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LINGUISTIC REPRESENTATIONS OF THE NATIONAL IDENTITY OF THE GERMANS IN THE POLISH PRESS. A COGNITIVE LINGUISTIC INTERPRETATION

The purpose of the present paper is to analyse the press representations of Germany and the Germans. The material has been extracted from the texts published in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Rzeczpospolita*, and *Wprost* in the years 1999-2000. The analysis employs the framework of cognitive linguistics. It describes metaphors, metonymies, and cognitive models present in the analysed texts and attempts to show the connections between them, as well as the image of Germany and the Germans formed on such basis.

1. Introduction

The aim of the present paper is to discuss the representations of Germany and the Germans selected and analysed on the basis of the Polish press in the years 1999-2000. The excerpts used for the analysis come from two daily papers, *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita*, as well as from one weekly – *Wprost*. They concern different aspects of the Polish-German relations, for instance the shared land and history, the attitude to the state and law.

The choice of the press material was such as to exclude the newspapers representing pronounced left or right-wing points of view. I have decided to concentrate on the titles connected with the broadly understood centre of the political scene in Poland. I believe that this choice will lead to eliminating extreme opinions, which is important as far as the national identities are concerned.

2. The method

The method that I have employed is cognitive. A number of reasons can justify this choice. First, cognitive linguistics is a relatively new field of language analysis. As yet, it has not been fully applied in Poland to the analysis of national identities. The approach based on characteristic features and their statistical importance is still dominant – see, for example, Bartmiński (1995) and Walas (1995) in general. Secondly, metaphors, metonymies

and cognitive models, when discussed in the text analysis and presented in a systematic way, can reveal meanings not obvious on the surface of those texts. Thirdly, metaphors and metonymies can become the basis for selecting features listed in the feature-based linguistic representations of national identities.

3. The concept of social reality and the method

This concept is crucial to the present analysis and as such has to be introduced at this stage. Following Berger and Luckmann (1967), Berting and Villain-Gandossi explain that reality is a social construction originating in the thoughts and actions of the members of society and being a continuum of typifications and categorizations removed from the context of the direct experience, that is the face-to-face situation (1995:15-16). Language, due to its displacement function, plays a dominant role in it, just because it can go beyond the context of the direct experience and make our categorizations anonymous (Berting and Villain-Gandossi 1995:16). Since most social communication is linguistic communication, social reality is to a large extent reflected in its linguistic representations.

But language is also linked with human conceptual system, to which, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980:3), it gives access. These authors claim that our concepts "... structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world and how we relate to other people." (1980:3). Since they are largely based on metaphor and metonymy, the cognitive method can contribute a lot to the analysis of social reality.

4. The concept of national identity

An important part of our social reality is our national identity, as well as the identities of other nations with which we come into contact. Berting and Villain-Gandossi (1995) discuss the connection between the concept of national identity and that of national character. They argue that the former should be used with respect to our own national group (the so-called *inside* view) and the latter with respect to some other, usually neighbouring, national group and represent its *outside*, non-member view (1995: 18-19). For the contents of the present paper this question is of little importance. It is equally acceptable to speak of the Polish or German national character or identity.

A much more important point is the concept of nation. Berting and Villain-Gandossi (1995:19) quote Smith, who, speaking about national identity, strictly links this concept with "the multiple dimensions of our conceptions of nationhood" (1992:60). They largely accept Smith's (1992:60) multidimensional definition of a nation, which shapes the concept of national identity and includes the following elements: a human population sharing a historical territory and having its own name, common memories and myths of origin, a standardized public culture, a common economy and territorial mobility, common legal rights and duties for all its members (1995:19).

In the present paper I shall not follow Berting and Villain-Gandossi's view of the concept of national identity as being dependent on national stereotypes (1995:19). I at the same time admit that national identity is often stereotype-bound. The concept of stereotype being extremely complex (see Schaff 1981), the size and the purpose of this paper do not warrant a careful analysis of the part of the national identity of the Germans which is constrained by stereotypes. Throughout the paper only the concept of national identity will be used.

5. The national identity of the Germans so far

Turning now to the national identity of the Germans as seen by the Poles, I will refer in some detail to most of the different aspects of this concept. Before I proceed, a sketch of the view of the national identity of the Germans hitherto alive in Poland would be apposite. It has played an important role among the Poles due to the long and complex interaction between the two nations.

Wrzesiński (1995) examines the evolution of the Polish view of the Germans from the 18th to the 20th centuries. Both positive and negative aspects are included. By the end of the 18th century, the Poles saw the Germans as alien, unfriendly, mainly preoccupied with material values, having bad intentions towards Poland, brutal, aggressive, war-oriented, wishing to dominate over other nations, loving power and the army. Such view of the Germans at least to some extent must have been shaped by the partitions of Poland at the end of the 18th century. The positive aspects included praise of German administrative skills, civic discipline, the cultural values (Wrzesiński 1995:185).

Little changed during the 19th century. Wrzesiński quotes a substantial number of labels and slogans that accompanied the negative view of the Germans at that time. They include the proverb of the Old Polish Commonwealth in the 16th century – ‘As long as the world lasts, the Pole will never be the German’s brother’; the struggle of the Slavs against the Teutons, the *Mark Brandenburg*, the *Tannenberg* battle, *Brandenburg Kurfuerste*, Prussian drill, Prussian militarism, the German *Reich*, *Drang nach Osten*, etc. (Wrzesiński 1995:186).

Most of the negative features seemed to have been confirmed during the two World Wars. After World War II, the East Germans were seen as allies, but the whole bunch of the negative features was instead ascribed to the West Germans.

Wrzesiński argues that a new shape of the German national identity is coming into being in Poland, but the whole process will take time (1995:190). In spite of the changes in Europe in the years 1989-1990, including the reunification of Germany, many negative features ascribed to the Germans still last. For instance, many interlocutors (personal communication) still mention the civic, almost military discipline of the Germans. They regard the Germans, via the conceptual metaphor UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING, as *blind* followers of their leaders, who are ready to fulfil orders without imagining or understanding their consequences.

6. The national identity of the Germans in the Polish press

If we now look at the selected Polish press titles of the last year – the contents of the articles, but also the use of some phrases – the following conclusion is justified: yes, the Polish view of the national identity of the Germans changes or, to use Wrzesiński’s term, the process of its demythologization takes place (1995:190). On the other hand, very many aspects of the old identity are still there or at least lurk behind the changes.

I will now provide the analysis of the contents of the selected press excerpts. The analysis will follow the structure of the concept of national identity as outlined in section 4 above.

6.1. The standardized public culture of the Germans

I begin with the discussion of the standardized public culture of the Germans. Here the Germans are presented as rational, orderly, punctual, reliable, hard-working, clean,

persevering, ambitious, sensitive, polite, well-mannered, cultivated, enlightened, loving perfection, loving greatness (the Faustian identity). This selection is based on the article "Buddenbrookowie w Warszawie" ["Buddenbroocks in Warsaw"] by Andrzej Szczypiorski, published in *Gazeta Wyborcza* (September 18-19, 1999) on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II. Szczypiorski argues that many of these features functioned in Poland as aspects of the national identity of the Germans already before World War II, and that they were also present among the Germans themselves (1999:17-18).

Contrasted and sometimes inconsistent with them is a set of negative features of the Germans, who in the same article by Szczypiorski are presented as irrational, barbaric, loving power, showing little self-discipline as far as power is concerned (1999:17-18). The study by Bartmiński (1995) to a large extent confirms the existence of such features.

The feature describing the Germans as 'irrational' is given in the following excerpts from the article by Szczypiorski:

- (1) W tamtych czasie Niemcy biegali po Warszawie jak *szaleńcy*. Nie można było przejść spokojnie ulicą bez poczucia *śmiertelnego zagrożenia* ... (p. 17)
[At that time the Germans were running around in Warsaw like *madmen*. One could not cross the street without the accompanying feeling of *deadly terror* ...]
- (2) ... że ich [spalonych książek] popioły rozwiał *wściekły* wichur Tysiącletniej Rzeszy. (p. 17)
[... the ashes of the burnt books having been blown away by a *mad* gale of the *Reich* one thousand years old.]
- (3) Fenomen Heinego dowodzi pośrednio, że Niemcy jeszcze wiele lat po ostatniej wojni nie do końca wyzbyli się pewnych *urojeń* wobec własnej przeszłości ... (p. 17)
[The Heine phenomenon proves indirectly that long after the end of the last war the Germans have not quite given up certain *delusions* concerning their own past.]
- (4) Wtedy zawołałem: 'To jakiś *wariat!*' 'Żaden *wariat* – odparł spokojnie chłop – To Niemiec!' (p. 18)
[Then I called out: 'It must be a *madman!*' 'No *madman* – the peasant answered calmly – It's a German!']

The following excerpt is an expression of the feature of 'barbarism':

- (5) ... musiałem okazywać Niemcom dumne dowody mojej aryjskiej przynależności. Pochylali głowy nad moim rozporkiem, jakby to było jakieś bezcenne dzieło sztuki albo *germański totem plemienny*. (p. 17)
[... I had to show the Germans the proud evidence of my Aryan status. They would bend their heads over my privy parts as if it was a priceless work of art or some *Germanic tribe totem*.]

Such listing of features is a way of making category judgements. It is based on metonymy where a subcategory representing a number of features is automatically used to refer to ('stand for') the whole category. The metonymy is of the sort described by Lakoff (1987) and formulated by Kovecses and Radden (1998) as A MEMBER OF A CATEGORY FOR THE CATEGORY. In our case it should be worded SOME MEMBERS OF THE CATEGORY FOR THE WHOLE CATEGORY.

In this way, the principle of metonymy underlies the typifications mentioned by Berger and Luckmann (1967), which form the texture of reality as a social construction (see section 3). Such typifications, though alive among their users, are not out there in the "objec-

tive" reality. They are real because they are a product of our ability to categorize the phenomena around us.

Metonymy underlies the feature-based representations of social reality in yet another way, not connected with a number of category members sharing some set of attributes. Only a part of the German history (the Nazi period) is selected to support the features of 'irrational' and 'barbaric'. Therefore, only a part of the "ICM of German history" is used to refer to the whole of the historical development of Germany that supposedly shaped the Germans into irrational and barbaric beings.

To what extent is it possible to postulate the existence of the "ICM of German history" or any other similar ICM? First, it can be delineated into a number of successive stages, e.g. the *I Reich* (the Roman Empire period), the *II Reich* (the Prussian period), the *Weimar Republic*, the *III Reich* (the Nazi period), the post-war period. Secondly, various causal relationships between the periods can be postulated, e.g. the Nazi period as having its sources in the *II Reich*. This is similar to the ICMs, or structured scenarios, described by Lakoff (1987:78-79), which also have clearly delineated parts and involve specific causal relationships between them, even if the causation is understood only via metaphor (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1999:172-178). For example, in the "ICM of going somewhere in a vehicle" (Lakoff 1987:79), the causal relationships hold between its successive parts, that is the precondition *leads to* the embarkation, and the center *leads to* a specific finish, etc.

The "ICM of German history" is thus similar to a complex event ICM consisting of a number of successive subevents (cf. Kovecses and Radden 1998:51-52). It should properly be called a complex scenario ICM, since it is impossible to regard history as an event, but rather as a scenario divided into parts. With the former ICMs, only one subevent – initial, central, or final – is used to stand for the whole event (Kovecses and Radden 1998:52). In the present case, only the pre-final (last but one) period or stage would be used to stand for the whole insofar history of Germany. Kovecses and Radden introduce the metonymy **SUCCESSIVE SUBEVENT FOR COMPLEX EVENT**, which is a variant of the metonymy **PART OF AN EVENT FOR THE WHOLE EVENT**; the former metonymy may still involve the submetonymies of **INITIAL**, **CENTRAL**, or **FINAL SUBEVENT FOR COMPLEX EVENT** (1998:52). In our case, the following metonymies, in the order from the most general to the most detailed, would apply: **PERIOD/STAGE OF HISTORY FOR THE WHOLE HISTORY**, **SUCCESSIVE PERIOD/STAGE OF HISTORY FOR THE WHOLE HISTORY**, **PRE-FINAL PERIOD/STAGE OF HISTORY FOR THE WHOLE HISTORY**, all of them with reference to the history of Germany.

Kovecses and Radden, giving examples of different ICMs, explain the principles underlying the selection of the preferred vehicles, that is elements which provide access to concepts understood via metonymy, which are called the targets (1998:59). One of them is the perceptual principle of proximity, which selects the immediate stimuli, in a spatial and in a temporal sense, and is called **IMMEDIATE OVER NON-IMMEDIATE** (Kovecses and Radden 1998:65-66). In our case, the Nazi period in the history of Germany may serve as such immediate stimulus. Temporal proximity may, however, not be enough to account for such choice of the vehicle. Another principle, e.g. **EMOTIONAL OVER NON-EMOTIONAL**, would be required to account for the outside negative significance of the Nazi period in German history.

Unlike the ICM discussed by Lakoff (1987:79), the "ICM of German history" is based on metaphor. In this case it is the Moving Observer metaphor of time, which is "... central to

the cultural tradition of establishing histories and calendars” (Lakoff and Johnson 1999:155). The temporal variant of the perceptual principle of IMMEDIATE OVER NON-IMMEDIATE, which underlies the choice of the Nazi period as a metonymic vehicle and could be called TEMPORALLY PROXIMATE OVER TEMPORALLY NON-PROXIMATE (cf. Kovecses and Radden 1998:65-66), is itself based on the spatial metaphor of time. A complex relationship between metaphor and metonymy may thus exist also on the level inside the ICM.

Coming now to metaphor, the feature of ‘barbarism’ of the Germans may be a good illustration of it. The metaphor is based on the Great Chain of Being, that is a cultural model of beings and their attributes (Lakoff and Turner 1989:166). Lakoff and Turner (1989:171) represent the Great Chain of Being, combined with the commonsense theory of the Nature of Things (attributes of forms as linked to behaviour), in the following way:

THE NATURE OF THINGS PLUS THE GREAT CHAIN

- HUMANS: Higher-order attributes lead to higher-order behaviour.
- ANIMALS: Instinctual attributes lead to instinctual behaviour.
- PLANTS: Biological attributes lead to biological behaviour.
- COMPLEX OBJECTS: Structural attributes lead to functional behaviour.
- NATURAL PHYSICAL THINGS: Natural physical attributes lead to natural physical behaviour.

Krzyszowski does not include the level of COMPLEX OBJECTS, but adds the level of GOD, an absolute being (1998:93-94). On his model, NATURAL PHYSICAL THINGS are referred to as INORGANIC OBJECTS, and he argues that the presented hierarchy can be extended inside to include various sublevels, e.g. of natural and artificial, that is man-made inorganic objects. Intermediate levels are also possible, e.g. between GOD and HUMANS, though, for different reasons, the latter are not as obvious as the other levels (Krzyszowski 1998:95-96). In a similar way, it is possible to postulate within the level of HUMANS the sublevel of civilized people, who are above savages or barbarians forming another sublevel (cf. the romantic myth of the noble savage).

This second version of the model (GOD to INORGANIC OBJECTS) can be a source of at least twenty metaphors, e.g. A GOD IS A HUMAN BEING, PEOPLE ARE PLANTS, etc. (Krzyszowski 1998:96). The number of metaphors could be greater if the sublevels and intermediate levels were taken into account. One sublevel metaphor could be PEOPLE ARE BARBARIANS/SAVAGES. Common expressions supporting the existence of this metaphor, both English and Polish, can be quoted:

- (6) You *savage*!
- (7) Ty *dzikusie*!
- (8) He showed his *barbaric* cruelty.
- (9) What a *barbaric* way of thinking!

The metaphor can have its detailed version, that is THE GERMANS ARE BARBARIANS/SAVAGES, which is implied in the previously quoted expression (*Germanic tribe totem*). It is obvious that the use of such metaphorical expressions introduces a definitely negative axiological orientation.

The feature of ‘barbaric’, itself based on metaphor, may still involve a metonymic relationship. Its selection with respect to the Germans may again be based on using only a part of the “ICM of German history”, that is the Nazi period, to represent the whole of it (see pages 6-7). The details of this question have to be left aside now since investigating the

relationship between metaphor and metonymy is not the main target of the present paper.

Other features appear in several other articles about Polish-German relations. For example, in the article by Danuta Zagrodzka, which deals with Polish-German relations in Silesia (*Gazeta Wyborcza*, Sept 18-19, 1999), the Silesians, connected with Germany through the use of language, see themselves as orderly, working for the benefit of the land and the state. The Poles, who settled there after World War II, are perceived as disorderly, chaotic, state-destructive. Such judgements, whichever way they go, are often too sweeping and are based on metonymy. It has the form of A MEMBER/SOME MEMBERS OF A CATEGORY FOR THE CATEGORY (see pages 5-6). The vehicle of the metonymy is selected following the principle of STEREOTYPICAL OVER NON-STEREOTYPICAL, which is connected with the concept of cultural preferences (Kovecses and Radden 1998:68).

6.2. The shared land and history

Under this heading, which originally refers to an aspect of the national identity of only a single nation (see section 4), I shall include the points concerning the relations between the Poles and the Germans in Silesia and in Gdańsk, that is the places where the two nations have often come into direct contact. The following set of expressions merits attention, of which (10) to (13) come from Danuta Zagrodzka's article in *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Sept 18-19, 1999); (14) and (15) are, respectively, from the articles by Beata Zaremba (*Rzeczpospolita*, Sept 18-19, 1999), and Piotr Cywiński and Krzysztof Olejnik (*Wprost*, Mar 26th, 2000):

- (10) Potraktowano to jako *atak na polskość*. (p. 1)
[It was taken to be an *attack on* the Polish nation.]
- (11) "IV *powstanie śląskie*." (p. 1)
["The 4th Silesian *uprising*."]
- (12) ... oto powstaje '*piąta kolumna*'... (p. 13)
[... here comes the '*fifth column*'...]
- (13) To CDU zawsze nas *broniła*. (p. 15)
[CDU has always *defended* us.]
- (14) Nie może być *tylko dla Niemców*. (page numbers unknown)
[It can't be *only for the Germans*.]
- (15) "*Drang nach Osten*." (p. 34)
["*March to the East*."]

It follows from the provided examples that Polish-German relations are still understood in terms of war. This is not only in terms of war in general, as in examples (10) and (13) – here we have the general metaphor POLISH-GERMAN RELATIONS ARE A WAR. The remaining four expressions contain in their source domains references to specific instances of historical conflict between Poland and Germany. As such, they fall under the detailed metaphor POLISH-GERMAN RELATIONS ARE A POLISH-GERMAN WAR. This metaphor is very important if we realize that relations between any two nations could be conceptualized in terms of war. The heading "The 4th Silesian *uprising*" has as its source domain the uprisings of 1919-21 in Silesia, when intense fighting between the Poles and the Germans was involved. The '*5th column*' goes back to the times before the outbreak of World War II and the fact that the German minority in Poland was perceived as secretly cooperating with the Nazi regime. The label was already a metaphor at that time since its origin is the Spanish civil war. The expression '*only for the Germans*' again uses the World War II in its source domain and it calls to mind the widespread practice of keeping some public

buildings, places, and means of transport accessible only for the Germans. They were all labelled as *Nur fuer Deutsche*, which was translated into Polish as *Tylko dla Niemców*. Finally, the heading “*Drang nach Osten*” is connected with the Prussian/German nationalist propaganda of the 19th century and it refers to Germany’s territorial expansion in the central and eastern Europe, which was seen by the Poles as an ultimate source of wars. Tygodnik *Wprost* uses the phrase with reference to the Silesian Germans who, having emigrated to Germany after World War II, now have a double citizenship and are coming back to live in Silesia. Apart from that title, the authors of the article do not present this fact in any negative light.

6.3. The shared mythology

This is the next aspect to be discussed. Here the role played by the Teutonic Order is especially important. It has become a subject of a number of films, often grand-scale productions, and as such an important element of the propaganda both in the pre-war and post-war years.

Janusz A. Majcherek argues for a great culture-making role of the German Order in Polish history. He connects the issue with Poland’s being IN or OUT of the western civilization and presents the Order as emissaries of this civilization in the medieval Poland (*Rzeczpospolita*, Sept 25-26, 1999). The following expressions are used in the text:

- (16) ... [Polska] *wstępowała do* niej [cywilizacji zachodniej] ... (page numbers unknown)
 [... Poland *got into* the western civilization ...]
- (17) ... [jesteśmy] *uczestnikami* [zachodniej cywilizacji] ... (page numbers unknown)
 [... we *participate in* the western civilization ...]

We have here the metaphor WESTERN CIVILIZATION IS A CONTAINER, based on the *in-out* container structure imposed on the abstract concept of civilization. In cognitive linguistics the structure is called a container image schema or the image schema of containment (cf. Johnson 1987). Lakoff and Johnson argue that such cognitive structures have “... a *causal role* in bringing about an understanding” or are “*causal of* understanding” (1999:117) by structuring the external experience.

Returning now to our metaphor, the imposition of the in-out schema builds the logic of the expressed argument. If Poland, like Germany, is *in* the western civilization or wants to be *in* it, then at least a change of attitude towards the medieval part of Polish-German history or even the history of the relations between the nations in general should be envisaged.

6.4. The state and the law

It is, again, possible to interpret this aspect of Polish-German relations in terms of features. Marcin Klimkowski and Natasza Socha in their article “Donos obywatelski” [“The Citizen’s Denunciation”] in *Wprost* (Sept 26th, 1999) present the Germans as state-creative. The Poles are shown as lacking this feature.

Their state-creative behaviour is often linked with the willingness of the Germans to inform the police about different cases of breaching the public order. According to the authors of the article, co-operation with the police, unacceptable in Poland largely for historical reasons, is one of the fundamentals of the well-known German order.

In personal communication I have often heard my interlocutors say that they regarded Germany as a police state. This was because the citizens of this country wanted to co-

operate with the police to help maintain the public order. Such methods were indiscriminately referred to as the police methods.

Calling Germany a *police* state, itself based on metaphor THE GERMAN STATE IS THE POLICE, may have its origin in the present experience of the Poles, but also in the past. It may still be a camouflaged reference to the Prussian state, which was perceived in the 19th century Poland as efficient and well-organized, but also as ruled by the army and the police (see section 5 above). Whatever the case, this metaphorical evaluation seems to be conditioned by metonymy where only a part of the "ICM of the German state", that is its police apparatus, is highlighted. This highlighted part of the ICM plays a crucial role in the creation of the metaphor.

7. Conclusion

This paper has discussed the representations of Germany and the Germans in the Polish press of 1999/2000 employing the most important principles of cognitive linguistics. I believe that metaphors, metonymies, and cognitive models can be a productive tool in the analysis of the linguistic representations of national identities. It still remains to be seen if it is possible to explain the representations of Germany or the Polish-German relations in terms of a coherent system of metaphors and metonymies.

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