The meaning of word as a value (based on comparison of metonymization models in Polish and English)

Znaczenie wyrazu jako wartość (na przykładzie porównania modeli metonimizacji języka polskiego z językiem angielskim)

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Keywords

value of lexeme, linguistic value of meaning, speech value of meaning, metonymization patterns, homonymoidity

Słowa kluczowe

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the issue of value in the language in reference to meaning – the meaning is here understood as value. In order to present the complexity of lexical processes determining the change or preservation of semantic value of a lexeme, the effects of functioning of metonymization patterns in the Polish language have been compared to English.

They are, most of all, lexical speech-formation paradigms, as they are used for actualization of specific elements of invariant lexical meaning in the speech production process and as a result speech units (so called lexical-semantic variants of a word) come into being. In that case we can speak about some invariable value in a language as only the speech value undergoes a change (there is no appearance of a new lexical unit). However, metonymization models may also lead to creating new lexical units in the case of autonomizing a single current meaning in verbal activity of users of a particular language. The existence of separate

metonymizing patterns that create language signs (mostly single ones) is just as possible as transforming speech units resulting from regular metonymization patterns into the very same sign. The appearance of a new invariant meaning means creation of a new word. And then a new value appears in a language.

This brief and selective comparative analysis of functioning of lexical metonymization models in Polish and English shows the differences concerning the changes of linguistic value. All patterns mentioned in the article fulfill in Polish the function of actualization of speech meaning with no change in linguistic value of analyzed lexical units. However, in English, not every pattern has only the speech value.

Streszczenie

Artykuł jest poświęcony zagadnieniu wartości w języku w odniesieniu do znaczenia – znaczenie jest tu pojmowane jako wartość. W celu pokazania złożoności procesów leksykalnych zachodzących w języku, stanowiących o zmianie lub zachowaniu wartości semantycznej leksemu porównano rezultaty działania metonimizacyjnych modeli leksykalnych języka polskiego z językiem angielskim.

Aby wyjaśnić złożoność procesów leksykalnych zachodzących w języku, porównano rezultaty działania modeli leksykalnych języka polskiego z językiem angielskim. Jednymi z najtrudniejszych w kwestii wartościowania znaczenia są modele metonimizacyjne. Są to przede wszystkim leksykalne modele mowotwórcze, ponieważ służą do aktualizacji określonych elementów inwariantnego znaczenia leksykalnego w procesie produkcji mowy, a w wyniku ich działania powstają jednostki mowne (tzw. warianty leksykalno-semantyczne wyrazu). W takim wypadku można mówić o niezmiennej wartości w języku, gdyż zmienia się tylko wartość mowna (nie pojawia się nowa jednostka leksykalna). Modele metonimizacji mogą jednak doprowadzić również do stworzenia nowej jednostki leksykalnej w sytuacji usamodzielnienia się pojedynczego aktualnego znaczenia w działalności werbalnej użytkowników danego języka. Możliwe jest zarówno istnienie odrębnych metonimizacyjnych modeli tworzących znak językowy (najczęściej pojedynczych), jak i transformacja w taki znak jednostek mownych powstałych w wyniku regularnych modeli metonimizacji. Pojawienie się nowego inwariantnego znaczenia oznacza stworzenie nowego wyrazu. Wówczas pojawia się w języku nowa wartość.

Ta pobieżna i selektywna analiza porównawcza działania leksykalnych modeli metonimizacji w języku polskim i angielskim pokazuje różnice dotyczące zmian wartości językowej. Wszystkie wymienione modele pełniły w języku polskim funkcję aktualizacji znaczenia mownego bez zmiany wartości językowej analizowanych jednostek leksykalnych. Tymczasem dla języka angielskiego nie wszystkie modele miały jedynie wartość mowną.

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The meaning of word as a value
(based on comparison of metonymization models
in Polish and English)

Introduction

The question of value in a language is the most relevant issue concerning the meaning of a word. It can boldly be said that the meaning is the value of a word. The verbal realization of the cognitive (conceptual) view of the world differentiates individual languages in the utmost degree, being, at the same time, the most complex element of translation and the glottodidactic process.

In order to explain the complexity of lexical processes going on in a language I am going to compare the results of functioning of lexical paradigms in Polish and English. Metonymization paradigms seem to be ones of the most difficult in the matter of valuing meaning. They are, most of all, lexical speech-formation paradigms, as they are used for actualization of specific elements of invariant lexical meaning in the speech production process and as a result speech units (so called lexical-semantic variants of a word) come into being. In that case we can speak about some invariable value in a language as only the speech value undergoes a change (there is no appearance of a new lexical unit). However, metonymization models may also lead to creating new lexical units in the case of autonomizing a single current meaning in verbal activity of users of a particular language. The existence of separate metonymizing patterns that create language signs (mostly single ones) is just as possible as transforming speech units resulting from regular metonymization patterns into the very same sign. The appearance of a new invariant meaning means creation of a new word. And then a new value appears in a language.

The aim of the article is to determine if the change of speech meaning influences invariant language meaning, which constitutes the immanent value of a word. In order to achieve this goal I compared the effects of operating of chosen speech metonymization models functioning in Polish and English.

Languages are based on individual patterns and that is how they work. Lexical patterns usually generate dissimilar results in reference to semantic value in different languages. Even apparently similarly working patterns may come out with different results in different languages – while in one language only the speech value changes, in another one a new language value comes

into being. In order to compare different effects of metonymization patterns' functioning, I am going to present some of Polish noun patterns developedby me[1] and weigh them against English ones.

Chosen transformational metonymization patterns of Polish

1. THE MODEL OF TRANSFERRING the name of institution (1), (3) to its employees (2), (4). Polish examples show that functioning of this pattern changes only the speech value of a word. In English the meaning 'institution employees' is obtained by connecting the institution names (5), (7) with words 'the whole' (6) or 'staff' (8). So, the meaning 'institution employees' results from aggregate value of words nominating an institution and other words. There are examples, however, which demonstrate correspondence between Polish and English in terms of realization of a particular pattern. That concerns transferring the name of an organization (9), (11) to its members (10), (12). The mechanism of the model is analogical, although the rules of functioning of institutions and organizations are different. In English, similarly to Polish, the linguistic value of used words does not change. The names of organizations (13), (15) are identical to the names of their members (14), (16).

(1) *Bank* dziś jest nieczynny (institution).
(2) *Bank* bawił się na imprezie integracyjnej przez cały weekend (bank workers).
(3) *Uniwersytet* rekrutuje od lipca od września (institution).
(4) Nie mam pewności, czy *uniwersytet* zna już plan naprawczy (university workers).
(5) The *bank* is closed today.
(6) *The whole bank* enjoyed a whole weekend industry event.
(7) *The University* recruits from July to September.
(8) I am not sure if *the University staff* already knows our turnaround plan.
(9) Czy można się jeszcze zapisać do *kółka*? (organization).
(10) W tej książce można znaleźć publikacje mojego *kółka* (interest group members).
(11) *Partia* dofinansowywana jest z budżetu państwa w przypadku osiągnięcia progu wyborczego (organization).
(12) Czy pańska *partia* zdaje sobie sprawę z przyczyn tak złego wyniku wyborczego? (party members).
(13) Can I still sign up for *an interest group*?
(14) In this book you can find publications of *my interest group*.

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[1] M. Król, *Typologia homonimii językowej w aspekcie onomazjologiczno-dyskursywnym,* Kielce 2014, 313–328.

(15) *A political party* is subsidized by the government budget once it reaches election treshold.

(16) Does your *political party* realize the reasons for such poor results of the election?

Within one particular metonymic pattern it may come to originating of lexical units if a term, that was previously the reference of the notion of institution, becomes pragmatically relevant. That happens in the case of the lexeme '*police*'. An institution name (17) was here used to create originally a speech homonymoid[2] (naming institution workers), which transformed into a linguistic homonymoid afterwards (18). The English language has also undergone the process of autonomization of a lexical unit, which can be seen in the example (19) where an institution is mentioned (a word used in a singular form) as well as in the example (20) where the applied lexical unit, meaning 'policemen / police officers' is distinct as it is used in plural.

(17) *Policja* jest utrzymywana z podatków wszystkich obywateli (institution).

(18) *Policja* musi rozdzielić demonstrantów (police officers).

(19) The *police* is supported by all citizens' taxes.

(20) (*The police* have to separate the demonstrators.

2. THE MODEL OF TRANSFERRING the name of an institution (organization) (21), (23), (25), (27) to a place or a room where it is located (22), (24), (26), (28). A given model is always a speech transformational pattern in cases of those institutions (organizations) that may occupy more than one room and / or be scattered in location. The situation is analogical in English – we deal with the same lexical unit, however, the process of actualization of the speech meaning and the use of this item in the meaning of 'building' by means of a determiner – the name of an institution is not preceded by a determiner (29), (31), (33), (35), while the name of the building where it is located needs using it (30), (32), (34), (36). In this way the English language differentiates individual speech meanings of the lexical units that verbalize the ideas of institutions. The significant difference regarding realization of this particular model can be seen in examples (37–40). In English the analyzed model does not refer to some of the institution buildings (40).

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[2] The term created by Ivan Toroptzev to describe units (linguistic or speech units) which come into being as a result of transferring the name from the named word to the newly verbalized one based on the similarity or parallelism of both (I.S. Toropcev, Y*azik i rech* Woroneż 1985, p. 116 [И.С. Торопцев, *Язык и речь*, Воронеж 1995, с. 116].

(21) *Bank* jest instytucją obsługi finansowej (institution).
(22) Tu za rogiem jest *bank*, tam na pewno będzie bankomat (the building hosting a bank).
(23) Studia na naszym *uniwersytecie* to najlepsza inwestycja w przyszłość (institution).
(24) Czy może mi pani powiedzieć, gdzie jest *uniwersytet* (the building hosting a university).
(25) To *muzeum* ma w swoich zbiorach jeden z najsłynniejszych obrazów Chełmońskiego (institution).
(26) *Muzeum* jest na końcu ulicy (building or buildings).
(27) *Liceum* kończy się egzaminem dojrzałości (institution).
(28) Moje *liceum* jest w samym centrum miasta (the building where this particular school is/was located).
(29) *Bank* is a financial service provider.
(30) There's *a bank* round the corner, you'll sure find an ATM there.
(31) Studying at our *university* is the best investment in your future life.
(32) Can you tell me where *the university* is?
(33) This *museum* is in the possession of one of the most famous Chełmoński's paintings.
(34) *The museum* is at the end of the street.
(35) *High school* ends with maturity exam.
(36) *The high school* I attended is located downtown.
(37) *Policja* powołana jest do ochrony obywateli i powinna stać na straży prawa (institution).
(38) Zaparkuj przed *policją*, tylko nie przy samym wejściu (in front of the police station).
(39) *Police* has been constituted to protect and serve.
(40) Please, park your car in front of *the police station*, not at the entrance.

3. THE MODEL OF TRANSFERRING the name of a service provider (41), (43) to its location (42), (44). This pattern does not function in English (45–48).

(41) Mój wujek jest *zegarmistrzem* (occupation).
(42) *Zegarmistrz* jest między apteką a supermarketem (place, venue where a watchmaker works).
(43) *Dentysta* bierze dziś za plombę 100 złotych (occupation).
(44) Na rogu jest *dentysta*. Może znajdziemy tam toaletę? (dentist's office).
(45) My uncle is *a clockmaker*.
(46) *The clockmaker's* is between a pharmacy and a supermarket.
(47) *A dentist* takes a hundred for a filling today.
(48) There's *a dentist's* on the corner. We may find a restroom there.

4. THE MODEL OF TRANSFERRING the name of a place (space, room) to the people whom this place unites. That may be a living spot (49), (51) whose name is transferred to its inhabitants (50), (52). It may be an institution location (53), (55), (57), (59) whose naming is transferred to all persons who meet there either regularly or randomly (54), (56), (58), (60). They may as well be workers as customers, clients, pupils, students, spectators, listening public, congregation, etc. This pattern does not function in English. In order to name the kind of people associated with a particular place it is necessary to combine a noun which names the building (61), (63), (65), (67), (69), (71) with the word '*whole*' (62), (64), (66), (66), (68), (70), (72).

(49) Mieszkam w tym *bloku* pośrodku (building).
(50) Cały *blok* o tym mówi (inhabitants of the building=tenants)
(51) Kocham ten *dom* i nie chcę mieszkać nigdziej indziej (building).
(52) Zrobiła to na oczach całego *domu* (all tenants).
(53) Widzę ją w *szkole* codziennie, ale nie mam odwagi podejść do niej (building).
(54) *Szkoła* ma dzisiaj wyjście do kina (students and teachers).
(55) Umówiliśmy się przed wejściem do *kina* (in front of the building).
(56) Oświadczył się jej niebanalnie, na oczach całego *kina* (spectators and workers).
(57) *Filharmonia* jest teraz naprzeciwko rektoratu (building).
(58) *Filharmonia* zamarła w oczekiwaniu na kolejne dźwięki pięknego Requiem (spectators).
(59) *Kościół* jest między szkołą a nowym blokiem (building).
(60) Cały *kościół* uczestniczył w procesji (congregation).
(61) I live in *the apartment house* in the middle.
(62) *The whole apartment house* is talking about it.
(63) I love this *house* and I don't want to live anywhere else.
(64) She did that in front of *the whole house*.
(65) I see her at *school* every day, but I never dare to approach her.
(66) *The whole school* is out for the movies today.
(67) We made a date at *the cinema* entrance.
(68) He proposed to her unordinarily in front of *the whole cinema*.
(69) *The philharmonic* hall is across from the chancellor's office.
(70) *The whole philharmonic* hall froze awaiting next sounds of wonderful Requiem.
(71) *The church* is between the school and the new apartment house.
(72) *The whole church community* took part in the procession.

5. THE MODEL OF TRANSFERRING the name of an event (73), (75) to its participants (74), (76). It works both in Polish and in English (77–80) as a speech pattern – there comes to actualization of the element of lexical meaning required by a speaker and no new word comes into being.

(73) *Konferencja* odbędzie się w dniach 1–3 czerwca 2013 roku (event).

(74) *Konferencja* wzięła udział w wycieczce śladami Żeromskiego (conference participants).

(75) 19 maja o godzinie 12:00 *odbyła się* kolejna *manifestacja* absolwentów szkół górniczych pod siedzibą JSW (event).

(76) Francja: ulicami Paryża przeszła *manifestacja* w obronie życia (manifestation participants).

(77) *The conference* will be held from 1st through 3rd of June 2013.

(78) *The conference* attendees took part in a guided tour tracing Żeromski.

(79) On May 19th, at noon there was another *manifestation* of mining trade schools' graduates.

(80) France: a *manifestation* in defense of life walked through streets of Paris.

6. THE MODEL OF TRANSFERRING the name of a sports discipline (81), (83) to practices (82) or games (84) in a particular discipline functions in English analogically (the speech value of a lexical unit does not change) (85–88).

(81) *Piłka nożna* jest aktualnie w Polsce najpopularniejszą dyscypliną sportu, pomimo niepowodzeń naszej reprezentacji (discipline).

(82) O której dzisiaj jest *piłka* (nożna)? (soccer game).

(83) *Siatkówka* jest dyscypliną uwielbianą przez kobiety (discipline).

(84) Antek ma dzisiaj *siatkówkę*. Musisz go zawieźć punktualnie (volleyball practice).

(85) *Football* is currently the most popular sport In Poland in spite of our national team's failures.

(86) What time is *football* today?

(87) Women just adore *volleyball*.

(88) Antek has *volleyball* today. You must pick him up on time.

7. THE MODEL OF TRANSFERRING the name of a physical object (89) or a living creature (91) to its image in the form of a photo (90), (92), a film, or a picture. That pattern is also realized by native users of English (93–96). This model, as well as the two following ones are characterized by the fact that they deal with iconic signs, which come into existence as a result of metonymic transformation. It should be reminded here that iconic signs that have been created in this way are speech signs relating to a lexical invariant, being the meaning of introduced, imagined or represented by those signs objects or creatures.

(89) Podaj mi *laptopa*, leży na biurku (object).

(90) Z tych *laptopów* najsolidniej wygląda ten z lewej (in a photo).

(91) *Maciek* skończył dziś 2 lata (person).

(92) Aż trudno uwierzyć, że *Maciek* miał tu dwa lata (in a photo).

(93) Can you fetch me *the laptop*? It's on the desk.
(94) Out of these *laptops*, the one on the left looks most reliable.
(95) *Maciek* turned 2 today / *Maciek* is turning 2 today.
(96) It's hard to believe that *Maciek* was 2 here.

8. THE MODEL OF TRANSFERRING the name of a physical object (97) or a living creature (99) to its copy (98), a toy (100) or a figurine imitating it. Its action is identical in both languages. In English this given transformational actualization does not result in creating new lexical units as well (101–104). This pattern is very similar to the previous one, both concerning the iconic character of new speech signs and in the aspect of the matter of the term represented by it. The difference that has determined the necessity of separating those models stems from the extent of correspondence between presented terms. The photo of a dog, representing the way how the human eye sees the world is very different from a stuffed toy, which, with longer ears could be a bunny, with a trunk – an elephant, or a more or less formulaic picture. To make it even clearer, I would like to mention X-ray or ultrasound images showing a heart as an organ as well as toys, ginger breads or just simple drawings picturing a heart. It is not easy to find similarities between such 'hearts'.

(97) Te *garnki* mogą też być wykorzystywane do gotowania na kuchence indukcyjnej (physical objects).
(98) Zapakuj sobie wszystkie swoje *garnki*, patelnię i resztę kuchni, bo nie będziesz miała czym się bawić u babci (copied kitchen utensils).
(99) Popatrz, jaki śliczny *piesek* do nas biegnie (animal).
(100) Przynieś Oli jej różowego *pieska*, bo bez niego nie zaśnie (toy).
(101) These *pots* may also be used for cooking on induction cooker.
(102) Pack all your *pots*, a frying pan and the rest of your kitchen, or you'll have nothing to play with at grandma's.
(103) Look! What *a* pretty *puppy* is running towards us!
(104) Bring Ola *her* pink *puppy*, she won't fall asleep without it.

9. THE MODEL OF TRANSFERRING the name of a town (105) or another geographical location (107) to a spot on a map (106) or to a given segment of a map (108). The realization of this model in English does not lead to any change in the value of a linguistic lexical unit (109–112).

(105) *Moskwa* jest przepięknym miastem, ale należy też do najdroższych stolic świata (city).
(106) *Moskwa* jest w dół od Petersburga (on a map or a globe).
(107) W tym roku spędzam wakacje nad *Morzem Śródziemnym* (sea).
(108) Po prawej stronie *Morza Śródziemnego* jest Francja (on a map or a globe).

(109) *Moscow* is a fabulous city, but it is also one of the most expensive capitals of the world.
(110) *Moscow* is below St. Petersburg on a map.
(111) I'm spending my vacation at *the Mediterranean Sea* this year.
(112) On the right of *the Mediterranean Sea* there is France.

10. THE MODEL OF TRANSFERRING the name of the author (113), (115) to his / her work (114), a concept, a philosophical trend (116) or any other trend created by this author. The functioning of this pattern is analogical in both languages (117–120).

(113) *Słowackiego*, jako młodego chłopca, *Mickiewicz* poznał jeszcze w Polsce (authors).
(114) Czytałem już *Mickiewicza*. Został mi jeszcze *Słowacki* (their works).
(115) Postać *Kanta* nieodłącznie kojarzona jest z Królewcem (author).
(116) Znam *Kanta* bardzo pobieżnie, dlatego nie chcę wypowiadać się w tej kwestii (his philosophy).
(117) *Słowacki*, as a young boy, was met by *Mickiewicz* while still in Poland.
(118) I've already read *Mickiewicz*. There's still *Słowacki* left.
(119) The figure of *Kant* is integrally associated with Koenigsberg.
(120) I only know *Kant* broadly so I am not inclined to speak on that matter.

11. THE MODEL OF TRANSFERRING of the name of function (121), (124) to an object used for performing that function (122), (123), (125). The outcome of realization of this pattern significantly differentiates the two juxtaposed languages. In English, gerunds (obtained by adding the '-ing' suffix) (126), (129) are not used in the meaning of an object used for performing the action of a given verb (127), (128), (130).

(121) Czy twój mąż robi w domu coś oprócz *jedzenia* i *spania*? (actions).
(122) *Jedzenie* stało na stole w słońcu i wszystko już się zepsuło (food).
(123) Kupiliśmy sobie fajne *spanie* (a bed – object).
(124) *Picie* jest dla człowieka o wiele ważniejsze od jedzenia (action).
(125) Dałeś Antkowi *picie* do szkoły? (beverage).
(126) Does your husband do anything at home except *eating* and *sleeping*?
(127) *The food* was on the table in the sunlight and everything has already gone bad.
(128) We bought ourselves a cool *bed*.
(129) *Drinking* is much more important for a man than eating.
(130) Did you give Antek *drinks* to school?

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Conclusions

This brief and selective comparative analysis of functioning of lexical metonymization models in Polish and English shows the differences concerning the changes of linguistic value. All patterns mentioned in the article fulfill in Polish the function of actualization of speech meaning with no change in linguistic value of analyzed lexical units. However, in English, not every pattern has only the speech value. In six cases (5–10) both languages have proven analogy in realization of the given patterns – the change of value refers only to speech as functioning of the discussed models results in actualization of single speech meanings without any change in semantics of a lexical unit. Three Polish patterns (models: 3, 4, 11) do not function in English. On the other hand, two metonymization models (1 and 2) in English partly lead to actualization of speech meanings, but they may also influence the linguistic value as in the result of their action, new lexical items with separate, distinct meanings, constituting the new value for a language come into being.

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