

PROFILING OF THE STEREOTYPE OF A RUSSIAN IN CONTEMPORARY POLISH

The paper is a part of a wider research programme concerned with national stereotypes in contemporary Polish. The scientific and social importance of the subject matter is appreciated in many research circles, a fact corroborated by the large number of relevant publications. The drawback of the analyses, however, is the lack of coherent methodology.

The present work follows the methodological tradition of the Lublin ethnolinguistic circle. In that tradition, research on stereotypes is based on the following assumptions:

- (1) stereotypes constitute an indispensable component of the cultural code;
- (2) rather than performing merely integrative or defensive functions in the social sense,

stereotypes are important from the cognitive and evaluative perspective (Putnam 1975);

- (3) the basis for the reconstruction of stereotypes are language data recoverable from the language system (lexis, derivatives, phraseology, etc.) and from texts (especially from fixed ones, such as proverbs, but also from popular texts of various authors and from public discourse). A stereotype is understood as an image of the relevant object shaped in the social experiential frame and entrenched in language, accessible via language and inherent in the knowledge of the world entertained by a particular community.

The basic conceptual tools used in the analysis, i.e. the *base* and *profiling of the elements of the base*, come from cognitive linguistics. Following the conception of Ronald Langacker, elements of the base are treated here as being derived from the base. The conception of profiling elaborated in Lublin is characterized by the conspicuous role of the speaking subject (*homo loquens*) and a specific methodology of describing the profiles. The methodology requires that the following be established:

- (1) relationships between a given profile and other elements of the relevant lexical-semantic field;
- (2) sets and oppositions of which the profile is an element;
- (3) the profile's textual and cultural equivalents;
- (4) an appropriately ordered set of aspects (facets) together with their content (also on the basis of extralinguistic cultural data).

This conception of profiling of concepts enables one to adequately reconstruct the image of a Russian entrenched in the consciousness of contemporary Poles. Contrary to the common view, there exist not just one but at least three variants (profiles) of the image. A Russian is perceived (1) as someone rather plain, a representative of the common people; (2) as an enemy, an aggressor, someone associated with hostile authorities; or (3) as a member of the intelligentsia, a democrat, a friend.

The paper also attempts to demonstrate the dynamic nature of the changes in the collective images of the neighbours of Poland as entertained by Poles. The dynamicity is revealed through a comparison of two questionnaires conducted among Lublin students, the first one in 1990 (a year before the disintegration of the Soviet Union), the second one in 2000.

REFERENCES:

Putnam, H. 1975. *Mind, Language and Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.