Anna Wileczek / Marzena Marczewska (eds.)

Native Language in the 21st Century

modersmål
anyanyelv ואם־עמאל
ана тили
modersmål
gjuhë e nënës
lengua materna
мајчин јазик äidinkieli μητρική γλώσσα
llingua materna sor-mintzaira
মাতৃভাষা dzimtā valoda
język ojczysty
moedertaal ene dili maćerščina
майчин език
gimtoji kalba
materni jezik ненан мотт
母語 (ぼご) Muttersprache
materinski jezik рідна мова
madrelingua

langue maternelle

sindi-kēļ

anadili

emakeel
moedertaal

ama-hizkuntza

mōdurmål

native language

V&R unipress

V&R unipress

Fields of Linguistics –
Aktuelle Fragestellungen und Herausforderungen

Band 11

Herausgegeben von

Joanna Szczęk, Anna Dargiewicz

und Mariusz Jakosz

Die Bände dieser Reihe sind peer-reviewed.

Anna Wileczek / Marzena Marczewska (eds.)

Native Language in the 21st Century

System, Communication Practices and Education

With 8 figures

V&R unipress

Contents

Introduction

The key competencies associated with effective human functioning in the modern world encompass the ability to communicate proficiently in one's native language. This proficiency not only ensures successful communication but also plays a crucial role in preserving community bonds, safeguarding national and cultural identities, enhancing personal cognitive development, facilitating a deeper understanding of the world, and nurturing meaningful interpersonal relationships. The celebration of the International Day of the Mother Tongue on the twenty-second of February underscores the significance of one's native language, which is more than just a means for effective verbal interaction across diverse contexts, social settings, and communication styles. It serves as a "code of access" to literary treasures and cultural heritage while also representing a cherished social value deeply rooted in a community's traditional culture and history.

The pragmatic contexts in which the mother tongue operates are numerous, spanning cognitive, communicative, persuasive, socializing, aesthetic, and culture-creating functions. This versatility and adaptability demonstrate the richness and variability of this phenomenon, which evolves in response to the evolving needs of its users. Native speakers actively contribute to the development of language through countless acts of communication and their resulting texts. Institutional education also plays a crucial role in expanding the skills necessary for effective and culturally congruent spoken and written dialogues. It fosters an appreciation for the aesthetic qualities of linguistic texts and cultivates awareness about the responsible use of language in a positive and socially conscious manner.

Even in the globalized reality of the 21st century, characterized by extensive migration, the relevance of mother tongue-related issues remains pertinent and worthy of exploration and critical analysis. This publication is a testament to this ongoing discourse, arising from the International Scientific Conference titled "Mother Tongue in the 21st Century: Systems, Education, Perspectives." The conference, which convened at Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, Poland, on

November 17–18, 2022, contributes to the continued examination and reflection on the significance of one's native language in contemporary society. During the conference, discussions revolved around research findings related to first language (L1) acquisition and education, with a specific focus on Polish and other European languages studied as initial languages. This multi-author volume we present here features chapters contributed by select conference speakers. These chapters draw upon research outcomes from three primary domains:

1. **Analysis of the Grammatical and Lexical System.**
2. **Description of Different Language Varieties and Registers:** The second area explores various language varieties and registers within their socio-pragmatic contexts.
3. **Reconstruction of Contemporary Trends in Language Education and Teaching:** The third domain deals with the contemporary trends in language education and pedagogy.

The initial section delves into the linguistic system and commences with a chapter by Marek Ruszkowski. This chapter explores what Witold Mańczak termed 'the law of the relationship between variation and frequency of linguistic elements.' This law suggests that linguistic elements used more frequently tend to exhibit greater differentiation compared to less frequently used elements. Nevertheless, Ruszkowski suggests that this rule does not meet all the criteria expected of a linguistic law, such as quantitative validity, verifiability, universality, and falsifiability. He concludes that this principle, as observed by W. Mańczak, also falls short in fulfilling the fundamental functions of a linguistic law, which encompass systematizing facts, explaining them, and making predictions.

Within this volume, Marta Nowosad-Bakalarczyk's chapter examines the functioning of a category often perceived as rare and marginal, namely "pluralia tantum" in contemporary Polish. Despite often being considered an anomaly in declension, the lexical evidence indicates not only its significant heterogeneity but also its substantial prevalence. In her study, Nowosad-Bakalarczyk draws on Eleonora Rosch's theory of prototypes, proposing that linguistic categories adhere to similar principles as conceptual categories. This approach enables the examination of nouns that lack a singular form (categorized as "pluralia tantum" based on their indispensable and sufficient characteristics) as well as nouns that exhibit a degree of similarity, where the singular form is unusual or infrequent. This comprehensive treatment of the category allows for the elucidation of distinctive features among its members, ranging from highly representative to unrepresentative ones.

Aleksandra Wieczorek's contribution addresses the utilization of electronic language resources, specifically text corpora, in the study of Old Polish. One such resource type is "treebanks," comprising collections of sentences accompanied

by their parsing. Hand-labeled treebanks serve as training data for parsers (syntactic analyzers). Parsers trained on manually annotated treebanks can subsequently be employed for automated syntactic analysis of a much larger set of sentences. Treebanks constructed using Old Polish materials, such as Middle Polish texts, prove to be invaluable tools for the examination of Old Polish syntax.The first section of this volume concludes with a chapter authored by Dorota Połowniak-Wawrzonek. In her work, she draws upon the cognitive theory of metaphor developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, as well as the principles of syntactic phraseology, as proposed by Andrzej Maria Lewicki. Her focus centers on exploring the metaphorical concept of "LOVE AND/OR DESIRE is INGESTION OF FOOD" within contemporary Polish discourse.

Moving on to the second section, titled "Communication Practices," it delves into the multifaceted nature of the communication process. Joanna Senderska initiates this section by presenting an analysis of youth lexicon sourced from the Youth Language and Culture Observatory, a website hosted by Jan Kochanowski University since 2021. Her primary emphasis lies in tracking trends related to the expansion of youth vocabulary, which encompasses the creation of new lexical entries and borrowings. She also highlights the substantial influence of the English language on youth speech, extending beyond vocabulary to encompass the structural aspects of their language.

Anna Wileczek's contribution scrutinizes the professional sub-code of contemporary Polish teachers. Her analysis involves a semantic-pragmatic examination of linguistic data drawn from diverse sources, including questionnaires, interviews, and social media comments. This analysis reveals three distinct lexical-semantic profiles associated with the teaching profession: professionalisms, neologisms, and neosemantisms. Additionally, she identifies semantic fields pertinent to the teaching profession, covering aspects such as teaching methods, organizational practices, documentation/reporting, workplace settings, and individuals involved in educational interactions.

Turning to the language of politicians, Dorota Połowniak-Wawrzonek and Agnieszka Rosinska-Mamej explore statements made by Jarosław Kaczyński that have gained prominence as idiomatic expressions. The authors investigate compound words firmly entrenched in contemporary Polish discourse, including phrases such as "najgorszy sort" (the worst type), "zdradzieckie mordy" (treacherous traps), "oczywista oczywistość" (literal translation: obvious obviousness), "chamska hołota" (boorish lout), and "Białe jest białe, a czarne jest czarne" (white is white and black is black). Their chapter not only provides insights into the contexts surrounding Kaczyński's statements but also conducts a thorough analysis of the meanings attributed to these expressions and their communicative functions.

Lastly, Katarzyna Ostrowska delves into the lexicon related to the theme of "SOCIETY," organized into thematic fields. Using a corpus of selected reportage texts written in Polish and published between 2004 and 2018 (recognized with the Beata Pawlak Prize), the author employs a four-stage research procedure. This includes corpus analysis, the selection of auto-semantic vocabulary associated with the theme of "SOCIETY," identification of thematic categories, and frequency analysis to shed light on the language's portrayal of societal topics.

Martyna Król-Kumor and Magdalena Ambra Wójcik's examination of the Ukrainian language highlights its pivotal role in shaping national identity. Considering that Ukrainian didn't always function as the mother tongue among Ukrainians (as evidenced by some speaking Russian), the authors opted to analyze Ukrainian-language public discourse spanning the years 1991 to 2022. Their research reveals that the outbreak of the war in Ukraine on February 24, 2022, brought about a profound shift in attitudes toward the mother tongue. Ukrainian language assumed a central role as a determinant of national identity, prompting Ukrainians to consciously invest in learning their mother tongue to underscore their sense of belonging to their nation.

The third section, titled "Language and Education," commences with reflections from Kaisu Rättyä, Xavier Fontich, Stanislav Štěpáník, Ana Luisa Costa, and Elżbieta Awramiuk on L1 (first language) education in five European educational jurisdictions: Finland, Spain, the Czech Republic, Portugal, and Poland. The authors examine the primary objectives of national L1 curricula and the challenges encountered in L1 language education across these countries. They underscore that, regardless of specific country contexts, L1 education shares a common goal: developing learners' communicative competence, encompassing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, and promoting social interaction. Language is recognized both as a means of communication and a tool for learning, with a focus on fostering access to written culture for all citizens.

Anita Jagun explores the role of technology in L1 education from the teacher's perspective. Drawing from her research, she analyzes how teachers working with L2 and L3 pupils approach the use of modern technologies, particularly digital applications, during mother tongue lessons. She also highlights the potential benefits and challenges arising from the integration of new technologies in teaching.

Anna Ślósarz introduces an innovative proposal centered on the concept of 'optimal teaching' advocating for the creation of a model for the reception of vocabulary from literary texts within Multimedia Thematic Modules (MTM). This approach acknowledges that in the 21st century, teaching the mother tongue serves not only communicative and aesthetic purposes but also socio-cultural ones. Contemporary literary texts exist within various multimedia contexts, and MTMs combine literature with multimedia elements on similar themes. These

combinations create cognitive clusters with enduring impact, offering educational policies that promote social inclusion, respect for cultural diversity, and a profound appreciation of indigenous, local, and national culture.

The section concludes with Tomasz Niestorowicz's examination of morpho-semantic interference from the mother tongue in written statements produced by Polish students learning Spanish as a foreign language. His work employs the concept of interlanguage, which positions second language learning as a continuum between the native language (L1) and the target language (L2). Niestorowicz describes and categorizes interlingual errors resulting from negative transfer from the mother tongue, a phenomenon observed among Polish students learning Spanish as a foreign language.

The editors of this volume aspire to inspire linguists, educators, mentors, native speakers, and all those interested in the diversity and role of the mother tongue in today's world. This publication, which primarily addresses current issues in Polish research on L1 development, education, and teaching, offers valuable insights for broader discussions on the significance of the mother tongue in contemporary society.

Marzena Marczewska, Anna Wileczek

I. Linguistic System

Marek Ruszkowski

Is it Possible to Speak of Mańczak's Linguistic Law?

Abstract

In 1965, during a lecture given at the Paris Linguistic Society, Witold Mańczak presented a regularity which he called 'the law of the relationship between differentiation and frequency of linguistic elements'. According to this regularity, linguistic elements used more frequently are generally more differentiated than linguistic elements used less frequently. This relationship has a wide range of application, as it applies to various areas and subsystems of language: phonetics, spelling, word formation, inflection, syntax, vocabulary. The rule presented is consistently referred to as *law* by W. Mańczak himself and by other authors. However, this way of understanding the linguistic law is too narrow and inconsistent with the definition of the word *law* presented in dictionaries, e.g. "a rule, regularity governing the world, natural and social processes, constituting the aim of scientific research". The rule in question does not meet all the conditions with which the linguistic law is characterised. These are: quantitativeness, verifiability, universality and falsifiability. It is difficult to speak of quantitativeness, which should be understood as the use of statistical apparatus to study and systematise linguistic features and to present them in the form of statistical summaries, tables and graphs. All that is stated is that some linguistic elements are more frequent than others (e.g. there are more oral vowels than nasal ones, more voiceless consonants than voiced ones, more lower case letters than upper case letters, more singular forms than plural forms). The condition of universality, according to which the linguistic law applies to most (all) languages of the world, is also not met. W. Mańczak presents individual linguistic regularities within individual languages (Polish, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian). This means that a given rule applies only to one or at most several languages. It also seems that W. Mańczak's rule does not fully fulfil the basic functions of the linguistic law, which are: 1. systematising facts, 2. explaining them, 3. predicting them (it can also be predicted to occur in a language that has not yet been described).

Keywords: law, linguistic law, linguistic rule, the so-called Mańczak's law

Marek Ruszkowski, Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, ORCID: 0000-0001-9305-6043.

Introduction

In 1965, during a lecture given at the Paris Linguistic Society, Witold Mańczak presented a regularity which he called 'the law of the relationship between differentiation and frequency of linguistic elements' (Mańczak, 1996, p. 98). He characterised this regularity earlier in his *Spanish Grammar* (Mańczak, 1966, pp. 128–132). According to this law (let us use this term for now), linguistic elements used more frequently tend to be more differentiated than linguistic elements used less frequently. This relationship has a wide range of application, as it refers to different areas and subsystems of language.

Phonetics

Linguists do not know of a single language in which the number of nasal vowels is greater than the number of oral vowels. Oral vowels, which are more frequently used, are more varied.

The voiceless consonants are more frequently used than the voiced ones and in many languages are more differentiated than the voiced ones. For example, in Polish [x], in German [š] (in native words) and [c], in Spanish [č], in Italian [š] have no voiced counterparts. The same can be observed among hard and soft consonants. Even in Russian, which abounds in palatal consonants, the soft consonants are less differentiated than the hard ones.

Spelling

Lowercase letters are much more frequently used than uppercase letters and are therefore more varied. This does not apply to Polish, where there is an exact correspondence between lowercase and uppercase letters. However, in French, for example, lowercase letters are always written with diacritical marks, while they can be omitted with uppercase letters. Therefore, a capital *E* can be equivalent to five lowercase letters: *e, é, è, ê, ë.*

Arabic numerals are used more frequently than Roman ones, so that in Spanish there is a difference between *cinco* 'five' (5) and *quinto* 'fifth' (5.°), while the Roman numeral *V* stands for both *cinco* and *quinto.*

Word formation

More derivatives are formed from words used more frequently than from words used less frequently. From the noun *dom* one can form derivatives and compounds such as *domek, domisko, domowy, domostwo, domownik, zadomowić, domokrążca, domator* and many others. At the same time the noun *radar* in general Polish is used to form only one adjective *radarowy* (in technical vocabulary also: *radaroskop, radaryzacja, radarzysta*). Thus, the family of a more frequently used word is more diverse than the family of a rare word.

Inflection

In Polish, the adjective shows more variation in the singular than in the less frequently used plural. In the accusative singular there are four forms: *dobrego (mężczyznę), dobry (stół), dobrą (kobietę), dobre (dziecko),* while in the accusative plural there are only two: *dobrych (mężczyzn), dobre (stoły, kobiety, dzieci).*

The verb *być* is more frequently used than *dobyć*, so its conjugation shows greater formal variation: *być –jest – są*, but *dobyć – dobywa – dobywają.*

In Spanish, the masculine noun *hijos* means not only 'sons' but also 'children'. The feminine noun *hijas* means only 'daughters'. This is because men are more often talked about than women, as can easily be seen by reading the press.

Syntax

Personal pronouns, which are more commonly used than nouns, can combine with verb forms in all three persons, whereas nouns can only be referred to by third person forms: *ja piszę, ty piszesz, on pisze*, but *człowiek pisze.*. That is, the syntactic use of personal pronouns is more varied than that of nouns. Third person verb forms, which are used more frequently than other persons, can combine with both pronouns and nouns, whereas first and second person verb forms can only complement pronouns.

The frequently used preposition *w* combines with two cases (*w domu, w dom*), while the less frequently used preposition *bez* combines with only one case (*bez domu*).

Vocabulary

Words used more frequently have more meanings than words used less frequently. For example, the noun *ręka* has four basic meanings and many figurative meanings in *Uniwersalny słownik języka polskiego* [The Universal Dictionary of the Polish Language], while the noun *reflacja* has only one: 'an increase in prices following a period in which they were below production costs' (Dubisz ed., 2003, vol. 3, p. 906).

Understanding the concept of *linguistic law*

Do the observations presented meet the conditions of the linguistic law? This depends on the definition adopted for the term *linguistic law*, which can be understood in different ways. As Ferenc Kovács states, "clarification of the concept of law is extremely important not only for closing the never-ending discussion in some satisfactory way, but also because this unresolved problem is still a source of much misunderstanding today" (Kovács, 1977, p. 335). Ferdinand de Saussure's statement: "to speak of the linguistic law in general is to pursue a dream" (Saussure, 2002, p. 115) is more than 100 years old and does not stand the test of time. Although the multiplicity of types of laws of science makes it much more difficult to analyse the concept (Grobler, 2006, pp. 164–175), the problems are undoubtedly less serious in relation to the linguistic law.

Słownik terminologii językoznawczej [The Dictionary of Linguistic Terminology] (STJ) provides the following definition of the linguistic law:

> "The acknowledgement that between certain elements of one and the same language or of two different languages there is a relation of a categorial nature. This means that at least one member of this relation constitutes a group (category). This relation can be either synchronous, in which case we speak of a synchronous law (…), or diachronic, in which case we speak of a diachronic law (…)" (Gołąb et al., 1968, p. 447).

A slightly different definition is found in *Encyklopedia językoznawstwa ogólnego* [The Encyclopaedia of General Linguistics (EJO):

> "The statement establishing a regular relationship between elements of the same language or different languages belonging to the same linguistic family, e.g. a statement of correspondence between Polish *g* and Czech *h*, cf. Polish *noga*, Czech *noha*; Polish *goły*, Czech *holý*; Polish *głowa*, Czech *hlava*, etc." (Polański, 1993, p. 419).

Encyklopedia języka polskiego [The Encyclopaedia of the Polish Language] provides a similar definition, which is not surprising as the author of the entry is also Kazimierz Polański.

According to the definition provided in the STJ, the linguistic law concerns relations of a categorical nature between elements of one language or two languages. In the EJO, the first part of the definition is almost identical, namely: "a regular relationship between elements of the same language". In contrast, the next part of the definition is less restrictive, as it speaks of different languages without indicating their number, and stipulates that these languages must belong to the same language family.

The understanding of the linguistic law contained in the STJ and EJO is far too narrow and inadequate for the rules listed in these lexicons. As a result, the STJ records entries describing 15 linguistic laws (of which 13 are the so-called phonetic laws), most of which apply to a single language. However, entries such as the *Law of Least Effort* or *Zipf's Law* describe laws that apply to most, and perhaps all, of the world's languages. The same is true of the EJO, which records 11 linguistic laws (including 9 so-called phonetic laws). These include laws that apply to one language (e.g. Wheeler's Law), two languages (e.g. Grassmann's Law) and numerous languages (e.g. Zipf's Law).

Adopting the definitions listed in the STJ and EJO would result in thousands of linguistic laws in and among all the languages of the world, estimated to number around 6,000 (Majewicz, 1989, p. 9). It is therefore legitimate to distinguish the linguistic law from the linguistic rule. W. Mańczak stressed that many linguists are not aware of the fundamental difference between a law and a rule:

> "The rule applies to one language, whereas the law applies to all or at least most of the world's languages. In other words, the relation between the rule and the law is like 1:3000, as there are at least that many languages on the globe. Thus, it is only possible to speak of the rule and not of the Verner's law, since it applies only to the Proto-Germanic language. However, we might speak of the law of analogical development, according to which analogy consists far more often in the removal of alternations than in their introduction, since it applies to all the languages of the world. The similarity of the rule to the law lies in the fact that both the notion of rule and exception and the notion of law and exception are quantitative concepts: a rule or law is what is frequent, while an exception is what is rare" (Mańczak, 1996, pp. 16–17).

This distinction is also advocated by Bogdan Walczak (2017).

This way of understanding the linguistic law is consistent with the definition of the noun law (in the sense we are interested in) found in general dictionaries, e.g. "a principle, a regularity governing the world, natural and social processes, constituting a goal of scientific research" (Dubisz ed., 2003, vol. 3, p. 541). In the shortest terms, a law can be said to be "systematically recurring relationships between facts" (Heller, 2009, p. 29). One of the broader definitions states:

> "A law of science is a strictly general statement, non-equivalent to a finite class of singular sentences, mostly open ontologically and always open epistemologically, well-validated, generally belonging to a theory, and capable of performing an exploratory

function as well as a predictive function (in a broad sense)" (Such, Szcześniak, 1997, p. 69).

Ontological openness means that the law also applies to future events whereas epistemological openness means that it applies to phenomena that have not been studied in some respect. The exploratory function is to explain facts and the connections between them.

It is therefore not surprising that:

> "the two basic research procedures applied in science are the establishment of scientific laws and theories and their verification (more broadly: justification). By arriving at laws and building theories and verifying them, science pursues its two fundamental objectives. These are to understand the world better and to act more effectively in it. Both of these aims presuppose the possibility of achieving truth, and not a trivial truth, but a truth that is theoretically interesting and at the same time practically useful" (Such, 1975, p. 7).

Also in linguistics, laws play a very important role, as they describe quantitative regularities occurring in the texts of various natural languages. It is not only the average language user who is unaware of these regularities, but also those linguists who are not concerned with the issue of linguistic laws. Moreover, speakers of a language have no influence on the occurrence of these laws, as they happen independently of their will and are revealed in a sufficiently large corpus of texts.

The starting point for formulating a linguistic law is to come up with a generalised hypothesis, which should ideally meet the following conditions: deducibility, quantitativeness, verifiability, falsifiability, universality, independence from the research material, possibility of including a given hypothesis within a broader set of statements and laws (Pawłowski, 2001, p. 8). Thus, an attempt can be made to formulate a definition of the linguistic law:

> "A regular relationship occurring between linguistic elements that covers the vast majority of facts under observation, occurring in many languages representing different language families" (Ruszkowski, 2010, p. 18).

Its characteristics are: quantitativeness, verifiability, universality and falsifiability. The linguistic law must always be based on statistics (quantitativeness), it must be positively verifiable (verifiability), it must occur in many languages (universality), which makes it possible to assume that it works in most (or all) languages, although it is not possible to establish this empirically. The linguistic law is valid until it is falsified (falsifiability).

Conclusions

W. Mańczak's linguistic regularity does not meet all the conditions of the linguistic law. It is difficult to speak of quantitativeness, which should be understood as the use of statistical apparatus to study and systematise linguistic features and to present them in the form of digital charts, tables and graphs. All that is concluded is that certain linguistic elements are more numerous and others less numerous (e.g. there are more oral vowels than nasal vowels, more voiced consonants than voiced consonants, more lower case letters than upper case letters, more singular forms than plural forms). We should therefore speak of linguistic universals, i.e. features that are present in all languages of the world, although not all of the properties listed belong to them. For example, the vast majority of the world's languages do not have a written form (Majewicz, 1989), so it is difficult to speak of the predominance of lower case over upper case. Besides, the already mentioned statement that "men are more often talked about than women, which is easy to find out by reading the press" is imprecise, intuitive and not supported by statistical data, although it may be true.

Verifiability assumes that it is possible to empirically test the truth of assumptions. W. Mańczak's observations partly fulfil this condition, as it can be ascertained that e.g. in the languages of the world there are always fewer nasal vowels than oral ones (there are also languages which do not have nasal vowels).

The condition of universality, according to which the linguistic law applies to most (all) languages of the world, is certainly not fulfilled. W. Mańczak presents individual linguistic regularities within individual languages (Polish, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian). This means that a given rule applies to only one or at most a few languages.

In the light of the observations made, the so-called Mańczak's law should be falsified, as it does not fulfil most of the requirements for the linguistic laws. At most, one can speak of linguistic rules that occur in one or more languages.

It also seems that W. Mańczak's rule does not fully fulfil the basic functions of the linguistic law, which are: 1. systematising facts, 2. explaining them, 3. predicting them (it can also be predicted to occur in language that has not yet been described). In this sense, linguistic laws bring linguistics closer to the natural sciences.

Wacław Pytkowski emphasises that

"Scientific laws enjoy special authority because they are the 'quintessence' of science, the reflection of regularities with complete scientific precision. (…) A scientific law is the highest achievement that human reason can reach and is usually the expression of the most complete solution to a problem and thus becoming the crowning achievement" (Pytkowski, 1985, p. 168–170; cf. also Such, 1972; Krajewski, 1998).

Linguistic laws cannot be determined, 'laws either exist or they do not exist, and if they do exist, we can at best learn and discover them' (Kovács, 1977, p. 286). They operate outside human consciousness, in objective linguistic reality. Linguistic laws also involve relations beyond human control, and the discovery of a linguistic law makes it possible to reveal deeper, hidden relations between linguistic facts.

It is therefore understandable that today we can speak of at most a dozen or so linguistic laws, even though several are usually described in the literature (e.g. Hammerl & Sambor, 1993; Kulacka, 2011; Ruszkowski, 2011). The classic example of a linguistic law is Menzerath's law (also called Menzerath-Altmann law). The final version was formulated by the German linguist Paul Menzerath in 1954: "The longer the linguistic construction, the shorter its components". This law applies to all subsystems of language: phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical (Sambor, 1987; Ruszkowski, 1991; Kulacka, 2009, 2011).

On a phonological level, research shows that the more phones in a syllable (i.e. the longer the syllable), the shorter the phones. This idea can be expressed differently – the longer the word, the shorter its syllables.In the morphological subsystem, the longer the lexeme, the shorter the morphemes of which that lexeme is composed. Thus, the longest morphemes are found in one-morphem lexemes, shorter ones in two-morphem lexemes, even shorter ones in three-morphem lexemes, and so on. In the syntactic subsystem, the average length of constituent sentences (measured in terms of the number of words) decreases as their number increases, i.e. the more constituent sentences in a compound statement, the shorter they are.

Menzerath's law also holds true in lexical semantics, as it turns out that the greater the length of a word measured by the number of syllables (or letters), the smaller the average number of its meanings in the dictionary. This law has not been falsified in the 70 years since it was formulated; on the contrary, it is confirmed in the successive languages that are studied. It meets all the requirements for linguistic laws, and appropriate statistical apparatus was used to discover it. In contrast, W. Mańczak's rule is just a simple statement of the existing state of affairs. Of course, today the claim of the uniqueness of linguistic laws is untenable, since "no rule is exceptionless, each one applies to most cases and not to all" (Sambor, 1972, p. 16).

References

Dubisz, S. (Ed.) (2003). *Uniwersalny słownik języka polskiego*, vol. 1–4. Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Gołąb, Z., Heinz, A., Polański, K. (1968). *Słownik terminologii językoznawczej.* Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.

Grobler, A. (2006). *Metodologia nauk.* Wydawnictwo Aureus, Wydawnictwo Znak.

Hammerl, R., Sambor, J. (1993). *O statystycznych prawach językowych.*Polskie Towarzystwo Semiotyczne.

Heller, M. (2009). *Filozofia nauki. Wprowadzenie.* Wydawnictwo PETRUS.

Kovács, F. (1977). *Struktury i prawa językowe.* Trans. by M. Sysak-Borońska. Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich.

Krajewski, W. (1998). *Prawa nauki. Przegląd zagadnień metodologicznych i filozoficznych.* Książka i Wiedza.

Kułacka, A. (2009). Warunki zachodzenia prawa Menzeratha-Altmanna. *LingVaria*, 1(7), 17–28.

Kułacka, A. (2011). *Statystyczne prawa językowe. Na przykładzie prawa Menzeratha-Altmanna w składni języków polskiego i angielskiego*, Oficyna Wydawnicza AUT, Wrocławskie Wydawnictwo Oświatowe.

Majewicz, A. F. (1989). *Języki świata i ich klasyfikowanie.* Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.

Mańczak, W. (1966). *Gramatyka hiszpańska.* Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.

Mańczak, W. (1966). *Problemy językoznawstwa ogólnego.* Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich.

Pawłowski, A. (2001). *Metody kwantytatywne w sekwencyjnej analizie tekstu.* Uniwersytet Warszawski.

Polański, K. (1991). Prawo językowe. In S. Urbańczyk (Ed.), *Encyklopedia języka polskiego.* Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich.

Pytkowski, W. (1985). *Organizacja badań i ocena prac naukowych.* Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.

Ruszkowski, M. (1991). Prawo Menzeratha w badaniach syntaktycznych. *Język Polski*, 3–5, 187–192.

Ruszkowski, M. (2010). O pojęciu "prawo językowe". *Poradnik Językowy*, 10, 12–20.

Ruszkowski, M. (2011). Prawa językowe. In P. Zbróg (Ed.), *Współczesna polszczyzna w badaniach językoznawczych. Od języka w działaniu do leksyki* (pp. 7–41). Wydawnictwo LIBRON.

Sambor, J. (1972). *Słowa i liczby. Zagadnienia językoznawstwa statystycznego.* Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich.

Sambor, J. (1987). Prawo Menzeratha a wieloznaczność wyrazów. In A. Weinsberg (Ed.), *Studia z językoznawstwa ogólnego i kontrastywnego* (pp. 83–106). Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.

Saussure de, F. (2002). *Kurs językoznawstwa ogólnego.* Trans. by K. Kasprzyk. Introduction and footnotes by K. Polański. Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Such, J. (1972). *O uniwersalności praw nauki.* Książka i Wiedza.

Such, J. (1975). *Problemy weryfikacji wiedzy. Studium metodologiczne.*Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.

Such, J., Szcześniak, M. (1997). *Filozofia nauki.* Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu.

Walczak, B. (2017). Prawa językowe a empiryczne uniwersalia językowe. *Scripta Neophilologica Posnaniensia*, 17, 377–381.

Marta Nowosad-Bakalarczyk

Pluralia tantum in Contemporary Polish: Categorial Centre and Peripheries

Abstract

This chapter deals with the category of *pluralia tantum* in contemporary Polish. The category is relatively large (in the source investigated here, over 1,700 proper nouns alone have been identified) and heterogeneous: category-central units only occur in the plural (e.g. *chrzciny* 'christening'); category-peripheral units are more common in the plural but also occur in the singular (e.g. *frytki* 'chips; French fries', sing. *frytek* or *frytka*); intermediate cases are derived from dual nouns or from *singularia tantum* (e.g. *akta* 'files' or *drogocenności* 'valuables').

Keywords: linguistic category, pluralia tantum, singularia tantum, dual nouns

Introduction

The terms *plurale tantum* and *pluralia tantum* are used in Polish grammar in reference to those nouns that only occur in the plural. As this usage is a deviation from the general patterns of nouns being inflected for number, *pluralia tantum* tend to be treated as marginal[1] and illustrated with a relatively fixed set of examples (*drzwi* 'doors', *sanie* 'sleigh', *spodnie* 'trousers', *skrzypce* 'violin', *no-życe* 'scissors', *usta* 'mouth', *fusy* '(coffee) grounds', *pomyje* 'slops', *męty* 'dregs' or 'scum', *urodziny* 'birthday', *wakacje* 'holidays'), which implies that they are a declensional anomaly found in a small number of words. But is this really so? The present chapter will look into *pluralia tantum* in contemporary Polish. The data have been excerpted from *Wielki słownik języka polskiego PWN ze słownikiem wyrazów bliskoznacznych* [PWN Great Polish Dictionary] on USB Flash Drive, which combines several dictionaries into one database (henceforth: WSJP PWN).

Marta Nowosad-Bakalarczyk, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, ORCID: 0000-0002-3226-1665.

1 For example, in Laskowski's (1998, pp. 205–206) grammar they are mentioned in the discussion on number as a minor, peripheral phenomenon, which is indicated with a smaller font.