applying to the dark-skinned students we regard those which give no indications of the color of their skin; i.e. those which are not based on the race criterion. These are, for example, all the expressions which point to the country / state / abode of a defined person, i.e. based on a state / national / geographical / cultural or a combination of criteria, such as: *Nigeryjczycy* (the Nigerian), *Afrykanie* (Africans), *studenci z Afryki / Czarneho Lądu* (the students from Africa / the Dark Land / Continent) + their sing. forms. Also the compound adjectival-noun forms, such as: *Afroamerykanie*<sup>7</sup> (African-Americans) as well as

<sup>5</sup> *Czarna Afryka* (Black Africa) does not mean the same as *Czarny Ląd* (Dark Continent). The first one refers to Africa or, more accurately, to this part of Africa which is inhabited by black people while the second expression is a general and widespread periphrasis of Africa of literary provenience. As Mirosław Bańko (2003: 46) explains, it was Henry Morton Stanley, a British traveler who first used this expression in his book *Through the Dark Continent*, 1878, which was to mean that the interior of Africa was unknown as if dark, to Europeans.

<sup>6</sup> *Bambo*, a little black scamp from Tuwim's poem was portrayed in a very stereotypical way. The black boy climbs the tree while his mother is talking him into drinking some milk. He does not want to wash himself because he is afraid that he will get white. However, at the same time he is a very diligent student, who reads all the mornings his first reader. It must be added that *Bambo*, similarly to *Kali*, another black hero from a well-known children novel of Sienkiewicz, became for Poles a prototype of an African. Easy rhymes of Tuwim's poem are easily remembered by Polish children who, while meeting black person, happen to recite some pieces of the poem in their presence, which makes black people shocked or angry.

<sup>7</sup> An expression *Afroamerykanie* (African-Americans), similarly to more general expression *czarnoskórzy* (dark-skinned), has been continuously getting in popularity among the press authors who are proponents of political correctness. Those who are opponents of PC, usually apply specifically Polish label *Murzyni* while defining black people.

adjectival expressions *Czarni / czarni* (Blacks / black), their longer variants *czarnoskórzy* (literarily: black-skinned) and *ciemnoskórzy* (literarily: dark-skinned) + their adjectival-noun variants, such as: *czarni / czarnoskórzy studenci*, can be considered neutral labels. All the same, it must be admitted that the longer, analytic, forms sound in Polish much gentler than the one-word noun expressions. We find it very important that all of them are approved of by the people which are defined by them.

The dark-skinned regard the labels: *Murzyn / pl. Murzyni* as signs of linguistic discrimination because they link this label with the times of slavery and they find the confirmation of this belief in some Polish-English dictionaries<sup>8</sup>. Polish lexicologists have quite a different opinion about this problem and they consequently define these lexemes as neutral labels of dark-skinned people (see for example: Szymczak 1993; Bańko 2000). A lexeme *Murzyn* was not inserted in the dictionary of colloquial Polish (Anusiewicz, Skawiński 1998), which explicitly forces us to treat this label as neutral. But, nevertheless, as our research on the naming strategies applied to black people has proved, this is not at all true, because a lexeme *Murzyn*, together with the negative and contemptuous colloquial synonyms of a lexeme *czarny* (black), such as: *smoluch* (sloven, dirty), *czarnuch* (nigger), *asfalt* (asphalt), which are present in the dictionary, are very often used as a component of offensive phrases directed to dark-skinned visitors<sup>9</sup>.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Our analysis has proved that the authors of the press articles concerning The Babel Tower of Łódź tend to select, during the process of defining the groups of foreigners, the labels which are very often based on the race criterion and are not accepted by the described people. This statement refers primarily to the black students. Moreover, the exotic, visually different students are, truly or not, negative heroes of many singular press texts or the text series<sup>10</sup>. It needs to be highlighted

<sup>8</sup> In an older Polish-English dictionary a label *Murzyn* is translated as Negro, see: Stanisławski 1986, part A–U: 533–534). In *A Feminist Dictionary* (Kramarae, Treichler 1989:298) we may find C. Robinson's (1981:367) description of black people's (intellectuals?) attitude toward the 'Negro' label, which we find very convincing: *The 'Negro', that is the color black, was both a negation of African and a unity of opposition to white. The construct of Negro, unlike the older terms African, Moore or Ethiopie, suggested no situatedness in time, that is history, or space, that is ethno- or politico-geography. The Negro had no civilization, no cultures, no religions, no history, no place and finally, no humanity which might command consideration [...]. The first task of black intellectuals in the 19th century was to destroy 'the Negro' in order to reassert the historical tradition of African people.*

<sup>9</sup> I discuss the problem of "hate speech" addressed to dark-skinned people in: Zarzycka 2006: 268–287.

<sup>10</sup> As it was in 1998, after the tragic death of one BTL Nigerian resident.

that the problem of press stigmatization concerns African students, who are considered “distant strangers” by Poles.

Moreover, our analysis has shown that the press authors are inconsequent in their attempts to define “close strangers” i.e. people / students who have crossed the Polish eastern border which concerns students of Polish origin, likewise. In this case, in the press articles, there are as many labels based on the neutral, state criterion and the political and identity criteria. Poles from the East, interviewed by the authors, tend to report on their lack of mental comfort in Poland where, as they say, they are considered Russians (*Ruscy*). The naming strategies which have been applied to both types of strangers reflect common perception of foreigners in Poland which is not at all free from xenophobia and, at the same time, is an image of the Polish’s complexes and their feeling of superiority.

In democratic Poland, Polish journalists and their interlocutors feel free to say whatever they have on their minds as regards many matters, and the effect of their lack of self-control is a very negative image of the foreign students in Łódź and The Babel Tower of Łódź, which has been their residence for many years. A thorough study of the names which have been given to The Babel Tower of Łódź (see: table 1), make us conclude that it is the press writers who are responsible for a very negative perception of the foreigners in Łódź. We are sure that many variants of the BTL’s names, among them metaphors of war, segregation and exclusion, as well as the press labels and descriptions of foreigners, have already been impressed on the readers’ minds, producing a mental script.

In all likelihood, the press image of The Babel Tower of Łódź would be much more positive if its residents were the representatives of the richer, “predominant”, parts of the world, such as the U.S.A. or the EU countries. In order to test this, the comparative analysis on the media images of different enclaves of foreigners in Poland, among them the centers of Polish language for foreigners in Kraków, Lublin or Warszawa, should be undertaken.

Table 1. Press labels of the foreign students’ residence in Łódź (see: Zarzycka 2006: 71)

Lp.	The labels	Characteristics	Key (the emotional sign)
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>XIV Dom Studenta</i> (Student House/ Dormitory No. 14)</li> <li><i>XIV DS</i> (S.H. No. 14)</li> <li>■ <i>czternastka</i> (Fourteen)</li> <li>■ <i>wieżowiec przy Kopcińskiego / Matejki</i> (the sky-scraper at the Kopcińskiego / Matejki Street)</li> </ul>	Colloquial non-metaphoric expressions	Neutral

Table 1. – cd.

Lp.	The labels	Characteristics	Key (the emotional sign)
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>Wieża Babel</i> (The Babel Tower)</li> <li>■ „<i>Wieża Babel</i>” („The Babel Tower”)</li> <li>■ <i>nowa / stara Wieża Babel</i> (The new / old Babel Tower)</li> <li>■ <i>Łódzka Wieża Babel</i> (The Babel Tower of Łódź)</li> <li>■ „<i>Łódzka Wieża Babel</i>” („The Babel Tower of Łódź”)</li> <li>■ <i>Babel</i> („The Babel”)</li> </ul>	Depending on the context: a) a metaphor of diversity b) a metaphor of chaos	Depending on the context: a) positive b) negative c) neutral (as <i>clichés</i> , metaphors of The Babel Tower lose, in many contexts, their emotional sign)
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>Sajgon</i></li> <li>■ <i>Belfast</i></li> <li>■ <i>Sarajewo</i></li> </ul>	Metaphors of war	Negative
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ „<i>wyższe piętra</i>” (“top floors”)</li> <li>■ „<i>czarne piętra</i>” (“black floors”)</li> <li>■ <i>getto</i> (ghetto)</li> <li>■ <i>Getto wyższych pięter</i> (Ghetto of the top floors)</li> <li>■ <i>Getto nr czternaście</i> (ghetto nr 14)</li> <li>■ <i>zoo</i> (the zoo)</li> </ul>	Metaphors of segregation, discrimination, exclusion, isolation	Negative
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>Piekielny akademik</i> (Infernal dorm)</li> <li>■ <i>Pechowy akademik</i> (Unlucky dorm)</li> <li>■ <i>Parszywa czternastka</i> (Dirty / scabby fourteen)</li> <li>■ „<i>Wylęgarnia zła</i>” (“Hatchery of evil”)</li> </ul>	Metaphors of evil and terror	Negative

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Grażyna Zarzycka

**KATEGORYZOWANIE GRUP CUDZOZIEMSKICH WYRAŻAJĄCE SIĘ  
W ICH NAZYWANIU  
(NA PODSTAWIE ANALIZY POLSKIEGO DYSKURSU PRASOWEGO)**

(Streszczenie)

**Słowa kluczowe:** polski dyskurs prasowy, postawy, wizerunek prasowy, nazywanie, kategoryzowanie, metafory w dyskursie prasowym, cudzoziemcy, Łódzka Wieża Babel

Celem tej socjokulturowej analizy dyskursu jest określenie kryteriów logicznych, służących autorom tekstów prasowych do nazywania grup etnicznych, które reprezentowali słuchacze Studium Języka Polskiego dla Cudzoziemców UŁ, mieszkający w XIV Domu Studenckim, nazywanym popularnie Łódzką Wieżą Babel (ŁWB). Kolejne jej cele to wyodrębnienie strategii nominacyjnych stosowanych do opisu osób czarnoskórych oraz wyrażen metaforycznych używanych w opisie siedziby studentów zagranicznych UŁ. W korpusie analizowanych tekstów znajduje się 150 artykułów opublikowanych w latach 1989–2003, których wiodącym tematem była ŁWB lub jej mieszkańcy. Analiza ta pokazuje, że to dziennikarze, nieustannie powielając te same wzorce nominacyjne, są w największym stopniu odpowiedzialni za wykreowanie w umysłach czytelników negatywnych skryptów mentalnych o określonych grupach etnicznych i samej ŁWB.