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The Linguistic Worldview
Ethnolinguistics, Cognition, and Culture

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The Editors

Introduction

Adam Głaz, David S. Danaher, and Przemysław Łozowski

1. The Linguistic Worldview: a Brief Historical Survey

Western philosophy[1] has been addressing the question of how language relates to the world at least since the Ancient Greek debate between those who thought that the relationship is natural (cf. Plato's *Cratylus*) and those who thought it is subjective and conventional (Democritus of Abdera, and in a way also Aristotle[2]). In the Middle Ages, realists (e.g. Duns Scotus) claimed that words denote concepts that correspond to real entities, whereas nominalists (e.g. William of Ockham) maintained that concepts only correspond to names or words (*nomina*). These considerations assumed a more specific shape with the growing awareness of the sometimes unbridgeable differences between languages, an idea expressed in Martin Luther's *Sendbrief vom Dollmetschen* (1530) or John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding* (1690). Clear traces of the linguistic worldview[3] idea can be found in Francis Bacon's *De Dignitate et*

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1 The brief outline in this section is largely based on Pajdzińska (this volume) and Żuk (2010).

2 Although this is what he suggests in Chapter 2 of *De Interpretatione*, Aristotle in fact introduced a third element, thinking, into the equation, in which he prefigured many later ideas including those in contemporary linguistics.

3 By using this spelling variant, rather than *world-view* or *world view*, we follow Bartmiński (2009/2012) in order to underscore the integrity of a speech community's mental image of the world conditioned by linguistic and extralinguistic (experiential, cognitive, cultural) factors. For a discussion of other related terms, such as *the linguistic image/picture of the world* see Tabakowska and Łozowski (both in this volume).

Augmentis Scientiarum (1623): the philosopher claimed that the unique structure and certain idiosyncratic properties of languages provide access to what the communities using these languages feel and think. The progressive interest in psychological and sociological aspects of language was continued by the 18th-c. German thinkers Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Johann Georg Hamann and Johann Gottfried Herder. Hamann and Herder saw a connection between language and the spirit (*psyche*) of the community or nation that speaks it. These observations were soon afterwards developed by Wilhelm von Humboldt, who is usually credited with originating the idea of the linguistic worldview. Humboldt says:

> It is no empty play upon words if we speak of language as arising in autonomy solely from itself and divinely free, but of languages as bound and dependent on the nations to which they belong. (Humboldt, 1999 [1836], p. 24)

Thus, "there resides in every language a characteristic *world-view* [*Weltansicht*]"[4] (ibid., p. 60). However, Humboldt attributes to speakers the ability to overcome the limitations imposed by each language, to extend the worldview in creative speech events.

Humboldt's views were continued and elaborated by Leo Weisgerber and Neo-Humboldtians with their notion of *sprachliches Weltbild*. Their main idea was that every language, a particular community's mother tongue, is a repository of cognitive content. Reality, claimed Neo-Humboldtians, is segmented not according to the properties of things themselves but to the lexical structure and syntactic organization of the mother tongue.

Similar ideas were developed by three generations of American anthropologists and anthropological linguists, from Franz Boas, through Edward Sapir, to Benjamin Lee Whorf. If, however, Neo-Humboldtian views in the Germany of the 1930s acquired a national-socialist orientation,[5] Boas devoted much effort to showing that the notion of a "primitive" language is fundamentally flawed and – in the manner of Humboldt – that speakers can move beyond the limitations of

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4 The difference between and the confusion of *Weltansicht* with *Weltanschauung* is discussed by Underhill (2009 and 2011). Says Underhill: "*Weltansicht* ... is the patterning of conceptual frameworks and the organisation of ideas which makes up the form of language (in Humboldt's definition of form), the patterning within which we think... *Weltanschauung* ... is the intellectual refinement and elaboration of those fundamental conceptual frameworks which enable us to give form to various mindsets or ideologies" (2009, p. 106). And elsewhere: "In Humboldt's terms, the worldview (*Weltansicht*) we inherit as we assimilate the language system contributes to the shaping of our own worldview (*Weltanschauung*)" (2011, p. 83).
5 Cf. Bock (1992, p. 249) or Leavitt (2006, p. 69).

their mother tongue should they be confronted with the need to do so. Similarly, although Sapir talks about a "tyrannical hold that linguistic form has upon our orientation to the world" (1931, p. 578), it is a hold imposed by tradition and usage, not by the language system. "The tyranny of language is then a human tyranny and not that of an impersonal structure" so "it is for this very reason that that tyranny of usage can be resisted" (Underhill 2009: 29). Sapir was a poetry-lover and a poet himself, drawn to it "probably [because of] the fact that poets rework language and explore the boundaries of usage, reinventing expressions and pushing against the limits of common usage" (Underhill, 2009, p. 26). Finally, Whorf seems to have formulated the most radical version of the linguistic relativity principle in that the terms of the agreement "that holds throughout our speech community" and that is "codified in the patterns of our language" are "absolutely obligatory" (Whorf, 1956 [1940], pp.213-214).[6] The progressively more radical outlook on a language's hold on the speaker is expressed by James Underhill thusly: "where Boas speaks of *channels* and Sapir speaks of *grooves*, Whorf sees *ruts*"[7] (Underhill, 2009, p. 35). However, as evidenced by the subsequent debates and the variety of interpretations of these scholars' writings,[8] their respective positions on the language-worldview interface are neither unequivocal nor in fact reducible to a single quote.

Later approaches to language and worldview, between approximately 1950 and the mid-1980s, are succinctly summarized in Bock (1992), with five major paths of development. First, there was the transformational movement of the 1950s that emphasized the universal in the world's languages, seeing the differences between them as largely superficial and the whole question of the linguistic worldview as unworthy of serious consideration. Then, in the

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6 Cf. in this spirit the following observation from Clyde Kluckhorn: "[The Navajo language] delights in sharply defined categories. It likes, so to speak, to file things away in neat little packages. It favors always the concrete and particular, with little scope for abstractions. [...] Navajo focuses interest upon doing – upon verbs as opposed to nouns or adjectives. [...] [S]triking divergences in manner of thinking are crystallized in and perpetuated by the forms of Navajo grammar" (in Bock, 1981, p. 39, after Bock, 1992, p. 249).

7 "The form of our grammar compels us to select a few traits of thought we wish to express and suppresses many other aspects which the speaker has in mind and which the hearer supplies according to his fancy ... There is little doubt that thought is thus directed in various *channels*..." (Boas, 1942, quoted in Lucy, 1992, p. 15)
"Language and our *thought-grooves* are inextricably interwoven, are, in a sense, one and the same." (Sapir, 1921, p. 232)
"...the best approach is through an exotic language, for in its study we are at long last pushed willy-nilly out of our *ruts*." (Whorf, 1956 [1941], p. 138; in all quotes, the emphasis is ours, A.G., D.D., and P.Ł.)

8 An article-length discussion of Boas, Sapir, Whorf and worldview, with many useful references, is Hill and Mannheim (1992).

1960s, came recognition of the fact that bilingual speakers (also in unrelated languages) can calibrate the apparently irreconcilable outlooks on the world that these languages bring with them. Next, interest in cognitive psychology and the poetic aspects of language in the 1970s and 1980s brought to linguists' attention "topics similar to world view" (Bock, 1992, p. 250), such as metaphor, conventionalized symbolization of conceptual content, or the imagination of the individual. Finally, over this whole period, ideas were being contributed by research on discourse analysis (worldview being arrived at through dialog, in various understandings of the term) and on literacy (with the social or economic changes it brings or the effect it has on people's psychology). While not all of these issues are directly relevant to the linguistic worldview program the present book is concerned with, some of them, such as the dialogic nature of human interaction, cognitive structuring of conceptual content, or the speakers' poetic imagination, do play a significant role in many of the chapters that follow.[9]

2. Jerzy Bartmiński's Cognitive Ethnolinguistic Worldview

Although in general terms this book is concerned with the linguistic worldview broadly understood, its specific focus is on one particular variant of the idea, its sources, extensions, and inspirations for related research. Some chapters also propose a critical assessment of the approach. The approach in question is the ethnolinguistic linguistic worldview program pursued in Lublin, Poland, and initiated and headed by Jerzy Bartmiński, i.e. a "subject-oriented interpretation of reality" (Bartmiński, 2009/2012, p. 13), a naive "picture of the world suggested […] by language" (ibid., p. 6). In order to distinguish it from other related approaches, we will refer to it as LWV (for *linguistic worldview*). Admittedly, the LWV program extends beyond Bartmiński's ethnolinguistic studies, both in Poland and elsewhere (in the sense that many scholars contributing to the LWV enterprise are not ethnolinguists or may actually be critical of some of the ideas proposed by Bartmiński and his collaborators),

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9 In some approaches (Maćkiewicz, 1999), worldview in the sense of an ideological, political, or religious outlook on the world is superordinate with regard to the linguistic worldview. There are two "modes of existence" of the worldview thus understood: mental (a component of people's consciousness) and an objectification of this abstract mental construct in the form of "traces": art, customs, rituals, gestures, mimicry, social organizations, relationships, and language. It is to the linguistic "trace" of what is in people's minds that this book is devoted.

and yet it is the "Lublin ethnolinguistic LWV" initiative that functions as the volume's conceptual axis.[10]

Bartmiński defines the linguistic worldview as

> a language-entrenched interpretation of reality, which can be expressed in the form of judgements about the world, people, things, events. It is an interpretation, not a reflection; it is a portrait without claims to fidelity, not a photograph of real object. The interpretation is a result of subjective perception and conceptualization of reality performed by the speakers of a given language; thus, it is clearly subjective and anthropocentric but also intersubjective (social). It unites people in a given social environment, creates a community of thoughts, feelings and values. It influences (to what extent is a matter for discussion) the perception and understanding of the social situation by a member of the community. (Bartmiński, 2009/2012, p. 23)

In his introduction to the first issue of the journal *Etnolingwistyka* (Bartmiński, 1988b), the author proposes that the notion of the linguistic worldview, the "naive" picture at the very basis of language, be treated as the key object of ethnolinguistic research. Lublin ethnolinguistics, whose prime achievement is the "Dictionary of Folk Stereotypes and Symbols" (*SSSL*, 1996-2012), the reconstruction of the linguistic worldview of rural speakers of Polish, draws inspiration from two major sources: Russian historical ethnolinguistics practiced by Nikita I. Tolstoy or Vyacheslav V. Ivanov and Vladimir N. Toporov, and American synchronic ethnolinguistics of Sapir and Whorf (see above). Other sources of inspiration include the work of Bronislaw Malinowski or Anna Wierzbicka. However, the term *ethnolinguistics* has a broad application and extends far beyond the realm of folklore: it embraces the study of any ethnic language, dialect, or language variety, from rural folk dialects, through urban dialects, student jargons, to national languages, etc. Indeed, as a methodology it

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10 According to Żuk (2010), the ideas of Polish scholars that later developed into the LWV can be traced back to 1930s. For example, Ajdukiewicz (1934) noted a dependence of one's scientific worldview on the conceptual apparatus used for the explication of experience. Szober (1939), in turn, discussed the picture of a human being projected by Polish phraseology. However, the first explicit definition of the linguistic worldview in Polish linguistic literature came from Walery Pisarek four decades later: it is "the picture/ view of the world reflected in a given national language" (Pisarek, 1978, p. 143; translation ours, A.G., D.D., and P.Ł.). As we will see, in Bartmiński's approach, the view is not *reflected*, need not be inherent in a *national* language, and does not really relate to the *world* (in the sense of physical reality).

may have a universal appeal, cf. the many diverse contributions to the present volume.[11]

The name of Anna Wierzbicka is especially important in the context of the so-called "cognitive definition" of the "mental object" associated with a given entity, of the way it is viewed, categorized, evaluated, and talked about by speakers of a given language (see Bartmiński, 1988a).[12] On the one hand, the preliminary installment of *SSSL* (Bartmiński, 1980) arose independently of Wierzbicka's theory of semantic primitives as a continuation of the work on folklore inspired by the linguist Maria Renata Mayenowa. However, in his major article on the cognitive definition, Bartmiński (1988a) already refers to Wierzbicka's *Lexicography and Conceptual Analysis* (1985). This, in the words of the former author (p.c.), is Wierzbicka's most interesting work, with an introduction that contains an excellent account of a comprehensive semantic description that is also pursued by the Lublin-based ethnolinguists. It therefore seemed justifiable to include Anna Wierzbicka's chapter at the beginning of the section on the cognitive definition in this volume: her explications have conceptually fueled the pursuits of Bartmiński and his collaborators and while the two approaches arose independently, they follow the same general path.

3. Controversies Surrounding the LWV

Over more than three decades of its existence, the Lublin ethnolinguistic worldview program has been beset by a number of questions and controversies, the most important of which are listed here, together with explications of the relevant views of Jerzy Bartmiński and his co-workers.

1. Are we pursuing a mental or a linguistic picture? On the one hand, the entity being described is mental (a "mental object"), and on the other, the ultimate description is that of a "linguistic worldview." In Bartmiński's view, the picture of a mental object includes a linguistic picture: his approach is integrationist, not separatist (in the sense of Harris, 1990), i.e. he considers language signs not in *isolation from* but in *relation to* other forms of behavior (culture) or to cognition. It is therefore a cognitive ethnolinguistic approach.

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11 Or James Underhill's recent book *Ethnolinguistics and Cultural Concepts* (2012), concerned with contemporary journalistic discourse.

12 For a fuller account and exemplification, see Bartmiński (2009/2012) as well chapters in this volume by Bartmiński, Niebrzegowska-Bartmińska, and Prorok & Głaz.

2. Is the LWV program a pursuit of a linguistic or a textual picture? Again, Bartmiński sees no reason to isolate a distinct textual worldview or even a textual component of the LWV because

> "linguistic" subsumes both what is systemic and what is conventionalized (though not necessarily systemic in the structuralist understanding), as well as what is contained in specific texts that contain more or less predictable, individual concretizations of the system and norm, and even their violations or modifications – but always capitalize on both the system and the convention of social norms. (Bartmiński, 2001b, p. 32; translation ours)

The view is exemplified in several chapters in this volume.

3. Are we dealing with a linguistic or a cultural picture? Since the cultural component in the ethnolinguistic worldview program is so conspicuous, is the endeavor not a pursuit of what Anusiewicz, Dąbrowska, and Fleischer (2000) call the *cultural worldview* (CWV)? No, it is not, it is a *linguistic-cultural worldview* (LCWV): if for Anusiewicz *et al.* CWV is a broader notion that subsumes LWV and that includes mimicry, gestures, and various aspects of the global worldview (scientific, ideological, religious, economic, etc. – cf. Żuk, 2010), then for Bartmiński language and culture are linked through a "paradox of reciprocal dependence" (2001a, p. 17).

4. Is the LWV a reflection, interpretation, or creation of reality? It is mainly interpretation (cf. the quotes above)[13] but also to some extent a creation: for instance, in the case of fairy tales, legends, and other fiction that nevertheless draws for its credibility on what is non-fictional.

5. What database should constitute the foundation for the reconstruction of the LWV, that is, where is the LWV "hidden"? Is it to be found in the language system alone (as once claimed by Grzegorczykowa, 1990) or in the system plus something else? If so, what else? Bartmiński makes use of four kinds of data: the language system, texts (stereotyped[14] but also creative, poetic, one-off texts), and questionnaires. The fourth kind are the so-called "co-

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13 According to Maćkiewicz (1999, p. 12), interpretation here consists in segmentation, description, arrangement, and valuation.

14 Stereotyped texts are texts that are "reproduced many times and [are] in effect socially established, with the status of linguistic 'plates' or 'matrices'" (Bartmiński, 2009/2012, p. 17), such as proverbs, anecdotes, fables, tales, etc.

linguistic" data,[15] i.e. "conventionalized patterns of behavior" (Bartmiński, 2009/2012, p. 34), customs, social practices often with the use of artifacts, and these may or may not be accompanied by language (i.e. the practice of putting iron on one's feet to make them hard – this corroborates iron's hardness, its basic property entrenched in the Polish word *żelazo*[16]). This volume has the ambition to show that this kind of wide-ranging approach is fruitful and well-designed, with some chapters focusing on the system (e.g. Nowosad-Bakalarczyk or Piekarczyk), some others on the system-*cum*-text (e.g. Filar, Wysocka) or text-vs.-system (e.g. Pajdzińska, Vaňková, Danaher), yet others on texts to a greater extent than on the system (Gicala, Vergara). Some make use of questionnaires (Brzozowska) and some also include co-linguistic data (Prorok & Głaz or Bielak).

4. This Volume

A more systematic, albeit a brief overview of the volume's content is now in order. In its basic design, it emerged from the theme of the conference held in Lublin, Poland, in October 2011: "The linguistic worldview or linguistic views of worlds?" If the latter is the case, then what worlds? Is it a case of one language/one worldview? Are there literary or poetic worldviews? Are there auctorial worldviews? Many of the chapters here are based on presentations from that conference, and others have been solicited especially for the volume. Generally, four kinds of contributions can be distinguished: (i) a presentation and exemplification of the "Lublin style" LWV approach; (ii) studies inspired by this approach but not following it in detail; (iii) independent but related and compatible research; and (iv) a critical reappraisal of some specific ideas proposed by Bartmiński and his collaborators.

The volume begins with Wojciech Chlebda's synthetic overview of the position of the Lublin Ethnolinguistic School within the larger domain of the Polish humanities: the author considers the possibility that it may play a uniting

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15 In Bartmiński (2009/2012) these are called *ad-linguistic data* (Pol. *dane przyjęzykowe*). While this term appeared sensible at the time when the book was being translated (by the first editor of the present volume), the term *co-linguistic*, suggested by Elżbieta Tabakowska at the *Globe 2013* conference in Warsaw, Poland, in May 2013, seems much more appropriate. We are grateful to Prof. Tabakowska for this invaluable suggestion and have decided to change the terminology before it becomes too deeply entrenched in the literature.

16 See Prorok & Głaz (this volume) or Głaz & Prorok (forthcoming) for details. Incidentally, the etymology of the English *iron* shows similar traces: it comes from Old-English *isærn* 'holy metal' or 'strong metal,' from Proto-Indo-European **is-(e)ro-* 'powerful.'

role in that domain. The contributions in Part I, "The LWV and the Poetic Text," deal with the linguistic worldview broadly understood. This part starts with Anna Pajdzińska's useful historical survey of the linguistic worldview idea, followed by analyses of selected fragments of Wisława Szymborska's poetry. The next chapter, by Angieszka Gicala, also takes Szymborska's poetry as material for analysis. The next two chapters deal with Czech. Irena Vaňková is also concerned with poetry but additionally offers a theoretical discussion of the relationship between language, thinking, and reality. David Danaher investigates the Czech concept of *svědomí* 'conscience' in the writings of Václav Havel. The section is closed by José Vergara's attempt to come to grips with the elusive cognitive and linguistic play in the works of the Russian experimental writer Daniil Kharms.

Part II is thematically much narrower and presents insights into one specific but key construct used by Lublin-based ethnolinguists, namely the cognitive definition (CD). The first chapter in this part, as has already been said, is Anna Wierzbicka's culture-and-language analysis couched within her theory of the Natural Semantic Metalanguage – a kind of cognitive definition that differs in details but is compatible in its major assumptions with Jerzy Bartmiński's proposal. Next comes Bartmiński's argument for treating the CD as text, and specifically as a text of culture. An exemplification of the "CD in action" follows, in a chapter by Katarzyna Prorok and Adam Głaz. Another exemplification is the contribution from Stanisława Niebrzegowska-Bartmińska, who also addresses the relationship between stereotypes and values, with a view to their respective positions in the LWV program. Finally, Agata Bielak reconstructs the Polish folk linguistic view of Saint Agatha, with special emphasis on co-linguistic data.

Part III contains five contributions that analyze specific grammatical categories or concepts. Marta Nowosad-Bakalarczyk and Dorota Piekarczyk do it solely on the basis of system data: the former author deals with the category of quantity, the latter with the Polish linguistic portraits of oral and written text. Dorota Filar (the concept of the THINKING SUBJECT) and Aneta Wysocka (the concept of NIEWOLNIK 'slave') start with the language system but move on to texts. Finally, in her reconstruction of the Polish linguistic view of patriotism, Małgorzata Brzozowska also makes use of questionnaires.

Part IV is a "problems" part: in it, the contributors cast doubts, ask questions, and occasionally propose modifications to Jerzy Bartmiński's research paradigm. First, Elżbieta Tabakowska surveys the implications behind the term *linguistic worldview* in comparison with other, related terms proposed in the literature. She also compares Polish cognitive studies with Western cognitive linguistics. James Underhill offers an outsider's view on Bartmiński's research, identifying its strengths but also challenging some of its tenets. Next, Przemysław Łozowski investigates the relationship between language and culture in Bartmiński's work, while Adam Głaz proposes that the parameters of SEEING identified by Bartmiński be supplemented with a more precise specification of the notion

of cognitive distance. Finally, Agnieszka Mierzwińska-Hajnos juxtaposes Bartmiński's ethnolinguistic analysis of plant names with Langacker's notion of a domain matrix.

The final section of the book, Part V, contains three studies that find support in or have been inspired by Bartmiński's linguistic worldview approach to various degrees. Enrique Bernárdez offers a cultural and linguistic dictionary- and corpus-based analysis of the Icelandic verbs *sjá* 'see' and *heyra* 'hear.' Finally, the chapters by Anna Niderla and Wiktoria Kudela-Świątek follow the methodology of oral-history research: the former author reconstructs self-presentational images of university ex-chancellors while the latter investigates the linguistic views of enslavement in accounts of Kazakhstani Poles.

5. Envoi

The linguistic worldview idea has been more extensively and thoroughly discussed in the linguistic literature than we have been able to suggest in this brief introduction. The LWV/LCWV research program is also more complex and diverse than the present volume can possibly hope to make clear. However, as its editors we have tried to achieve three major aims.

In the first place, we hope to show that Jerzy Bartmiński's cognitive ethnolinguistic research deserves wide international recognition. Although primarily concerned with Polish data, the methodology and scholarly "philosophy" of the Lublin Ethnolinguistic School ought to have both broader application and broader influence than has so far been the case. An English-language volume devoted to Bartmiński's program will, it is hoped, facilitate its reception among scholars who are not yet familiar with the Polish linguistic scene.

Secondly, we have tried to demonstrate the influence that Bartmiński's program has had by soliciting contributions from scholars who are familiar with Polish (Lublin) ethnolinguistics but who demonstrate originality in their own linguistic inquiries.

Finally, the volume invites the reader to assess Bartmiński and others' LCWV program critically, to subject its theoretical assumptions and methodological solutions to revision, and perhaps to propose alternative solutions of their own to the specific questions raised here.

Whether and to what extent these aims have actually been achieved, we leave to the reader to judge.

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Can Polish Ethnolinguistics Become a Philological Keystone of the Humanities?

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The question in the title may sound a little provocative. After all, ethnolinguistics is a field of study that signaled its autonomous position in Poland only about thirty years ago and since then has flourished, drawing extensively on the traditions and achievements of other disciplines, such as dialectology, folklore studies, or ethnography. These are all very specialized disciplines, and all use highly specific methodological, conceptual, and terminological apparatuses (dialectology, in particular). According to the *Collins English Dictionary* (2009), a keystone is "something that is necessary to connect or support a number of other related things," and it is therefore crucial to determine which characteristics of ethnolinguistics might enable it to play the role of a philological keystone that would unite different disciplines in the humanities.

At the start, it is important to emphasize that I use the term *ethnolinguistics* here only with reference to anthropology, and that I deliberately ignore sociologically-oriented ethnolinguistics. In general terms, while the latter aims to determine the place and functions of language in culture and society, anthropological ethnolinguistics focuses on the opposite vector, namely the cultural heritage of a given national community manifested in the language of this community (i.e. "culture in a language" rather than "a language in culture"). Thus understood, Polish ethnolinguistics has its roots in native ethnography, folklore studies and dialectology as pursued by Bronislaw Malinowski, Kazimierz Moszyński and Kazimierz Nitsch, but also in several distinct trends in European and non-European humanities. It is rooted in the old German tradition of language conceptualization and perception, developed by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Johann Gottfried Herder, and Wilhelm von Humboldt, as well as in the twentieth-century mainstream neohumboldtism, in particular the variety represented by Leo Weisgerber and his *naiver Sprachrealismus* as the foundation of semantics.[1]

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1 Cf. in this context a discussion of Humboldt's writings, the notion of worldview and its relation to language in Underhill (2009).

Polish ethnolinguistics owes much to the cultural linguistics of Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf and to later American scholars of the philosophy of language, cognitive psychology and anthropology (Ward Goodenough, Dell Hymes, Eleanor Rosch, Hilary Putnam, Stephen A. Tyler). As can naturally be expected and in addition to the above, there is also the Slavic intense and invigorating flow of ideas between Polish ethnolinguistics and the Russian humanities: semiotics of culture, from Vladimir Propp and Peter Bogatyrev to Yuri Lotman, Vyacheslav Ivanov and Vladimir Toporov, and, in particular, Russian linguistics in its broad spectrum, which is represented by scholars from Yuri Apresyan to Svetlana Tolstaya and Nikita Tolstoy. Finally, there is much overlap between Polish ethnolinguistics and the school of cultural semantics developed by Anna Wierzbicka, first as a representative of the so-called Warsaw School of Semantics (together with, among others, Andrzej Bogusławski, Zofia Zaron, Renata Grzegorczykowa, and Maciej Grochowski), and later, while living and working in Australia, as a creator of original methods of analysis and description of the cultural conditions that underlie concepts and scripts of human behavior. All of these currents converged in one place and one time, and this gave rise to a phenomenon known as the Ethnolinguistic School of Lublin, a school devoted to a cultural, anthropological, and cognitive ethnolinguistics.[2]

A short history of Polish ethnolinguistics can be divided into three stages, measured in some sense by the contents of the Lublin-based annual *Etnolingwistyka*, which has been edited by Jerzy Bartmiński since its inception. The origins of ethnolinguistics go back to Bartmiński's works from the early 1970s (collected in Bartmiński, 1990) that were devoted to the language of folklore texts; Bartmiński analyzed the language of these texts in a wide range of dimensions (from purely statistical to stylistic) and with an unusual understanding of style as an indicator of the point of view and attitude of the speaking subject towards reality. The result is a specific conceptualization of reality, its model. Bartmiński formulated a proposal to reconstruct this model (later called the *linguistic worldview*) on the basis of three kinds of folklore data: systemic, textual, and the so called "co-linguistic" data,[3] such as beliefs, rituals, and customs. The linguistic worldview is

> an interpretation of reality, manifested in a language and variously verbalized, which can be subsumed under a set of judgments about the world. These judgments can be "fixed," i.e. derived from the

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2 The label *anthropological-cultural ethnolinguistics* is used by the Lublin school, while the name *cognitive ethnolinguistics* has been propagated by Jőrg Zinken (see his introduction to Bartmiński, 2009/2012). See also relevant comments in Kiklewicz & Wilczewski (2011).
3 *Ad-linguistic* in Bartmiński (2009/2012).

> matter of language, i.e. grammar, vocabulary, clichéd (or stereotyped) texts, e.g. proverbs, or presupposed, i.e. implied by linguistic forms recorded at the level of social knowledge, beliefs, myths, and rituals. (Bartmiński, 2006b, p. 12; cf. also Bartmiński, 2004 [1990])

This concept has become a central and key idea of Polish ethnolinguistics as a whole, and the task of reconstructing the linguistic worldview has become the latter's engine.

In 1980, on the initiative of Jerzy Bartmiński, a first collection of such reconstructions was published (Bartmiński, 1980), a pilot edition of what later became the *Dictionary of Folk Symbols and Stereotypes* (SSSL, 1996-2012). It contained several assumptions that were later discussed, verified, and developed in a number of articles, dictionary entries, master's theses and doctoral dissertations. The first seven volumes of *Etnolingwistyka* comprise a systematic and methodical reconstruction of the Polish folk-understanding of such concepts as MOTHER, BROTHER, RAIN, SEA, STARS, RAINBOW, CAT, HORSE, etc. This first stage of the development of Polish ethnolinguistics, one that was based on multi-aspectual analysis of folkloric texts, was crowned by the 1996 publication of the first volume of *SSSL*. The dictionary, which resembles a thesaurus, has been planned to consist of seven volumes (each with several parts); the first volume was completed in 2012 with a publication of the last two of its four parts.[4] The project is of fundamental importance to Polish culture and, internationally, it can perhaps be positioned alongside the Russian dictionary *Славянские древности* (1996-2009), which was compiled almost simultaneously.[5]

In 1996, the eighth volume of *Etnolingwistyka* came out in print not just in a different layout, but also with a clear editorial announcement that as of that moment and without abandoning its folklore tradition, the journal would more strongly emphasize the idea that ethnolinguistics focuses on language in *all* its varieties, including the standard variety, and on its relation to culture, people, and society. This eighth volume marks the beginning of the second stage of the development of Polish ethnolinguistics, which can be called "general linguistic" or "linguistic and cultural," the two terms being applied to not only Polish, but generally Slavic data, and even data from outside the Slavic realm. It is

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4 Volume 1: *The Universe*, Part 1: *Sky, Heavenly Lights, Fire, Stones*; Part 2: *Earth, Water, Underground*; Part 3: *Meteorology*, Part 4: *World, Light, Metals.* The thesaurus-like character of this compendium is also visible in the contents of the following volumes: Vol. 2: *Plants*, Vol. 3: *Animals*, Vol. 4: *Man*, Vol. 5: *Society*, Vol. 6: *Religion, Demonology*, Vol. 7: *Time, Space, Measurements, Colors.*

5 Vol. 1 – 1996, vol. 2 – 1999, vol. 3 – 2004, vol. 4 – 2009.

symptomatic that the two-volume *Etnolingwistyka* 9/10 begins with papers in which central importance is assigned to the linguistic and cultural consequences of adopting the cognitivist approach not only as a specific methodology, but also, more broadly, as a cognitive attitude towards the object of research (Tokarski, 1998; Muszyński, 1998). From the Polish perspective, the cognitive orientation – sometimes only an inspiration – is not tantamount to a rejection of the principles and practices of structuralism, but rather complements them with several assumptions that lead to deeper, more comprehensive, and more adequate reconstructions of nationally-marked ways of conceptualizing the world.

As a result of these theoretical assumptions, the concept of the cognitive definition was proposed, first outlined by Jerzy Bartmiński in the late 1970s and further developed in the 1990s (cf. Bartmiński, 1998; this volume). The cognitive definition is a cognitive frame targeted at stereotypical images of objects found in the world; its role is to represent their modular (multi-faceted) structure as well as the perspective and point of view of the speaking subject. In accordance with the "strong" interpretation of ethnolinguistics, the process of defining concepts departs from the taxonomic and scientifically-oriented approach of structural semantics, while in the "weaker' interpretation, it all merges into a synthetic whole, a cognitive-descriptive instrument, which I once referred to as a "two-eyed perception of the world" (Chlebda, 1993). This broad and open methodological approach of Polish ethnolinguists is also manifested in the creation of a synthetic material basis for research, built according to the so-called DQT formula (Polish SAT). It stipulates that dictionaries, questionnaires, and texts be treated on an equal footing: dictionaries as repositories of systemic data (derived from non-lexicographic sources), questionnaires as "invoked data sources," inquiring more directly into the minds of language users and their general knowledge, and finally texts of various types and genres, including poetry and other creative texts, as individual realizations of the potency of a language system.[6]

The methodological framework outlined above has given rise to a number of publications, both articles and monographs, focusing on reconstructing fragments

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6 In my opinion, a material base should be compiled in accordance with the DCQT (Polish SKAT) formula, i.e. it should embrace dictionaries – corpora – questionnaires – texts. I distinguish between texts and corpora even though the latter essentially constitute collections of texts; nevertheless, these collections are balanced ones (i.e. compiled in accordance with specific criteria and proportions) while the texts for analysis are usually collected randomly and subjectively. As a result, the same questions considered with regard to texts and corpora yield different answers (see Chlebda 2010; esp. pp. 219-221). The problem of the non-use of corpora in the Lublin School is also mentioned by Underhill (this volume).

of the linguistic worldview, penetrating both the contents and the dynamics of ethnic and cultural stereotypes as they change through time. These works have become a meeting place for researchers of different theoretical backgrounds and research interests, e.g. Andrzej Lewicki, a phraseologist, Jan Adamowski, a folklorist, Renata Grzegorczykowa, a semanticist, Hanna Popowska-Taborska, a dialectologist, Stanisława Niebrzegowska (later Niebrzegowska-Bartmińska), a textologist, Henryk Kardela, a cognitive linguist, Anna Pajdzińska, a researcher of the linguistic worldview entrenched in poetry, as well as the author of this chapter, a lexicographer. In addition, young corpus linguists have recently joined the ranks (Łukasz Grabowski). Scholars grouped around the Lublin center were primarily concerned with reproducing the hierarchy of values dominant or inherent in the fragments of reality subjected to study. On the assumption that the entire human existential space is axiologically-loaded, the researchers have outlined, using Jadwiga Puzynina's theoretical and methodological framework for investigating the language of values, a project for a Polish axiological dictionary (cf. Bartmiński, 1989). They have gradually implemented an extensive research program focusing on Polish linguistic axiology; a volume entitled *Nazwy wartości* [Names of values] was published in 1993 (Bartmiński and Mazurkiewicz-Brzozowska, 1993); *Język w kręgu wartości* [Language in the sphere of values] appeared in 2003 (Bartmiński, 2003) and 2006 saw the publication of *Język – wartości – polityka* [Language – values – politics; Bartmiński, 2006a]. At the time of the launching of the project, i.e. around 1989, when Poland became an axiological melting pot, the Ethnolinguistic School of Lublin planned (and, it is worth emphasizing, later completed) a series of questionnaire studies on the state of the axiological awareness of the young generation of Poles, conducted at regular ten-year intervals (1990, 2000, and 2010). A research report on the first two of these studies, the aforementioned volume on language, values, and politics, remains an important reference point for any empirical research on the Polish language of values. This research program has been a vibrant aspect of Polish ethnolinguistics.

It is difficult to determine precisely what marks the third stage in the development of ethnolinguistic research in Poland. Is it the sixteenth volume of *Etnolingwistyka*, at which point the journal became the organ of the Ethnolinguistic Section of the International Committee of Slavists? Or is it the eighteenth volume, with its discussion of the identity and status of ethnolinguistics as a scholarly discipline? Every discipline goes through a period of self-determination, a closer examination of the essence, scope, and object of its research, its distinctiveness and links with related fields and disciplines. In 2005, around the thirtieth anniversary of the commencement of Polish ethnolinguistic research, at a meeting of the Ethnolinguistic Section of the Committee on Linguistics (the Polish Academy of Sciences), the relations between ethnolinguistics and related disciplines were discussed by an ethnolinguist, a folklorist, a dialectologist,

a cultural anthropologist, and a general linguist. The essence of this amiable discussion seems to be best reflected in the words of a dialectologist, Halina Pelcowa:

> Dialectology has borrowed from ethnolinguistics the idea of the cognitive definition, the notion of the linguistic worldview, an opportunity to broaden analyses of dialects by incorporating considerations of customs, rituals, and beliefs. Ethnolinguistics has borrowed from dialectology a description of spoken language varieties, methods of collecting linguistic material in field research, the concept of the center and periphery, as well as the mapping of customs and cultural facts. (Pelcowa, 2006, p. 91)

The meeting revealed a reciprocal and mutually advantageous openness of different research disciplines with full respect for their distinctiveness. It is an attitude that makes Polish ethnolinguistics so attractive for subsequent generations of researchers from various specialties, including the youngest generation. Thus, when speaking of the Ethnolinguistic School of Lublin, the traditional meaning of the word *school* comes to the fore, namely an educational institution shaping the attitudes of young students of and researchers in philology, integrating scholars based in Lublin but also elsewhere, e.g. in Wrocław, Gdańsk, Kraków, Warsaw, and Opole.

In retrospect, it seems that Polish ethnolinguistics needed a self-reflection on and strengthening of its self-identity in order to open up even wider to areas far less penetrated and to disciplines which had dealt with these areas before. Therefore, a visible sign of the third stage of the development of Polish ethnolinguistics is perhaps a later, the twentieth, volume of *Etnolingwistyka*, containing an explicitly formulated view of the discipline as concerned with communal identity. A similar view had been formulated by Jerzy Bartmiński much earlier, in his 1996 article with the telling title "Language as a carrier of national identity and a sign of openness" (Bartmiński, 1996), but only during the Fourteenth Congress of Slavists in Ohrid, Macedonia (2008) did this idea morph into a fully-fledged research program. In a joint paper, Jerzy Bartmiński and I spoke in Ohrid about the possibility of incorporating ethnolinguistics into the range of sciences that study group identities, primarily but not exclusively national identities, and positioning it on an equal footing alongside such identity-oriented disciplines as social psychology, sociology, or historiography (as a study of narratives interpreting reality, with particular emphasis on "interpreting") (see Bartmiński & Chlebda, 2008). At the same time, my proposal was to bring ethnolinguistics closer to research on collective memory and collective oblivion, as it is memory/oblivion that is now widely considered to be the foundation of communal identity (Chlebda, 2011). And since identity, both individual and

collective, is shaped in a never-ending confrontation of "me" with "not-me," the ethnolinguistic preoccupation with identity has inevitably strengthened its comparative, cross-linguistic, and cross-cultural profile. A tangible outcome of this development was the launching of the seminar EUROJOS in 2009: EURO referring to "European," and JOS to "the linguistic worldview " (in Polish: *językowy obraz świata*). It is an initiative affiliated with the Institute of Slavic Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences, headed by Maciej Abramowicz, president of the seminar's Scientific Council. Its main objective is to coordinate the work of an international team of researchers who have conducted, based on the methodological framework developed by the Ethnolinguistic School of Lublin, a research project entitled "The linguistic and cultural worldview of Slavs in a comparative context." At present, this project provides an analysis of five value-laden concepts: HOME/HOUSE (Pol. DOM), EUROPE (EUROPA), FREEDOM (WOLNOŚĆ), JOB/LABOR (PRACA), and HONOR (HONOR) – all of which are conceptualized differently in different national languages.[7]

Thus, when speaking about the function of Polish ethnolinguistics as a "philological keystone," it is essential to realize that EUROJOS, a "flagship" of today's Polish ethnolinguistics, gathers under a common banner a number of scholars from different generations, with different research interests, and from different countries – from the United States to Russia to Japan and Australia – and continues a long tradition of national and international collaborative ethnolinguistic research (let me just mention a well-known international research project on the understanding of the concept of HOMELAND in different national languages; cf. Bartmiński, 1993). The existence of a Polish school of ethnolinguistics, as distinct as the famous Moscow school, provides a stimulus for the development of ethnolinguistic research in countries that have not yet established their own schools of this kind. Alongside the publication of research works, a bibliographic database of the Lublin-based publications has been developed: the contents of twenty volumes of *Etnolingwistyka* and twenty-five volumes of the so-called "red series," a book series published by Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press (UMCS), all came out in book form, annotated with abstracts and indices of keywords (cf. Boguta & Matczuk, 2010; Maksymiuk-Pacek & Niebrzegowska-Bartmińska, 2008; Tomczak, Bartmiński, & Wasiuta, 2010). This demonstrates that Polish ethnolinguistics has developed in a non-random manner, with a clear view of its goals. Also, the fact that translations of Jerzy Bartmiński's works, as well as those of other representatives of Polish

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7 Although this is a comparative research, the starting point were the Polish words-concepts (in parentheses). For more information on EUROJOS, see www.ispan.waw.pl/content/blogsection/29/188/lang,pl_PL.ISO8859-2/; last accessed February 19, 2013.

ethnolinguistics, are being published today in the United Kingdom, the United States, Russia, Ukraine, or Serbia, reaffirms the importance and impact of this center of humanistic thought.

The term *humanistic thought*, rather than *ethnolinguistic thought*, is used here deliberately because even this very sketchy outline of the development of Polish ethnolinguistics shows how far it has departed from its starting point in folklore. Its development can be seen in an overview of topics, titles, and entries contained in almost eighty volumes, monographs, collective works and dictionaries, including the twenty-volume series "Language and Culture" (*Język a kultura*) published in Wrocław, all of them products of more than thirty years of Polish ethnolinguistic research. Its range spans linguistic categorization of the world, the linguistics of space and time (especially the past), point of view, the speaking subject and subjectivity in language and culture, values in language, community discourse, barriers and bridges in communication, etc. When one adds to this a discussion of certain ever-present questions concerning cultural and national identity, as well as increasingly frequent questions concerning collective memory and oblivion, it becomes clear that Polish ethnolinguistics treats the fundamental problems of the modern humanities. At the same time, it does not display any expansionist tendencies; rather than appropriating other areas of scholarship, it willingly opens itself up to the benefits of these areas, to their ideas and experience, and with similar willingness it is ready to share with them its own resources and experience. (Incidentally, it is still a rather one-sided and unidirectional openness, as some disciplines in Polish humanities have not yet discovered ethnolinguistics and its achievements for themselves – but this is an altogether different matter.)

Should one inquire what allows for this real or potential interdisciplinary research, the answer could be subsumed under the shape of a triangle (Fig. 1.1), whose vertices stand for the notions of "culture," memory," and "identity," whose interior is filled with the semantic content of the term *subject* (that is, *subjectivity*, or more precisely, *community multi-subjectivity*[8]), and with language, resembling a connective tissue and permeating the entire figure. Such a triangle could be conventionally referred to as a "philological keystone of the humanities," in the broadest sense of the latter as disciplines oriented toward an understanding of man.

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8 A community understood as a collective subject is not monolithic, and therefore such notions as, e.g., the "Polish linguistic worldview," are mental shortcuts. In one ethnic community, there may co-occur a number of different linguistic worldviews, whose collective amalgam may be referred to as the "linguistic worldview (of Poles)." Behind this multifarious structure one may find not a collective subject, but rather a collective (communal) multi-subjectivity. Cf. in this context the concept of a "multiplicity of collective memories in Poland" (Nijakowski, 2008, pp. 145-189).
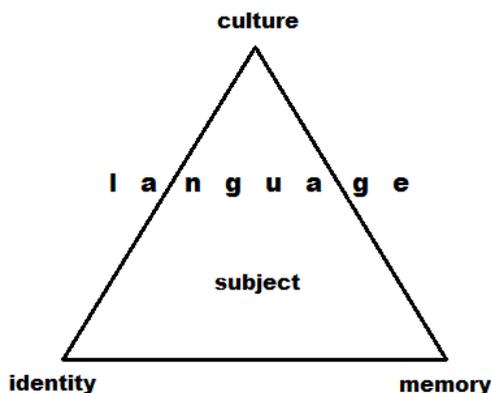
Fig. 1.1 A "philological keystone of the humanities" in diagrammatic form

Many disciplines within the humanities would readily find their place in such a scheme because various configurations of culture, identity, memory, and subjectivity occur in a number of them. But it is ethnolinguistics that puts at the center of its interest culture, identity, collective memory, and subjectivity, as well as the linguistic, or better, the linguified nature of all these phenomena.[9] It performs an analysis of them with continuously developing instruments of linguistic research. Ethnolinguistics, which appears to be constituted by the contents of the "keystone" triangle, is capable of and ready to enter into interactive relationships with disciplines that study multifaceted understandings of human beings and the communities they create.

I believe that the role of ethnolinguistics as a philological keystone could be tested by confronting two great mental constructs: the Polish collective memory, on the one hand, and the Polish linguistic worldview, on the other. The contents of these two constructs have been substantially reconstructed, respectively, in studies into collective memory and in ethnolinguistics. But while the constructs have a clear *tertium comparationis*,[10] the reconstructions, as presented in

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9 The concept of "linguification," although used in the humanities, has not been precisely and unambiguously defined. I presented my own understanding of it with reference to (collective) memory in Chlebda (2012).

10 It is possible to identify five features common to collective memory and linguistic worldview, which constitute the *tertium*: 1. reference to reality; 2. an interpretation of this reality; 3. linguification (the presence of linguistic exponents manifested in narratives); 4. subjectivity (community multi-subjectivity); 5. a capacity to shape communal identity. Each feature requires a separate description.

monographs, in hundreds of articles and in dictionaries, have never been juxtaposed or confronted with each other, let alone being – if only fragmentarily – merged. The significance of the results of such a meeting of disciplines can hardly be overestimated.

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Part I

THE LINGUISTIC WORLDVIEW AND THE POETIC TEXT

Chapter 2

The Linguistic Worldview and Literature

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1. The origin of the linguistic worldview idea

Language is usually viewed as a social tool, a means of expressing thoughts and emotions, a sign system used for communicating with and influencing others. But it can also be viewed as a "symbolic guide to culture" (Sapir, 1961 [1929], p. 70). The cultural aspect of language was already recognized by the Ancient Greeks. Two major debates, referred to as the *phýsei* vs. *thései* debate and the analogists vs. anomalists debate, involved nearly all distinguished Greek philosophers, later also philologists and grammarians, and centered around the language-world relationship: is it natural or conventional? Can language, as a tool for naming things and phenomena, provide us with a knowledge of reality and if so, to what extent? Do words derive from the nature of objects or are they conventionally assigned labels? Is there a proportionality (analogy) or a mere anomaly between language and reality? The debates were continued in the Middle Ages as a controversy involving universals: what corresponds to words denoting general concepts? According to realists, elements of reality do, whereas according to nominalists, nothing really does, general concepts being merely products of the human mind.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, as more and more languages were studied, it became progressively clearer that there is no strict correspondence between them (cf. Martin Luther's 1530 *Sendbrief vom Dollmetschen*). In subsequent centuries, interest in languages on the part of philosophers increased again. Until the end of the 19th century, attempts to find or construct a universal language were repeatedly made, and many remarks found in philosophical treatises continue to arouse interest up to this day. For example, Francis Bacon claimed that the structure and characteristic properties of languages, as tools constructed and used by language communities, indirectly testify to the spiritual and psychological qualities of these communities. John Locke, in turn, noticed that each language contains several words without equivalents in other languages. They express, claimed Locke, complex ideas as derivatives of the customs and lifestyle of a given nation. Also Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz treated languages as a source of knowledge about their users, as the best reflection of human minds.

The 18th and 19th-century German philosophers Johann Gottfried Herder and Wilhelm von Humboldt, as well as Johann Georg Hamann before them, underscored a bidirectional influence between language and its users: language is a manifestation of the psychic life of a given community (the nation's spirit), i.e. a form of consciousness. The community leaves its mark on the language it is using and can also be recognized through it. But language, says Humboldt, does not only reflect human consciousness: it also shapes it. Between the intellectually active speaker and the outside world intervenes that speaker's mother tongue with its specific and characteristic interpretation of reality – thus, how the world is experienced depends on language. However, there is no determinism here: even though one's native language puts a magic ring around its users' cognition, every creative speech event is to a certain degree an attempt to move beyond that ring, in the same way that is involved in learning a foreign language with its distinct conceptual network and worldview. For Humboldt, a complete understanding of objective reality is not possible – but that is not a cause for concern. On the contrary, thanks to this aprioristic imperfection, the processes of cognitive and epistemological enrichment and thinking in language are in fact unbounded.

2. Two Sources of the Linguistic Worldview Theory

Humboldt's ideas found fertile ground in the thinking of 20th-century German linguists gathered around the figure of Leo Weisgerber, i.e. the Neo-Humboldtians. Their major goal was to uncover the cognitive content entrenched in one's mother tongue (*Muttersprache*) and transmitted from one generation to another (hence a different name for the approach: *inhaltbezogene Grammatik*, the grammar of content). They mainly analyzed the structuring of the lexicon into semantic fields; this they deemed to be the best method of identifying the fragments of the world made salient through a given language, as well as those that the language fails to "notice." The linguists argued that

> we need not only see language as a means of communication but as a creative strength of the spirit. The fact that a language has a certain body of lexis and a certain syntax means that it contains a segmentation of the world which is not inherent in things but precisely in language. Every language is a means of accessing the world; every language community is constituted by a common worldview contained in its mother tongue. (Christmann, 1967, p. 442)

Beisdes the term *sprachliches Weltbild*, which replaced Humboldt's *Weltansicht*,[1] another important term for Neo-Humboldtians was *sprachliche Zwischenwelt*. This intermediary linguistic world they took to be the result of transforming, by a given speech community, the perceived (material, substantial, physical) world into the world of consciousness, i.e. the intellectual and conceptual world. It is an intermediary being, situated between the speaker and the outside world, and influencing the speaker's view of that world.

There is also a striking similarity, which suggests an inspiration and influence, between the views of German idealists and those of American ethnolinguists. Research on Native American communities led Franz Boas to the conclusion that language depends on culture and so it is legitimate to treat it as a testimony to culture. Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf,[2] in their descriptions of Native American languages and comparisons thereof with English, discovered several deeply rooted differences on the level of lexis and grammar. They also noticed a correlation between linguistic forms and human behavior, which led them to a view of the language-culture interface as bidirectional influence. However, the so-called "Sapir-Whorf hypothesis" or the linguistic relativity/determinism hypothesis is a double misnomer: (i) it is an in-line juxtaposition of apparently equipollent terms whose import as to the role of language is in fact different, and (ii) it suggests that Sapir professed linguistic relativity, whereas his disciple had more radical views. In fact, the works of both scholars contain statements that modulate the "hypothesis" in numerous ways. Linguistic relativity assumes that there are differences between the perception of the world entrenched in languages from different cultures (as well as conceptual differences within the same national language), whereas determinists would have us believe that a national language actually conditions human cognition: as a result, people who speak different languages live, in a sense, in different worlds.

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1 For a discussion of these and other terms, their connotations and (mis)interpretations, cf. Underhill (2009) and (2011).

2 Whorf even uses the notion of *world view* and attributes it to the working of a language or languages, cf. for example:

The participants in a given world view are not aware of the idiomatic nature of the channels in which their talking and thinking run, and are perfectly satisfied with them, regarding them as logical inevitables. But take an outsider, a person accustomed to widely different language and culture, or even a scientist of a later era using somewhat different language of the same basic type, and not all that seems logical and inevitable to the participants in the given world view seems so to him. (Whorf, 1956 [1940], p. 222)

The most succinct formulation of the idea, however, seems to come from Stuart Chase, the author of the Foreword to Whorf's *Language, Thought, and Reality*, who finds in the latter linguist's unpublished monograph the idea that "[r]esearch is needed to discover the world view of many unexplored languages, some now in danger of extinction" (Chase, 1956, p. x).

3. Language as an Interpretation of the World

No convincing arguments have been adduced so far to accept or reject the deterministic view. Relativity, on the other hand, is well-documented: for several decades evidence has been accumulating that every language is an interpretation, not a reflection of the world in the sense of a one-to-one mapping between them. Differences between languages lie deep: they are not merely formal or superficial. A language consolidates the cognitive experience of the community it serves, or more precisely, of the various generations and groups within the community, each of which may approach the same fragment of reality form a different viewpoint, following its own sentiments and needs. In consequence, the linguistic worldview that results is complex, multi-layered, heterogenic, and dynamic: it derives from continually occurring cognitive acts, whose effects accumulate, coexist, change, supplant, or are superimposed upon one another. Thus, although the linguistic worldview is in a sense conservative or anachronistic, as linguistic change is slower than social or cultural change, the dynamism of change is incessant: language on the one hand imposes a certain conceptualization of reality upon its users, on the other hand it allows speakers to overcome the limitations of that conceptualization, to move beyond its boundaries.

Every language models the world in a way that makes it possible for members of the relevant speech community to function in it properly. The modeling is composed of several interlinked operations:
- segmentation of the world, i.e. identification of things and phenomena important for the speech community concerned;
- interpretation of these things and phenomena, ascription of features to them; the feature that is the most conspicuous from the point of view of a given community usually becomes the name-providing distinguishing mark;
- ordering of things and phenomena, delineating the relationships between them;
- a multi-aspectual valuation of things and states of affairs, in which an especially prominent role is played by conceptual categories that organize a given worldview: anthropocentrism and the "us–them" opposition.

In the processes of modeling the world, the latter is constantly being adjusted to human cognitive capacities: its complexity is reduced, its changeability and flow of events are weakened, and experiential chaos is transformed into an order.

An interpretation of the world characteristic of a given language can be expressed with diverse means: the semantic structures of lexemes, the number of items in a given lexico-semantic domain (the more important the domain, the more items it usually contains), etymology, word-formational and semantic motivation of lexemes, acts of naming, and the process of metaphorization. However, a view of the world is entrenched not only in the lexicon but also in

morphological and syntactic structures, as well as in a language's grammatical categories. The grammar of each language encodes a certain body of meanings, expressed in an often mandatory and automatized manner. Speakers are usually not aware of their existence, let alone of their interpretive nature. Almost any information can be conveyed in any language but its lexical or grammatical modulation may differ, and its expression in one language may be easier than in others, with aspects of meaning being more or less obligatory. What view of the world is entrenched in a language obviously depends on the natural living conditions of its community, i.e. the topography, climate, etc., but to the same extent – if not more so – on its culture.

4. Language as the Raw Material of Literature: Implications

It took a long time for scholars to realize the consequences of the fact that literature builds on language as its raw material. Principles of ancient provenance – a good genological pattern, its application in a specific situation, a clear theme and its rhetorical elaboration in accordance with the norms of a given genre – were still in operation in the Enlightenment. Apart from formal requirements, the poetic value of one's work depended on whether and how the content was idealized or sublimated. It was only in late 18th century that universal rules, applied for the work of art to have an esthetic value, were counterbalanced by that work as an expression of a nation's spirit. The idea of poetry as a national artifact appeared in opposition to the universalism of the classic model,[3] and the idea of the significance of folk literature emerged as a counterpoint to the theory's elitism. By underscoring national aspects and conditioning of poetry, national languages became the center of attention in a natural way. Admittedly, Georg Hegel, while discussing various types of artistic activity in his *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, attributed a greater role to the content of a literary work of art than to its linguistic matter. He explained it in the following way: although content in literature is realized through language, something else emerges between the linguistic sign (which he considered a "means of spiritual expression" rather than "an end in itself", Hegel 1886, no page) and what the sign refers to – namely, an internal view, image, or representation, which becomes the center for cognizing. The arbitrary nature of the sign makes it so that its

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3 I.e., the imitation of ancient Greek and Roman patterns, with attention being paid to universal, timeless ideals rather than those related to national or more local contexts.

role in poetic expression is decidedly smaller than the role of raw material in painting or sculpture. However, the already mentioned Johann Gottfried Herder, over a quarter of a century before Hegel, viewed the role of language in poetry somewhat differently. He wrote: "The spirit of the language … is also the spirit of the nation's literature… It is therefore impossible to comprehend the literature of a nation without knowing its language; it is only through language that you can come to knowledge of the literature" (*Fragmente über die neuere deutsche Literatur. Erste Sammlung von Fragmenten,* translated from Skwarczyńska, 1965, p. 64). One can also deduce that for Herder, poets build their works from the material of the very grammatical structure of language. For example, he considered how much content can be extracted from the allegedly redundant – according to Cartesians – gender distinctions of inanimate nouns, found only in some languages and even there realized differently from language to language.

The most forceful view on the relatedness of poetry and language was expressed by Wilhelm von Humboldt at the very end of the 18th century when he wrote that poetry is art practiced through language. In his view, poetry must "work language through and through" (because language transforms everything into general concepts) in order to activate its potential to move from the general to the specific, from the abstract to the concrete. In her interpretation of Humboldt's work, Zdzisława Kopczyńska (1976, p. 189) writes: "In the two directions of poetic endeavor that he mentions, language is the main element: it does not only define each of the two directions but is in fact decisive in shaping their diversity." One extreme is "the use of language as a means or an instrument in poetry as art, i.e. for the shaping … of the poetic work by making use of those aspects of the language potential that render it effective as a tool." A radically different situation is when "language itself, as it were, decides the nature of the poetic work. Here poetry does not so much utilize the defining properties of language but absorbs them, acquiring in the process a significant degree of autonomy as a form of artistic expression."

For Wilhelm Scherer, writing in the second half of the 19th century, it is no longer the psychology or the history of a nation that constitutes the essence of historical and literary inquiry. It was clear to him that poetry is "a kind of attitude to language and [that it] operates within language use"; it is "an art of speech," and an "artistic employment of language" (Scherer, 1977 [1888], p. 9).

Polish authors also contributed to the discussion on the mutual relationship between the national language and the language of poetry, on the role of poetry in the development of the national language, and the poetic potential of language. Kazimierz Brodziński (1964 [1818]), for example, took note of the properties of national languages. He viewed the Romantic spirit of the Germans as appropriate and understandable, since it was motivated by the German tradition and the German language. In Poland, however, the tradition is closer to the classical aura. It is matched by a language that does not easily fit in with

the Romantic spirit due to its "ancient classical structure,"[4] "freedom, frankness and conciseness," "an almost inexhaustible potential for semantic shading," "a striking logic," and "a natural clarity and common sense." An interdependence of national characteristics and language was also assumed by Leon Borowski (1820), whose research on poetry and elocution rested on the idea that "the spirit of nations and the spirit of their speech are such close companions that one always speaks through the other" (in Kopczyńska, 1976, p. 88). Contrary to Brodziński, Borowski did not have a high opinion of the Polish literary tradition and criticized it for blindly following foreign patterns, without a "clear national taste." He did believe, however, that the Polish language, which had preserved its "power and valor," can facilitate an outstanding development of Polish poetry.

In the debate on the linguistic raw material of literature, a momentous role was played by the phenomenological theory of a literary work of art. According to Roman Ingarden, all extralinguistic artistically relevant elements of the work ultimately derive from linguistic creations in that work and from their properties. Some esthetically significant qualities directly depend on the shape of those creations or derive from the complexity and expressiveness of syntactic structure. Linguistic creations in a literary work of art play, therefore, a double role: first, they determine all other elements of the work, and second, they function themselves as the work's elements. It is thanks to their presence and meaning that specific esthetic qualities are realized.

Thanks to the structuralist approach it became obvious that an artistic text, especially poetry, is a unique arrangement of elements in which everything has semantic value. Even before it enters the work, the raw material of literature is meaningful and structured – this is not the case in other kinds of artistic endeavor. Limitations imposed on a material of this kind help reveal novel semantic qualities and a new sequence of meanings is superimposed over the sequence of linguistic meanings. Textual meanings are also hidden in the very structure of linguistic signs and their larger complexes, in linguistic arrangements and configurations. All components are interlinked and constitute a functional whole, irreducible to any of them individually. That whole, in turn, is not meaningful in itself but in relation to higher-order structures: it is usually interpreted against the backdrop of the language system and literary tradition, but its relativized value in terms of the linguistic worldview also seems relevant.

This idea appeared already in the work of the Tartu semiotic school, in which every national language was treated as a primary modeling system. For example, Yuri Lotman frequently underscored the fact that linguistic structure systematizes the signs of the code, turning them into tools for transmission of information and

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4 The relatedness of Polish and Latin was for Brodziński unquestionable.

at the same time reflecting people's views of reality. Since linguistic structure preserves human cognitive acts, the writer works with the material that contains, in a condensed form, the centuries-old activity of a given speech community whose members have made an effort to know the world. This reflection, however, was all too weakly shared, if indeed shared at all, by literary scholars.

An obvious, not to say a banal view in contemporary humanities is that living with others in a community is impossible without assuming a certain common worldview, a kind of frame of reference for all the endeavors of the community's members. It appears, however, that this idea is still insufficiently appreciated, or else accepted without due reflection on the fact that a common worldview is to a large extent shaped by a common language.

If language is an interpretation of reality or a way of seeing the world, the categories and values cherished by a linguistic community should also be taken into account in interpretations of literary texts. Even if one assumes that literary texts are radically different from other kinds of text in their very essence, their intentions and execution, even if the author – in his or her desire to enrich and extend the knowledge of people and the world, to express the inexpressible, to access a mystery, etc. – continually strives to go beyond the limits of language in its communicative function, "everything that a work contains ... must go through the medium of language" (Mukařovský, 1970, p. 169). This, says Mukařovský, "at the same time refers to an internal connection of a work ... with the society achieved precisely through language." A similar thought had been formulated even more emphatically by Edward Sapir: "The understanding of a simple poem, for instance, involves not merely an understanding of the single words in their average significance, but a full comprehension of the whole life of the community as it is mirrored in the words, or as it is suggested by their overtones" (Sapir, 1961 [1929], p. 69).

5. Poetic Exemplification

In order to realize how important it is to take note of the linguistic worldview in an analysis of a literary text, let us consider a few examples. They all come from the work of the Polish poet and Nobel Prize winner, Wisława Szymborska. In her poem *Conversation with a Stone*,[5] a person is talking to an unusual interlocutor. Is it, however, a coincidental interlocutor? Perhaps not: other objects are mentioned

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5 The English translations of Szymborska's poems, by Stanisław Barańczak and Clare Cavanagh, come from Szymborska (2001). For a discussion of the linguistic view of Czech *kámen* 'stone' and some examples of its poetic elaboration, cf. Vaňková this volume.

in the poem – a leaf, a drop of water, a hair – but these remain backgrounded. By choosing a stone out of many possible elements of nature, the poet was probably guided by the suggestiveness of its image in the Polish language. For a speaker of Polish, *kamień* 'stone' is not only "a piece of rock, usually hard, compact and heavy" (a dictionary definition) but has numerous semantic connotations, e.g. the fact that it is inanimate motivates the feature 'immobile' (cf. *skamienieć* 'turn into stone, fossilize, petrify,' *siedzieć kamieniem* 'sit still,' or *bodajby się w kamień zamienił* 'may he turn into stone'), while the prototypical hardness is metaphorically extended to yield the meaning of 'insensitive, unaffected, strict, unemotional, unfeeling, ruthless' (cf. *ktoś jest (twardy) jak kamień* 'someone is hard as a rock,' *kamień nie człowiek* 'he's a stone, not a human being,' *kamień by się poruszył* 'this would move a stone,' *ktoś jest z kamienia* 'someone is made of stone,' *kamienne serce* 'a heart of stone,' *kamienna twarz* 'a stone face'). This characterization is evoked in the poem when the stone responds to the human speaker's words "My mortality should touch you" with "I'm made of stone … and therefore must keep a straight face."

In making such ample use of the linguistic view of *kamień*, Szymborska – by choosing a stone for the interlocutor – rejects an important feature that results from the object's inanimateness, namely its inability to speak. The expressions *milczeć jak kamień* 'to be silent as a grave' (lit. 'as a stone'), *kamienna cisza/ kamienne milczenie* 'dead (lit. stony) silence' show that for Polish speakers stones belong to the realm of the silent and are unassociated with sounds, let alone with speech.[6] In the poem, the stone is not only endowed with the ability to speak, but its conversational function is actually stronger than that of the human speaker. The latter's request repeatedly meets with the stone's rejection. The stone's unquestionable dominance is surprising because it contradicts our conviction, which derives from our use of language, that humans are the most important "components" of the world, and as such they occupy the highest position in the earthly hierarchy of beings.

Why have these requests been rejected? What do they concern? At the very beginning of the conversation, one reads:

> I want to enter your insides,
> have a look around,
> breathe my fill of you.

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6 Connections of stones with speech can be found in broader culture. For example, in the biblical Book of Habakkuk (2, 6-11) the stone in the house built on bloodshed and evil gain will cry out against the oppressor. In Luke's Gospel (19, 40), in turn, Jesus says that even if the crowd in Jerusalem keep silent, the stones will cry out. These, however, are exceptional and hypothetical situations: people's behavior is so outrageous that it provokes verbal reaction from otherwise mute stones.

At the end of it, in turn, the human interlocutor asks:

> It's only me, let me come in.
> I haven't got two thousand centuries,
> so let me come under your roof.

In order to interpret this, we must again make recourse to the linguistic worldview idea. These poetic contexts rather clearly imply certain properties of a stone that may be absent from its linguistic portrayal but that derive from that portrayal. 'Hardness' motivates 'durability' and 'permanence,' and these turn a stone into a symbol of longevity or even of existence. From this, there is only a stone's throw from viewing it as a source of life.[7] It is precisely this characteristic that is indirectly expressed through *breathe my fill of you*. In Polish, the linguistic metaphors motivated by one of the most fundamental human experiences, i.e. breathing, express the notion of being alive: *ktoś jeszcze oddycha* 'someone is still alive' (lit. 'is still breathing'), *do ostatniego tchu/tchnienia* 'to the last breath,' *ktoś ledwo/ledwie dyszy/dycha* 'someone is barely alive' (lit. 'can hardly breathe'), *ktoś oddał/wydał ostanie tchnienie* 'someone breathed their last,' *ktoś/coś jest dla kogoś jak powietrze* 'someone/ something is indispensable to someone else to live' (lit. 'like the air').[8]

The human subject in Szymborska's poem does not fully realize his or her own fault in the failed conversation. A human perspective, a human ordering and evaluation of the world, is never cast away: the stone is approached like an artifact, the speaker *knocks at the stone's front door* and says:

> I want to enter your insides,
> [...]
> I mean to stroll through your palace,
> [...]
> I hear you have great empty halls inside you,
> unseen, their beauty in vain,
> soundless, not echoing anyone's steps.

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7 Certain cultural facts show that a stone's hardness and immobility are no obstacles to treating it as a living creature or even a life-giver. In Europe, until the end of the 17th century it was assumed that "stones are conceived, grow and mature in the depths of the Earth... Hence there originates a connection, frequent in various cultures, between stones and the earth's symbolism of fertility: fertility is drawn from the earth via stones. A second source of stone's symbolism of fertility is the belief that they are inhabited by the spirits of one's ancestors and mediate in the transmission of fertility from them" (Brzozowska, 1996, p. 349).

8 More on linguistic and artistic metaphors with the source domain of breathing can be found in Pajdzińska (1999). Incidentally, similar metaphorical processes can also be found in English, cf. *with one's last/dying breath, to be the breath of life to somebody* or *to breathe one's last.*