

THE LANGUAGE OF OTHERING IN A DIVERSE EUROPE

EDITED BY

MARTA FALKOWSKA AND JADWIGA LINDE-USIEKNIEWICZ

BRILL'S STUDIES IN LANGUAGE, COGNITION AND CULTURE

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The Language of Othering in a Diverse Europe

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Jadwiga Linde-Usiekniewicz



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Othering and Language: An Introduction

Marta Falkowska and Jadwiga Linde-Usiekniewicz

This book is a result of the collaboration of linguists from three universities: the University of Warsaw (Poland), Charles University in Prague (Czech Republic), and the University of Heidelberg (Germany) within the 4EU+ Alliance program SEED4EU+, and was funded under this program. Specifically, our research project called *Naming for othering in a diversified Europe* represents the 4EU+ Initiative Flagship 2: *Europeanness: multilingualism, pluralities, citizenship*. The common goal of all the authors involved in the project was to verify whether and in what ways the notion of *othering* can inform linguistically oriented studies of selected European languages: Polish, Czech, German, Croatian, and Slovak. Overall, our research is intended to trace and analyze othering in its many linguistic manifestations, e.g., nomination strategies, referential practices, insults, offensive or stigmatizing terms, linguistic tropes, and negative stereotypes used in the ongoing public discourse that are aimed at excluding, marginalizing, and denigrating groups or individuals. The themes and conclusions of individual papers respond to the current European challenges concerning the formation of a European identity in public discourse and upholding the “us”–“them” dichotomy that often leads to delegitimizing certain social actors. Thus, the book highlights analyses of words and phrases referring to social groups (e.g., immigrants/refugees, ethnic minorities, political and ideological opponents) and social and political actors conceived as falling outside of the in-group. The focus here is on language that provides insights into how people perceive, construe, and categorize the social world around them, and eventually form or adhere to ideology-based or ethnicity-based prejudice. The authors investigate explicit and implicit strategies of othering and exclusion across selected types of discourse. According to Ruth Wodak, “[...] ‘inclusion’ and ‘exclusion’ are to be understood as the fundamental construction of ‘in-groups’ and ‘out-groups’ in various public spaces, structurally and discursively” (Wodak 2008, 61), and the two processes play a fundamental role in organizing every aspect of the social life and the social actors’ participation in it. The majority of chapters within this volume address othering of marginalized groups and ideological opponents. However, some of the papers explore the linguistic behavior of the othered groups, such as terms used for the dominant majorities, and strategies for reclaiming certain negatively loaded lexical items and re-evaluating them for self-referencing.

None of the papers explicitly mentions or involves post-colonial European or post-dependency studies, yet they do echo some of the concerns raised within these approaches. The papers that present othering of migrants and refugees and of non-European ethnic groups (Gvozdanović, this volume; Kołos and Karlińska, this volume; Łaziński, this volume) enter into dialogue with post-colonial studies as presented by Lars Jensen (2020), since they confirm the privileged position of whiteness (Jensen 2020, 4–26). Since all the languages represented in the volume are spoken in Central and Eastern Europe, it should come as no surprise that they mirror some of the concerns raised in post-dependency studies (Pucherová and Gáfrík 2015; Nycz 2014; Gosk 2014). The post-dependency issues are involved, although not so named, in several chapters, e.g., Petrak (this volume); Falkowska (this volume); Banasiak and Wnuk (this volume); and Saicová Římalová, Kopřivová, and Rejzek (this volume).

By the same token, we may observe thematic overlap of some contributions with the studies representing the critical race theory (Crenshaw et al. 1995; Delgado and Stefancic 2012; Ladson-Billings 2022). In particular, several chapters involve analyses of representing race, or stereotypical non-whiteness (Łaziński; Kołos and Karlińska, this volume), ethnicity (Falkowska, this volume), and gender (Gvozdanović, this volume). However, our research goals, formulated from the linguistic standpoint, were chiefly focused on studying textual representations of these constructs without delving into social, political, economic or legal practices they may be intertwined with.

1 Various Facets of *Othering*

The “us”–“them” or “self”–“other” dichotomy is one of the many entrenched oppositions that help people make sense of the world: to categorize its elements, organize their social experience, and guide them in their day-to-day interactions. The duality builds upon the basic cognitive mechanism that consists of perceiving similarities or analogies as well as differences between “us” and the people around us. However, while the inherent and growing diversity among Europeans should be seen as constituting an asset for the future growth of European societies, it has also been a visible and substantial challenge (Delanty et al. 2008; Ife 2020; Krzyżanowski 2010; Jensen 2020: 142–144; Kopytowska et al. 2017). The sheer number of features that may be used to set groups of people apart is extensive and possibly open-ended. For instance, individuals may be characterized in terms of their political views and ideologies, nationality, ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs, looks (e.g., skin color, body

mass), or behaviors linked to neurodiversity. All these characteristics that render people different may be discursively foregrounded and used as a basis for denigrating and excluding those perceived and conceptually framed as “others”. This has been particularly visible in the context of the European migrant and refugee crises (see, e.g., Chovanec and Molek-Kozakowska 2017; Kopytowska et al. 2017; Fábíán 2023).

The *Oxford English Dictionary* attests the verb *to other* ‘to become conscious of by viewing as a distinct entity’ as early as 1810 and illustrates it with a quote from Samuel Coleridge’s *Notebooks*: “My Neighbour is my *other* Self, *othered* by Space—my old age is to my youth an other Self, *othered* by Time”. However, this sense clearly does not entail any explicit negative evaluation nor exclusion of “the other”. Quite the contrary—the “Neighbour” and “the Self”, while distinct, are portrayed as equal and essentially similar: the other person is a Self, albeit spatially distant. Even more so, othering thus conceived concerns the same person over time: in their youth and in their old age.

The term *othering*, as it is understood nowadays, e.g., in social psychology, sociology, and anthropology, is generally believed to have been coined by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. It is used in her analysis of colonial discourses and “the mechanics of the construction of the *self-consolidating* other” (Spivak 1985, 251; original emphasis). However, according to Sune Qvotrup Jensen (2011), the roots of the concept may be traced back to Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and his thoughts on the origins of self-consciousness as shaped by the struggle with the other. Among thinkers inspired by Hegel, there is also Simone de Beauvoir, whose well-known work *The Second Sex* (1956 [1949]) posits that “the category of the Other is as primordial as consciousness itself” and that “Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought” (de Beauvoir 1956, 16). De Beauvoir applies these observations to the social construction of relations between men and women, whereby the latter are construed as “the others”. This, in turn, enables the crystallization and self-consolidation of the “us” (the in-group) since “our representations of *ourselves*, even *to ourselves*, require a form of social comparison” (Coupland 2010, 247; original emphasis). The mechanism of building a group’s social identity in contrast with “them” is best summed up in an aphoristic statement, “We are what we are because *they* are not what we are” (Tajfel and Forgas 1981, 124; original emphasis).

Since Spivak’s seminal work, the term *othering* has been defined and used in various ways, but in almost all instances, it involves either distancing or subordination. Below, we briefly present selected definitions that have informed our analyses.

In our book, several authors decided to follow the definition put forward by Lajos Brons:

Othering is the simultaneous construction of the self or in-group and the other or out-group in mutual and unequal opposition through identification of some desirable characteristic that the self/in-group has and the other/out-group lacks and/or some undesirable characteristic that the other/out-group has and the self/in-group lacks. Othering thus sets up a superior self/in-group in contrast to an inferior other/out-group, but this superiority/inferiority is nearly always left implicit.

BRONS 2015, 70

This definition underscores that it is not only the out-group that comes into being by the process of othering. It is inherently part of the self/in-group construction and consolidation that stems from positive self-presentation in contrast with the othered. Importantly, the opposition is “unequal”: it often entails a distinction along the superiority–inferiority axis or even, in some cases, “a dehumanizing over-inflation of otherness” in which the other becomes “radically alien” (Brons 2015, 72). It portrays the differences between the in-group and out-group as insurmountable and blocks any chances of empathetic understanding between them.

Moreover, in Brons's view, othering may occur between both individuals and groups. The former type seems problematic since even in examples reported by Brons (2015, 71), where two individual people (a Muslim and an atheist) talk about their life values, underlying stereotypical beliefs about a group are activated (e.g., an assumption that atheists are immoral). Indeed, Brons himself also recognizes the “inherently social” nature of othering (Brons 2025, 72). That is why, in our research, we tended to concentrate on the group dimension of othering that may be systematically traced in discourse rather than on individual relations between *the otherer* and *the othered*.

Brons (2015, 70) claims that the “superiority/inferiority distinction is nearly always left implicit”, which may be true when the process of othering is considered in the abstract. However, it is no longer so when actual linguistic practices are studied, especially when the research focuses on specific nominations created and used with the main purpose of conveying disdain. In the latter case, naming practices usually make the opposition quite explicit and axiologically clear from the point of view of a language user. This falls along the lines of Teun van Dijk's (2011, 396) concept of “ideological square” whereby the “us”–“them” polarization involves positive self-presentation (i.e., foregrounding the positive features of the in-group while denying or mitigating negative ones) and negative other-presentation (i.e., focusing on negative characteristics of the out-group, while de-emphasizing positive ones).

Another issue that Brons's account raises is the distinction between *crude* and *sophisticated* forms of othering. Brons puts it as follows:

What sets apart *crude* from *sophisticated* othering, is that in case of the former, otherness is constructed just through self-other distanciation, while in case of the latter, self-other identification plays a key role in the process. That is, in crude othering, the distribution of the (un)desirable characteristic is more or less assumed or posited, while in sophisticated othering it follows from an argument that is partially based on a self-other-identifying assumption. More specifically, in both kinds of othering, there is a perceived difference between the self or in-group and the other or out-group, but while this difference is the (un)desirable characteristic in case of crude othering, it is a relatively neutral difference in case of sophisticated othering. However, perceived through the lens of self-other identification, this *relatively* neutral difference leads to the construction of another difference, and that other difference is the (un)desirable characteristic.

BRONS 2015, 70–71; original emphasis

Brons acknowledges that there is “no hard boundary” between crude and sophisticated othering (Brons 2015, 71). Yet, he contrasts only sophisticated othering with what he calls *quasi-othering* (Brons 2015, 83), where some of the elements involved in instances of sophisticated othering are present, but there is no underlying assumption of the superiority of the in-group, and by the same token, no straightforward conclusion about the inferiority of the out-group. This has led one of the authors (Linde-Usiekniewicz, this volume) to ask whether it is possible to construct a *quasi* counterpart to crude othering, consisting of acknowledging or elaborating the “self”–“other” differentiation without invoking the actual inferiority of the out-group or their radical alienness. Her proposal consists of positing that the three grammars of identity/alterity postulated by Baumann and Gingrich (2006) may, in fact, be three instances of crude quasi-othering.

Following Brons (2015) in considering othering as a social phenomenon, and at the same time critically assessing his explications, Gvozdanović (this volume) notices that some instances of othering only occur in very specific milieus (a phenomenon that she terms “socially situated othering”). She argues that the othering of some groups may not be generalized to all instances when the in-group faces the out-group but to specific situations. Her example is that of women being othered in a specific way when applying for senior academic positions, thereby challenging a sociocultural norm.

Among approaches to othering, Poul Rohleder’s definition, published in the *Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology* (2014), is noteworthy, too. Rohleder links the phenomenon of othering with “irrational emotions and feelings” which

underlie prejudice, e.g., hatred, fear, and disgust, and which in turn often lead to actions against “the other” (e.g., abuse, enslavement, persecution). In Rohleder’s view, othering cannot be equated with stereotyping: although both processes involve “making generalizations about groups of people”, in the case of the latter, these generalizations can be positive or negative, while othering only pertains to ascribing negative characteristics to the out-group (Rohleder 2014, 1306). Rohleder’s differentiation between the terms *stereotyping* and *othering* and his claim that othering has its roots in affective states seem to be valid for linguistic analyses, too. These observations are brought to the fore in the chapter by Mikołajczuk (this volume), who explores othering as a contempt-related phenomenon, as well as in the study by Banasiak and Wnuk (this volume), who touch upon the affective component of othering.

Nikolas Coupland underlines the conceptual and constitutive nature of othering as a “process of representing an individual or a social group to *render them* distant, alien or deviant” (Coupland 2010, 244; original emphasis). He also notes a potential alternative way of understanding *othering* as “a process of ‘totemising’ or ‘fetishising’” (Coupland 2010, 244), within which “the other” is imagined as someone mysterious, revered, or imbued with magical powers. He adds that even though the out-group is usually a minority group, “majority groups will often be cast as ‘other’ to minorities” (Coupland 2010, 244), which indicates that the process need not be typical for numerical majority groups only.

Yet another inspiring approach comes from Sune Qvortrup Jensen, who focuses on power relations between the groups and, more specifically, on the ways othering influences the members of the subordinate group:

I define othering as discursive processes by which powerful groups, who may or may not make up a numerical majority, define subordinate groups into existence in a reductionist way which ascribe problematic and/or inferior characteristics to these subordinate groups. Such discursive processes affirm the legitimacy and superiority of the powerful and condition identity formation among the subordinate.

JENSEN 2011, 65

While Jensen is generally in agreement with the previously mentioned researchers when it comes to the superior–inferior distinction brought about by othering, as well as the reductionist approach to “the other”, he focuses on two ways the othered group may react discursively to counter the process. Firstly, they can use what Jensen calls *capitalization* to appropriate some elements of the denigrating discourses and reclaim them for themselves in order to subvert the underlying negative representations. Secondly, they may resort to *refusal*,

i.e., overtly or covertly distancing themselves from the category they supposedly form, thus rejecting the position of “the other” they have been relegated to. We find Jensen’s observations concerning capitalization particularly fitting when it comes to analyzing the language of groups that stand up to othering by reclaiming and re-evaluating the words that have been used to denigrate them. The chapter written by Zawisławska and Chojnacka-Kuraś (this volume) may be a case in point.

The attempts at defining *othering* discussed in this section give us some insight into the main components that the selected authors read into it. It would seem that both Brons and Jensen look at othering predominantly as a sociocognitive process through which social groups are defined into existence, and their mutual relations along the superiority/inferiority axis are specified. Jensen’s approach also focuses on how this process influences the othered group’s identity and what their responses to othering might be. Rohleder and Coupland both look at othering in terms of social perceptions and representations, but while Coupland sees othering as a discursive practice with the accompanying discourse strategies (e.g., homogenization or pejoration), Rohleder is more interested in its affective component and psychoanalytic foundation (e.g., irrational fear of “the other”).

From this typology, it follows that the linguistic phenomena analyzed in this book may be treated either as symptoms of the underlying othering at the sociocognitive level (a view that we might link with the approaches put forward by Brons, Rohleder, and Jensen) or as its very essence (which seems to conform with Coupland’s account). The two approaches are implicitly reflected in the present volume. The majority of the authors build their theoretical frameworks following Brons (2015) and tend to analyze the linguistic phenomena they study as manifestations of the social or situational perception of some groups, e.g., Gvozdanović (this volume), Mikołajczuk (this volume), Linde-Usiekniewicz (this volume), Kołos and Karlińska (this volume), Falkowska (this volume). Other authors represented in this volume focus primarily on discourse practices and analyze the way those lead to othering (e.g., Hebal-Jezierska, this volume; Petrak, this volume) or blend elements of both approaches within their methodological frameworks (e.g., Banasiak and Wnuk, this volume; Łaziński, this volume).

Although the research presented in this book focuses on either discursive othering or its linguistic manifestations in discourse, Rohleder’s (2014) account of othering as involving affective states also plays an important role in some of the chapters. Affective states, i.e., hate and contempt, are directly invoked in two chapters: by Mikołajczuk (this volume) and by Kołos and Karlińska (this volume), where the authors argue that linguistic manifestations of the

results of different kinds of othering are instances of hate speech. Yet, as recognized by some hate speech theoreticians and scholars (Brown 2017a, b; Linde-Usiekniewicz 2020; Bilewicz et al. 2017), the emotions and attitudes behind hate speech acts may be different and more strongly related to contempt (Bilewicz et al. 2017). While Kołos and Karlińska use the notion of *hate speech* as an umbrella term for a whole range of bannable Internet discourses, Mikołajczuk explicitly argues that the affective state linked to attacks on Polish teachers on strike is that of contempt and not hate.

2 Multifaceted Opposition “Us” versus “Others”

Theoretical work on othering and the opposition between selves or in-groups, and them or others (out-groups) has led us to expect certain asymmetries, especially along the superior–inferior axis. Interestingly, but not unexpectedly, a certain asymmetry has been detected between two directions in which the “us” vs. “the others” distinction can be elaborated. The focus on othering, as defined in the section above, resulted in the authors of most of the chapters focusing on “their bad things”, to cite van Dijk (2011, 396), with “our good things” being taken for granted or present only implicitly and by default. A notable exception, i.e., focusing on “our good things” (van Dijk 2011, 396), has been brought to the fore in only two of the chapters. In one of them, the authors present the way in which the Polish adjective *gruby* ‘fat’ is reclaimed in the fat-activist discourse (Zawisławska and Chojnacka-Kuraś, this volume). In the other (Linde-Usiekniewicz, this volume), the self-construal of Polish d/Deaf as opposed to the hearing majority reflects “creating clusters of similar values and norms with the inclusive subject ‘we’” (Kopytowska et al. 2017, 66).

Yet another feature of othering that the chapters in this volume reveal and confirm is the range of dimensions along which the “us” vs. “them” opposition is construed. These dimensions form two clusters. One cluster is formed by instances where the othered group consists of people who can be informally considered “those without”, i.e., outside the speaker’s group. In the second cluster, the others are those who the otherers consider at least partly “those within”, although they do not share the expected cultural or political values. As a result, they are considered traitors or at least black sheep.

In the first cluster, the relevant dimensions are ethnicity and race. The “others” are generally either migrants, or rather immigrants, and their descendants. Othering of non-white immigrants in Germany is one of the topics discussed by Gvozdanović (this volume), while both Łaziński (this volume) and Kołos and Karlińska (this volume) present othering of non-whites through terms used to

refer to them. Within the context of othering, it is of interest how the ethnically diverse groups of people who are considered non-whites and non-Blacks, including people of Middle Eastern origin and people originating from the South Asian subcontinent, are construed as a single “they” under the umbrella term *ciapaty* (see both chapters for a detailed analysis of the term), based on their non-white color.

While the two instances discussed by Gvozdanović and by Kołos and Karlińska (both in this volume) focus on a cross-section of both immigrant status and ethnicity, the two dimensions do not always constitute an interwoven strand. The two features can be separated, and othering can be carried out based on race alone or nationality alone. Thus, Łaziński (this volume) shows how Black people are othered and stigmatized in Polish translations of literary works featuring Black protagonists by adding terms referring to their race where such terms are not present in the original works. Falkowska (this volume) discusses how immigrants and refugees from Ukraine are othered in Polish both through the use of derogatory terms and through attributing negative characteristics to them based on either the perception of their refugee status or on historical grievances.

Within the second cluster, the othered groups consist of what has previously been called “those within”. Here, the othering is targeted at members of the same national community. If they do not conform to the norms and values of the perceived “we”, by the same token, they become “them” within the logic of the debate. In other words, they are considered traitors to some of the values associated with nationhood. One instance of such opposition is discussed by Petrak (this volume). The framing context is that of linguistic purism as applied to Croatian, and the larger context involves the intersection between language ideologies and national identities. The pivotal issue is the presence and acceptability of linguistic items of foreign origin (in particular, English and Serbian) within the relatively newly formed national language. While English influences are either accepted or criticized on generic puristic grounds, the issue of Serbian influences is highly divisive. Thus, Croatian people with more liberal attitudes towards Serbian influence construe their opponents, i.e., the anti-Serbian purists, as “them”. Conversely, Croatian anti-Serbian purists deem the linguistic liberals as those who are not happy with the existence of the Croatian state and would like to see a return to the Yugoslavian past.

The second instance is presented in the chapter by Banasiak and Wnuk (this volume) and is based on the Polish-internal debate about the appropriate model of Polishness. Two such models are contrasted: one that adheres to traditional values to a degree that is at odds with the modern world, and the other, more liberal, geared to European values. Each group, within the logic of

the conflict, other their opponents in multiple ways, including specific derogatory names coined for them: *cebulak* ‘onioner’ is the term used by the liberals for the conservatives, and *fajnopolak* ‘cool-o-Pole’ is the term typically used by the conservatives for the liberals.

What the two instances presented above have in common is that the two sides of the debate are fairly symmetrical. Within the dialectic of the debate, neither group can be considered a minority, either numerically or in terms of privilege or power relations. Interestingly, in the case of Croatian, the two groups even share the same Internet forums. In the Polish case, there is a tendency for each group to use separate forums and Internet sites.

This symmetry of social actors is absent in the third instance of the cluster, discussed in the chapter by Mikołajczuk (this volume). What can be easily observed in her material and its analyses is that Polish teachers who went on strike in 2019 are overwhelmingly targeted in media discourse; their strike is commonly compared to a terrorist activity, with school children portrayed as hostages.

In all the instances discussed so far, it is relatively clear how the opposition between “us” and “them” is construed. In each case, there are some shared values and norms that contribute to the construction of the in-group identity and result in perceiving the out-group as being in opposition. The dialectic is, therefore, binary, and the linguistic means employed follow or illustrate the perception of the out-group by the in-group. This model cannot be invoked in the case of the chapter by Hebal-Jezierska (this volume), which analyzes the way Polish, Czech, and Slovak media have presented the sides of the Israel–Hamas conflict, when it still involved only these two actors, i.e., between October 7, 2023, and June 2024. Hebal-Jezierska shows how the way the discourse is organized, and particularly, the lexical choices present, tend to other only one side of the conflict, i.e., Hamas. If we assume that Coupland’s (2010, 244) term “powerful group” can also refer to those who control discourse (here: Polish, Slovak, and Czech media), we must recognize that they do render only one group as inferior to the other, or more “distant, alien or deviant” (to evoke the formulation used by Coupland 2010, 244). Thus, Hebal-Jezierska shows that the practice of othering may also be performed not by social actors who represent the two poles of the opposition but by apparent bystanders who nevertheless take sides while reporting.

The research presented in this volume also shows that the “us” vs. “them” opposition can change over time. In the material studies, this modification involves what we would like to call *mental geography*, i.e., the imaginary alignment of countries with either the East or the West. Conceptualizing “us” as affiliated with the West and the immigrants as coming from the East is dis-

cussed directly in the chapter by Saicová Římalová, Kopřivová, and Rejzek (this volume). The part of their chapter that deals with the contemporary linguistic view of migrants in Czech convincingly shows that Czech people identify themselves with the West. Yet the historical part of the chapter, and in particular the one devoted to the representation of migrants in the totalitarian period (1948–1989), proves that the official communist discourse of Czechoslovakia used to construe the West as the enemy. Hence the opposition used to run along the lines of “us”, i.e., popular democracies (as these countries referred to themselves) versus “the bad West” that was threatening the communist values of workers’ paradises. Interestingly, there is little evidence that the official Czech discourse of that time construed “us” as the East.

Identifying “us” with the West and “them” with the East, sometimes in accordance with real-life geography and sometimes within mental geography alone, is also attested in other chapters that discuss ethnicity-based othering (e.g., Falkowska, this volume; Kołos and Karlińska, this volume). The discussions about the appropriate model of Polishness (Banasiak and Wnuk, this volume) also invoke the East vs. West dichotomy, with modern liberals blaming the conservatives (i.e., ‘the onioners’) for failing to adhere to Western cultural models and standards, while the conservatives blame the liberals (the ‘cool-o-Poles’) for aspiring uncritically to Western standards of living and Western culture, regarded as superficial and nihilistic.

3 Othering and Naming Practices

The pivotal role that language plays in building, managing, and upholding social identities has long been recognized (e.g., Duszak 2002, 1). According to Coupland, “linguistic representations lie at the heart of both social integration and cohesion, and social division and exclusion” (2010, 242–243). Since each instance of social division is different and context-dependent, “each site and time-period of intergroup conflict will have its own distinctive themes and tendencies, its own patterns and strategies of prejudicial representation, its own modes of resistance and rebuttal. Each will be a culturally and temporally specific formation” (2010, 244–245). Yet, these strategies are always built upon the linguistic means that specific languages offer.

The specific linguistic means are discussed in individual chapters and within different linguistic methodologies (see section 4). However, several linguistic phenomena are discussed across different chapters and are therefore worth mentioning here.

One linguistic technique predominantly used to discursively other the minority group, reported amply in the literature and also present in the cases studied here, is the substitution of neutral words by derogatory words. Yet the studies presented in this volume show that speakers do not only use existing slurs but also form new pejorative coinages for the specific purpose of othering. The linguistic processes behind these novel forms include semantic shifts combined with morphological derivation, e.g., *cebulak* 'onioner' mentioned above, and more interestingly, compounds and their derivatives, e.g., *fajnopolak* 'cool-o-pole' (Banasiak and Wnuk, this volume) as well as an entire set of Croatian compounds presented by Petrak (this volume). Another procedure is that of formal blends, present among ethnophaulisms referring to Ukrainians that draw on the acronym *UPA* (Ukrayin'ska Povstan'ska Armiia), which refers to the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, blamed for massacres of Polish people in the 1930s and 1940s. Two forms have emerged: *UPAINIEC* and *UPADLINIEC*, with the latter also featuring a sequence that alludes to *padlina* 'carriion'. On the conceptual level, this blend others the present-day Ukrainians residing in Poland either as immigrants or as refugees by both invoking their guilt in historical mass killings and dehumanizing them.

Łaziński (this volume) shows that ethnic names that are not necessarily offensive may also attach stigma to people they describe. He posits that it happens specifically when the words are overused and become the default means of referring to people (in the case of his analysis, these are fictional characters). His chapter describes the over-characterization of Black protagonists as Black in novels translated into Polish, where the original text identifies them in a different way (e.g., by proper names, pronouns, or definite nouns referring to their gender).

Two chapters focusing on othering people in Polish based on their race (Łaziński, this volume; Kołos and Karlińska, this volume) also bring to the fore how Polish word formation is recruited to other people based on their ethnicity. They both comment on the Polish diminutive suffix *-qtko* added to racial terms to denote children of that race or ethnicity. The suffix is also added to animal names to denote their young but not to names of nationalities and ethnicities deemed white.

The two chapters in question also discuss how inflection is recruited in Polish to other and dehumanize those othered. While standard Polish requires plural forms of masculine nouns to carry a special masculine-personal marker, the materials they study show that there is a marked tendency to inflect them according to a derogatory paradigm that marks them as if they were not masculine personal nouns and, since they retain their masculine grammatical gender, their referents are othered as if they were non-human. This is a grammatical device unique to Polish among Slavonic languages.

Two chapters, one by Mikołajczuk (this volume) and another by Hebal-Jezierska (this volume), also show that linguistic othering can occur without direct naming. Mikołajczuk shows that othering can occur through the use of certain words invoking particular frames. Her most telling example is that of calling schoolchildren who are deprived of their schooling because of the teachers' strike *zakołodnicy* 'hostages', which, once the relevant frame is activated, presents the striking teachers as terrorists. Hebal-Jezierska shows that the way two sides of the Israel– Hamas conflict are named reveals that the Czech, Slovak, and Polish press implicitly take sides when reporting the conflict and tend to—intentionally or not—conflate Hamas with all Palestinians.

4 Methods and Data

Given the variety of research questions posed in individual contributions, there is no uniform methodological framework adopted for all the chapters. However, the common thread of the studies contained in the monograph is the prevalence of the semasiological orientation, where lexical items serve as the fulcrum around which analyses of their uses, meanings, and functions revolve. The *Afterword* further elaborates on the implications of the semasiological perspective adopted in the book.

As far as the theoretical background of our book is concerned, the majority of chapters represent lexical semantics combined with pragmatics to study the denotative and connotative meanings of lexical items, as well as discursive strategies governing their use and collocability. Attention is also paid to grammatical (i.e., inflectional, morphological) properties of the studied nominal structures (see section 3 above). Depending on the scope of the analysis and the specificity of their material, the frameworks used by the authors include e.g., critical discourse analysis (Petrak, this volume), cognitive metaphor theory (Saicová Římalová, Kopřivová, and Rejzek; Banasiak and Wnuk, this volume), the concepts of frames and cognitive domains, as well as conceptual blending theory according to Fauconnier and Turner (Mikołajczuk, this volume), and an ethnolinguistic approach typical of the Polish school of Lublin (also termed *linguistic worldview*) to study culture-specific stereotypes behind words (Banasiak and Wnuk; Mikołajczuk, this volume).

A common feature of our research is also the extensive use of corpora. These include both self-compiled, tailored corpora designed to give insights into specific discursive topics and strategies (e.g., Zawisławska and Chojnacka-Kuraś; Petrak; Kołos and Karlińska, this volume), and ready-made ones, selected because of the specific time periods they cover and the text types they encompass

(Saicová Římalová, Kopřivová, and Rejzek; Falkowska, this volume). Hebal-Jezierska (this volume) employs both types of corpora, while Łaziński (this volume) bases his observations about stigmatizing words on literary sources drawn from a parallel corpus. The self-compiled corpora are often based on texts excerpted from the Internet. Our analyses confirm the observation by Emily Harmer and Karen Lumsden that othering is widely represented in online communication under the form of a “myriad toxic and harmful behaviors which are being created through, or perpetuated by, information and communication technologies” (Lumsden and Harmer 2019, 21). The challenges and methodological restraints connected with using Internet-sourced materials in linguistic analyses are discussed in more detail by Kołos and Karlińska, and by Falkowska (this volume).

Most papers in this volume offer qualitative analyses, with the exception of the chapters by Zawisławska and Chojnacka-Kuraś, as well as Kołos and Karlińska, which also provide quantitative analyses and interpretations of corpus material, in particular keyness and stylometric analyses. Gvozdanović, as well as Saicová Římalová, Kopřivová, and Rejzek, employ selected corpus linguistics tools to visualize data concerning the corpus frequency of specific expressions over time and the trends in their usage, while Łaziński illustrates his observations on words that carry a stigmatizing potential with quantitative data from several corpora (monolingual and parallel).

5 Structure of the Volume and Chapter Overview

The volume is divided into four distinct parts. Part 1 presents two corpus-based diachronic studies of naming for othering, in particular concerning migrants. The languages involved are mainly German and Czech. Part 2 focuses on the phenomenon of othering through naming in identity debates. Two national identity debates are presented: Croatian and Polish. In Part 3, the complex theoretical and discursive relations between othering, naming, and stigma are explored. Part 4 discusses instances where naming social actors is seen as serving some in-group purpose. In-groups discussed in this part are not necessarily otherers. They include a group that reclaims for themselves a name that has been used in general discourse as derogatory, a group that is naming an outside majority, and in-groups consisting of bystanders to a conflict, who, through their linguistic choices, nevertheless take sides with one of the conflict's actors.

Within Part 1, Jadranka Gvozdanović discusses how the othering of women and migrants is construed and maintained in German-language discourse (with some excursions to Croatian for the purpose of comparison). Her study,

carried out using a digital historical dictionary of German and contemporary German and Croatian corpora, confirms that the two disadvantaged groups are othered in discourse but in different ways. In the case of migrants, the preponderance of plural forms construes them as an indiscriminate group with shared, predominantly negative characteristics. By contrast, the predominant word forms referring to women tend to be singular, and women are othered as weak and incompetent individuals. This tendency is observed both in the case of a cross-section between migranthood and womanhood, in reference to migrant women, and in a section devoted to the othering of women in academia. It is for the latter case that Jadranka Gvozdanović appends Brons's (2015) notions of *othering* with that of *situated othering*.

In the same part of the volume, Lucie Saicová Římalová, Marie Kopřivová, and Jiří Rejzek reconstruct the view of migrants in historical and contemporary Czech discourse. By analyzing Czech words referring to migrants, and specifically their roots and affixes as exponents, they reconstruct various linguistic views of migrants, focusing on two noteworthy examples: migrants as people in motion and migrants as settlers. They show convincing evidence about how migrants are othered in contemporary Czech discourse in a way that generally mirrors the predominant discourse around contemporary migration and refugee crises: with nationals as “us” and everybody else as “them”. Their findings also show how mental geographies are constructed, with “us” representing the West and “them” representing the East, irrespective of the actual countries of origin of non-European migrants. The historical part of their study on the othering of migrants (both incoming and leaving the country) confirms Coup-land's (2010) claim that every time period has its own specific socioculturally dependent conventions governing the process.

Part 2 opens with Iva Petrak's study on how language ideologies inform the national identity debate in contemporary Croatia. In particular, linguistic purism and rejection of all Serbianisms are markers of nationalism, while tolerance towards Serbian influences in Croatian is perceived by more nationally minded individuals as a kind of treason and a retrotopian (see Bauman 2017) nostalgia for Yugoslavian times. Dagmara Banasiak and Łukasz Wnuk, in turn, discuss the debate on Polishness, and specifically the conflict around the “correct” Polish identity: the modern European one that eschews most national traditions and values or the traditional conservative one that rejects modern European values in favor of strong, cultural, and ideological nationalism.

As already mentioned, the four chapters that constitute Part 3 elaborate on the relations between naming, othering, and stigma.

Marek Łaziński observes that racial and ethnic terms have a potential for stigmatizing that can be evaluated based on their unnecessary and unwar-

ranted use. He argues that traditional Polish words referring to Black people have a stronger stigmatizing potential than words referring to people of other races and ethnicities. He argues that in texts translated into Polish, words referring to Black people are added to identify them much more often than words describing people's Asian origins or their Romani ethnicity. Using a parallel corpus featuring original texts and their translations, he shows that in other languages, the words referring to the Blackness of protagonists are not added. These differences make him conclude that even formerly neutral Polish words referring to Black people have a stigmatizing potential that is quantitatively demonstrable.

Agnieszka Mikołajczuk studies the way Polish teachers who went on strike in 2019 are portrayed in the media. Using various concepts derived from cognitive linguistics, she shows how the striking teachers are framed as terrorists or (alternatively) as lazy common dunces. Their alleged terrorist-like activity targets both school children and the whole society. Additionally, the inferiority of the striking teachers is implied by juxtaposing them against other "superior" groups (e.g., healthcare workers and farmers).

Anna Kołos and Agnieszka Karlińska quantitatively compare linguistic strategies aimed at exclusion and othering based on race and ethnicity used on a specific Internet site. They convincingly show, among other things, how grammar is recruited to denigrate and other people, specifically in the use of non-masculine personal forms of Polish nouns and in other inflected parts of speech, e.g., verbs and adjectives that refer to them. Their results, besides drawing attention to language-specific features of hate speech, may support elaborating better automated diagnostic tools for identifying and eventually suppressing instances of hate speech on the web.

Marta Falkowska discusses naming practices and strategies used in reference to Ukrainians and how they are disadvantageously represented in a Polish contemporary Internet corpus. The terms include not only the formal blends mentioned above but many loanwords from Russian, which is surprising, given the historical disdain and hate targeted at all things Russian (including the Soviet state).

Lastly, Part 4 contains three chapters that focus on practices of naming either in-groups or out-groups for specific purposes of the in-groups.

Jadwiga Linde-Usiekniewicz raises the issue of whether the names used in spoken Polish by the Polish Deaf to refer to hearing individuals constitute naming for othering. She concludes that the way the Deaf conceive of the h/Hearing is best analyzed as an instance of crude quasi-othering, which corresponds to the three grammars of identity and alterity as postulated by Baumann and Gingrich (2006). She also argues that the potentially offensive term *s/Słyszak*

'h/Hearie' tends to be used within the orientalizing grammar, in which "our good things" are contrasted with "their bad things", but also "our bad things" are contrasted with "their good things". By the same token, even when hearing people are named as *s/Słyszaki*, they are not being othered since neither their inferiority nor their radical alienness is postulated.

Magdalena Zawisławska and Marta Chojnacka-Kuraś discuss the way Polish fat activists reclaim the derogatory term *gruby* 'fat' and argue for its normalization when talking about people's large bodies. The research is based on a tailored corpus of fat activism texts and presents quantitatively identified keywords of fat activism discourse, as well as the semantic prosody associated with them. The authors also convincingly show how the Polish fat emancipation discourse strives to deprive the dominant group, i.e., advocates of slim body standards, of their lexical means of discrimination, which stigmatizes and others people with larger bodies.

Finally, Milena Hebal-Jezińska analyzes the discourse on the Israel–Hamas conflict following the Hamas attack on Israeli civilians on October 7, 2023. Her data come from press reports and commentaries in the Polish, Slovak, and Czech press in the period between immediately after the attack and June 2024. Her analysis of the lexemes referring to the conflict itself and the two sides of the conflict demonstrates that the sides of the conflict are not presented symmetrically. Her analysis is unique in that she conclusively proves that othering, understood as attributing inferiority to a group, can extend to situations in which the otherer distinguishes between the good "them" and the bad "them".

The book closes with a brief *Afterword* whose aim is to discuss the most important general findings of the monograph, as well as its limitations.

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PART 1

Naming for Othering in a Diachronic Perspective



Othering Construed and Maintained in Discourse

Jadranka Gvozdanović

1 Introduction: Othering, Bias, and Procedures of Exclusion

Identities of individuals and social groups are conceptualized in contrast to others, with perceived different properties. In this sense, otherness is a fundamental human thought (for the latter, see de Beauvoir 1949, 16). Construal of the Self vs. the Other is a culturally bound matter; depending on the culture, it may lead to procedures of segregation implemented and ensured by the social organization (see also Goffman 1977, 316). Construal of the Self or the in-group and the Other or the out-group occurs in “an active, constitutive process” (Coup-land 2010, 244; see also Brons 2015, 70) conveyed through language (see Duszak 2002, 1). Coherent discourse procedures transmit ideas of othering construed by social groups.

In his inaugural lecture at the Collège de France, Michel Foucault convincingly showed in *The order of discourse* (1981),¹ that

in every society the order of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to get mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality.

FOUCAULT 1981, 49

Practices of control and restraint mark discourse at every point. Foucault illustrated these statements by procedures of exclusion such as constraints on sexuality and exclusion of madness. His analysis of discourse provides a setting for understanding how exclusion of the Other is maintained by the rules of discourse and the social powers behind it. Importantly, according to Foucault, discourse consists of practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. In this sense, discourse is more than a composition of semiotic signs, it actively construes the world spoken about. Norman Fairclough (2003, 2004), who developed his critical discourse analysis fundamentally based on

¹ The lecture was first delivered in French in 1970. I am quoting the English translation from 1981.

Foucault's approach, conceived of discourse order as a social structuring of semiotic differences, a particular social ordering of relationships among different ways of making meaning. Fairclough distinguished text, discourse practices, and (what he calls) social reality, consisting of social structure and social events.

Discourse traditions provide frames for reasoning and interpretations. Psychologically, we are more susceptible to recognizing what conforms to our previous experiences and less open to recognizing new information. This is referred to as *priming* (a phenomenon known in cognitive psychology since Palmer 1975, also discussed in Kahneman 2011, 59–66). Priming is based not only on direct experiences but also on knowledge of norms and values valid for our surroundings, our habitat (in the sense of Bourdieu 1979) in the socio-cultural sense. As most people tend to avoid the risks involved in shifting their attitudes (this has been known as *the Bernoulli effect* for almost three centuries, see also Kahneman 2011, 312 f.), the existing norms and values tend to be maintained, even when in many cases they have been shaped to serve the interests in some domain of power. In other words, those in power shape discourse properties to safeguard their sphere of power.

In the actual practice of societies, this results in various attitudes towards Others, justifying their segregation and mostly disadvantageous treatment. This is clearly visible in spatial segregation by race and social class in urban centers. Goffman (1977, 307) distinguished segregated disadvantaged people, who usually live within specific neighborhoods, such as Black people in the US, from nonsegregated disadvantaged people (e.g., blind, obese, etc.) who live rather scattered in societies. Women belong, in principle, to the nonsegregated group, but—instead of being scattered—they constitute half of humanity. Historically assumed to pertain to the domain of home and family, women are culturally construed as fragile and valuable at the same time, not imbued with the qualities attributed to men, and therefore not capable of performing the same functions (see Goffman 1977, 308).

The present contribution has two disadvantaged groups in focus:

- (a) women, who are nonsegregated horizontally, but—as we shall see below—are vertically segregated, and
- (b) migrants, whose numbers have risen significantly over the past decades and especially since 2015 in the EU, resulting in a change from initially segregated inhabitation in city neighborhoods to nonsegregated inhabitation and entrance into spheres formerly reserved for nationals; their newcomer status often intersects with racial differences.

For both these groups, their status has changed over the past decades. Women have moved out of the domestic sphere to become competitors to men in

professional contexts. And migrants, along with racial minorities, have moved out of their spatial segregation to become spread over the majority spaces. I hypothesize that both phenomena of shifting boundaries of segregation instigated discourse negotiation, leading to othering and stigmatization. I assume (following up on Bourdieu 1979, 1982) that stigmatization is reflected in all areas of capital—economic, social, and symbolic-cultural, and that it is construed through language.

This contribution starts with a presentation of economic indicators showing that othering, manifesting itself as exclusion, is in place on a large scale. In the next step, the rise of discourse negotiation will be documented by the rise of frequencies of the key expressions referring to the investigated groups. Finally, grammatical means of representing these groups will be investigated as further indicators of the same discourse negotiation.

For each group, its status as disadvantaged will first be demonstrated by the EU economic indicators (Eurostat, etc.). Secondly, the linguistic means contributing to the disadvantaged status will be examined in discourses over time. For the linguistic data, German has been chosen as the primary language. The linguistic data stems from the Digital Dictionary of the German Language 1600 until now (*Digitales Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache, DWDS*²) with 67,293,943,366 tokens, coupled with the German 2020 corpus on SketchEngine³ with 20,999,598,683 tokens (including the newspaper *Die Zeit*).

The German data concerning recent discourse on migrants have been briefly contrasted with Croatian linguistic data, to see how language-specific the discourse on this issue is. Croatian is similar to German insofar as both languages have morphological markers of gender and number. Also, despite geographical distance, the two countries share a relatively similar Central European heritage. From the Middle Ages to the end of WWI, Croatia has belonged to the Western sphere of cultural, religious, and political influence: first as a part of Charlemagne's empire, and latterly up until WWI as a part of the Habsburg empire. Croatian linguistic data come from the Croatian web corpus on SketchEngine, hrWaC 2.2, with 1,405,794,913 tokens (with 85,878,109 tokens from the newspaper *Slobodna Dalmacija* and 49,521,530 from *Večernji list*⁴). Since the Croatian corpus contains only contemporary texts (from 1990 onwards), it was not possible to compare historical data. It was also impossible to compare

2 Available from dwds.de (last accessed: July 22, 2024).

3 https://app.sketchengine.eu/#dashboard?corpname=preloaded%2Fdetenten20_rft3 (last accessed: July 22, 2024).

4 <https://www.sketchengine.eu/hrwac-croatian-corpus/> (last accessed: July 22, 2024).

data concerning gender: gender-sensitive language is a relatively recent issue for Croatian (Kuna and Nujić 2015).

2 The Disadvantaged Status of Women and Migrants

As mentioned above, the disadvantaged status of women and migrants is not biological, but sociocultural, a matter of perception of Others from an in-group perspective. From the in-group perspective, these Others do not conform to the in-group norms—they form an out-group breaking these norms. Othering treats them indiscriminately as a group and ascribes (usually negative) properties to the entire group. This leads to skewed perception and evaluation of individuals pertaining to this group, psychologically corresponding with what is called *bias*. In this sense, bias is a psychological correlate of othering, whereas othering itself is a matter of evaluation relative to the in-group sociocultural norms. Othering is construed and maintained through language in discourse, but its effects are noticeable in all areas of capital—economic, social, and symbolic-cultural.

2.1 *Othering of Women*

As already described by Simone de Beauvoir in her book *Le deuxième sexe* ‘The second sex’ (1949), since the rise of the patriarchal society, women were forced into a secondary position, and this was enforced by education and social contracts. This treatment, like the treatment of minorities, was in part supported by women themselves as part of the social contract. De Beauvoir’s analysis (based on existential ethics, but with a strong empirical grounding) preempted the work of later philosophers and gender activists up to the present. Much is owed to Goffman’s lucid work on the arrangement of the sexes (1977). He also showed that gender is construed in interaction with institutions and in concrete discourse framed by contexts; the construal of gender is at the core of the sociocultural construal of order and power.

In 1948, the United Nations (UN) proclaimed the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, and in 1979, the UN General Assembly adopted the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*,⁵ often described as an “International Bill of Rights for Women”. In the 1980s, much activity at the institutional level was based on the understanding that not women, but institutions should be changed to pave the way for greater

5 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women> (last accessed: July 22, 2024).

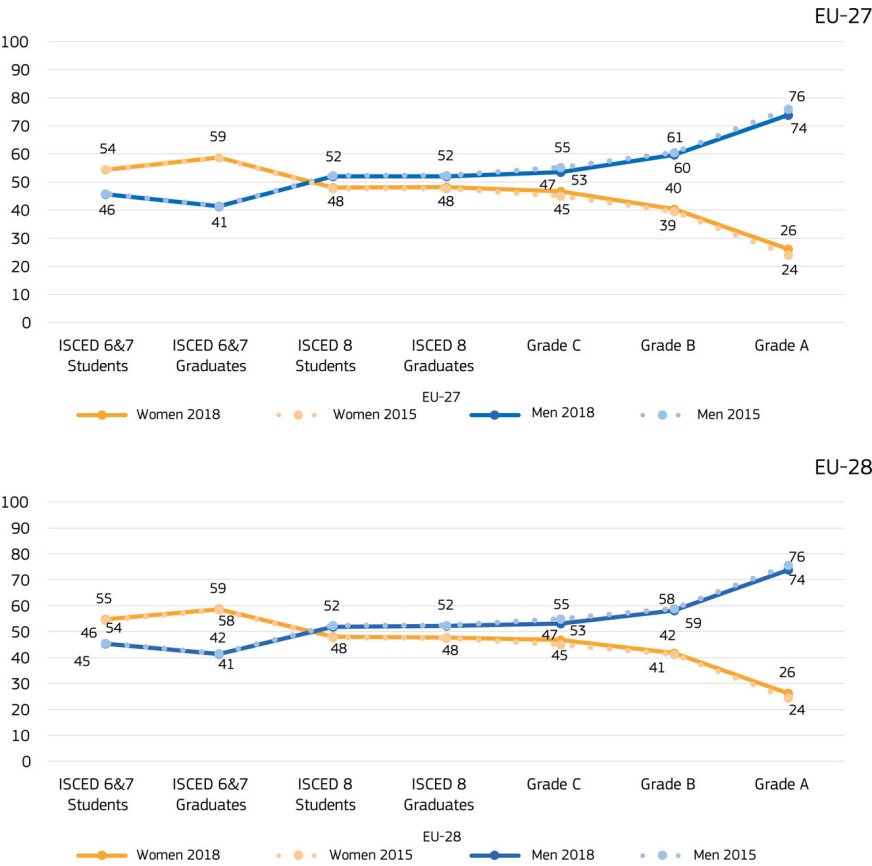


FIGURE 1.1 The leaky pipeline at European universities, closing at only about half a percentage point per year; 2015–2018, EU 27 and EU 28 (European Commission 2021, 181)
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equality. Despite these efforts, Virginia Valian published her well-known book *Why so slow?* almost two decades later (in 1999), showing—from interdisciplinary perspectives—that gender schemas, entrenched from early youth, create cumulative gender differences in characteristics, behaviors, perceptions, and evaluations of men and women (e.g., by construing males as more agentic and females as more communal). These originally small differences accumulate in creating gender schemas that overrate men in professional life and underrate women.

Even with this knowledge, twenty years later, at European universities, the underrepresentation of women rises with each higher career step, as shown in the European Commission report *She Figures* published in 2021 covering the years 2015–2018 (see Figure 1.1). At the same time, statistics show that young

female researchers finish their PhD on average with slightly better grades than their male colleagues. It is apparently not a matter of quality that underlies the underrating of women on the way towards higher professional positions. If it is neither biology nor empirical quality that holds back women, then it must be a cultural phenomenon, i.e., cultural capital combined with economic and social capital.

From the first postdoctoral position (i.e., Grade C, in 2018 at 46.6%) to assistant/associate professor (i.e., Grade B, in 2018 at 40.3%) to full professor (i.e., Grade A, in 2018 at 26.2%), the participation of women declined to around one-quarter.

The leaky pipelines of Figure 1.1 are indicative of the essence of othering in Academia. Here, othering cannot be explained as radical alienness and discrimination (as assumed by Brons 2015): it is neither general nor radical (because there are no traces of these phenomena against female students before their PhD in Europe). Othering within Academia is clearly socially situated; it emerges when a construed social norm (of assistant, associate, and full professors being prototypically male) gets challenged and shifted (by women entering these positions). Therefore, othering of this kind is a situated socio-cultural judgment of deviation from a group-internally accepted sociocultural norm.

When discrimination is involved, it affects all kinds of (an individual's or group's) capital, including economic capital, as shown in Figure 1.2 in terms of pay gap.⁶ This demonstrates that at the same position and with the same education and the same years of service women consistently earn less across all EU countries.

Diminished access to higher positions in Academia, and more generally on the labor market, as well as gender pay gaps across Europe, show that women belong to a disadvantaged group. The changing values of these phenomena depend on the political situation (i.e., awareness and action against unequal treatment) and illustrate situated othering.

6 Figure 1.2 comes from The European Commission 2023 report on gender equality in the EU (European Commission 2023, 22); https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2023-04/annual_report_GE_2023_web_EN.pdf (last accessed: July 22, 2024). It shows the gender pay gap expressed in percentages in 2018 and 2021 across EU countries (abbreviations: LU = Luxembourg, RO = Romania, SI = Slovenia, PL = Poland, BE = Belgium, IT = Italy, ES = Spain, CY = Cyprus, IE = Ireland, MT = Montenegro, HR = Croatia, SE = Sweden, PT = Portugal, LT = Lithuania, BG = Bulgaria, NL = The Netherlands, DK = Denmark, LV = Latvia, CZ = The Czech Republic, FR = France, FI = Finland, SK = Slovakia, HU = Hungary, DE = Germany, AT = Austria, EE = Estonia, EL = Greece).

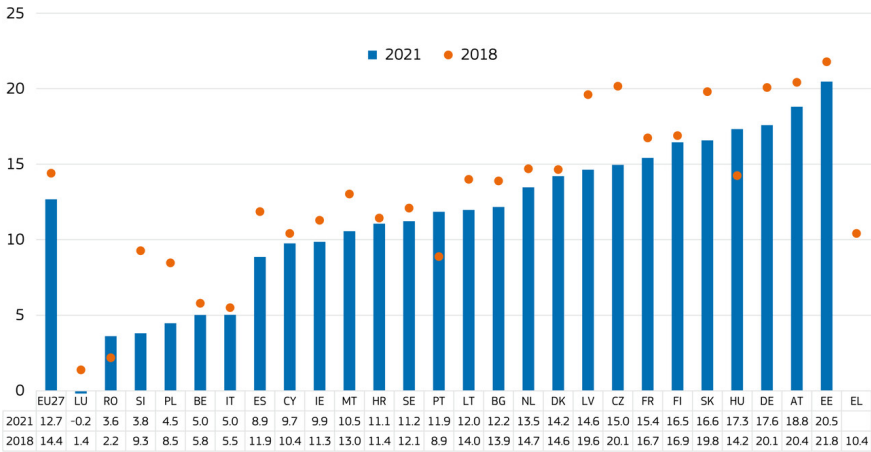


FIGURE 1.2 Female pay gap in % (European Commission 2023, 22)
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2.2 Othering of Migrants

Migrants are similarly subjected to substantial pay gaps, even exceeding over 40% and rising in some countries lately, as shown in a recent report by Silas Amo-Agyei (2020, xvii). The report has also demonstrated that while migrant workers’ education levels are similar to or higher than that of nationals for the same occupation, migrant workers earn less than non-migrant workers within the same occupation in several countries (Amo-Agyei 2020, 112). What is more, “women migrant workers are doubly discriminated against, especially with regard to pay”—both as migrants and as women (Amo-Agyei 2020, iii).

Strikingly, as an effect of the migration wave that started in 2015, the migrant pay gap within high-income countries (HICs) became larger in 11 countries (e.g., Cyprus, Slovenia, Italy, Portugal), and smaller in 6 countries (e.g., Spain, Greece, Estonia). As a corollary of the pay gap, migrants are at a risk of poverty, and female migrants even more so than male migrants, as illustrated by Figure 1.3.⁷

Women and migrants are disadvantaged in the labor market. Moreover, since the opening of Europe to migrants in 2015, the pay gap between migrants and nationals has risen significantly, pointing to the treatment of migrants as Others in a disqualifying way. In addition, the data in Figure 1.3 show that female migrants suffer double disadvantages, as women and as migrants.

7 Source: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/bpfa_a_offic_a4_ilc_li32 (last accessed: July 22, 2024). Original data source: Eurostat.

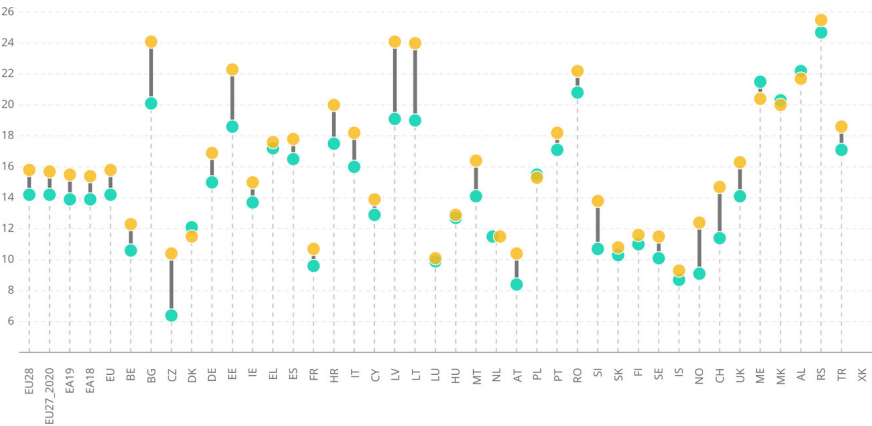


FIGURE 1.3 At-risk-of poverty rate (%) by sex (female in yellow, male in green) and migrant background (18+ population)
ORIGINAL DATA SOURCE: EUROSTAT. REPRINTED UNDER THE CC BY 4.0 LICENSE

3 Negotiation of the Other: Women and Migrants in Discourse

Linguistically, the construal of othering can be either explicit or implicit. It is explicit when referring to those significant Others by newly coined names or descriptions suggesting that they are different—in some respects less advantageously so—compared to Us, the inner group. In Germany, discrimination is legally forbidden, so implicit othering is the core strategy of signaling doubt or lesser value of Others. Doubt about capacities of those Others gets implicitly communicated without being indictable; it is construed and maintained communicatively as a powerful means of priming. The Others tend to be treated indiscriminately as a group based on the feature that others them. This holds for first-, second-, and even third-generation immigrants, and racial differences enhance othering. Indeed, according to the current data published by the German Federal Office against Discrimination, discrimination is on the rise, and of the 10,772 reported cases in 2023, 41% concerned racial discrimination.⁸

3.1 Gender

Research on women in application procedures (e.g., by Trix and Psenka 2003) shows that discourse practices are in place to raise doubt about the capacities

8 https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/aktuelles/DE/2024/20240625_Jahresbericht_2023.html (last accessed: July 22, 2024).

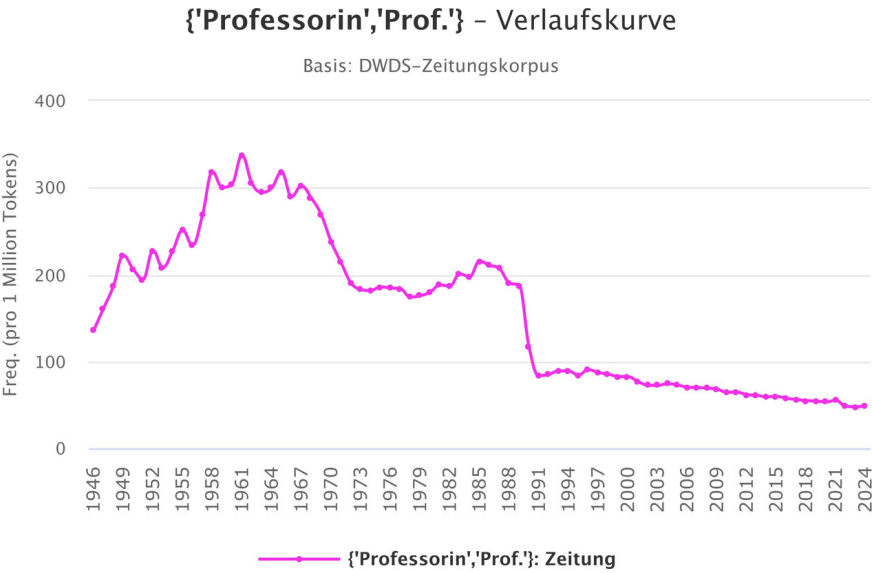


FIGURE 1.4 Frequency of *Professorin* (‘professor-N.F’) in DWDS

of female applicants. These include faint praise (e.g., *She has the potential to grow*, an assessment that is theoretically positive, but rather negative in the context of a leading position) or hedges (e.g., *She is actually good*) to express doubt, which is understood as signaling weakness, and this often suffices for a rejection. At universities, this is especially relevant for the position of professor, where leadership qualities are expected.

Linguistically, both male and female professors were historically referred to by the generic masculine. However, psycholinguistic research showed that the generic masculine was usually understood as a referential masculine (see, e.g., Stahlberg et al. 2007). It was the political discussion about gender and discrimination that paved the way for gender-sensitive language in Germany. In addition, the decision of the German Research Council (DFG) to include gender policy as one of the criteria for quality had an impact on gender-sensitive usage. Currently, it is a declared policy of DFG to use gender-sensitive language (e.g., *Professor*in* ‘male or female professor’ in non-referential contexts).

The Digital Dictionary of the German Language (DWDS) gives almost the same frequency curves for *Professor* and *Professorin*, which is surprising, given that the masculine in its generic reading can denote both. For *Professorin* (see Figure 1.4), the following frequencies hold: in 1985, 9,059 tokens; 1989: 10,662 tokens; and 1991: 5,510 tokens, and for *Professor* (see Figure 1.5), the following very similar ones: in 1985: 9,003 tokens; 1989: 10,435 tokens; and 1991: 5,296 tokens.

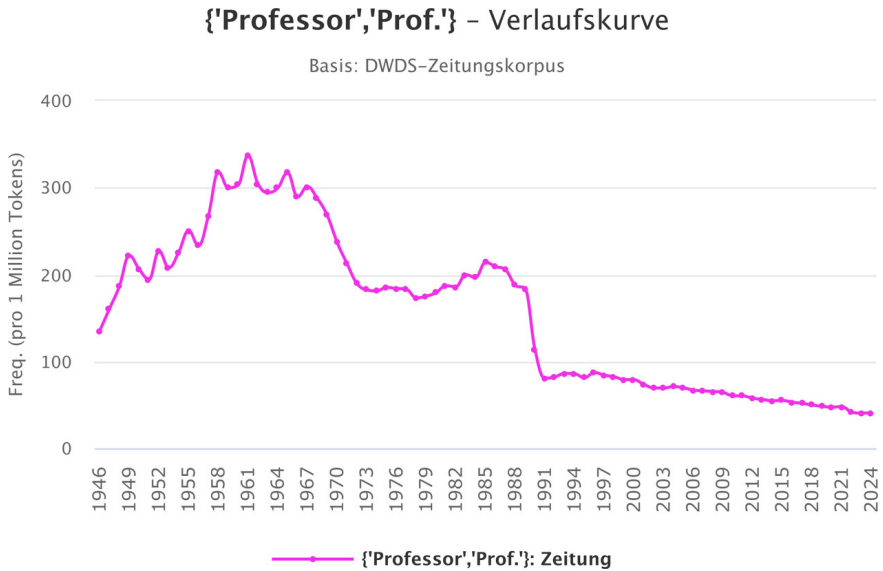


FIGURE 1.5 Frequency of *Professor* ('professor-N.M') in DWDS

We can see that both frequency curves start rising around 1948, the year when the UN proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including equal rights for women. This apparently provoked lots of discussion in the public media. This discussion continued into the 1980s after the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979). The parallel decline in frequencies for both *Professor* and *Professorin* in the mid-1980s reflects diminishing interest in the debate surrounding the use of gender-sensitive language. While similar frequencies for both masculine and feminine forms might suggest that the problem of discrimination has been resolved, this is not the case. Qualitative linguistic data prove that 40 years after the debate, implicit forms of discrimination linger on. Progress is still slow and not justifiable by any objective measure of competence. The following example originates from DWDS:

- (1) *Es gibt schließlich kein schöneres Leben als das einer **Professorin**!* [Die Zeit, 01.05.2007, Nr. 19]
 'There is actually no nicer life than that of a female professor'

In contrast to *Professorin* vs. *Professor*, where the non-significantly different data point to insufficient differentiation of female and male professors, an everyday expression such as *Steuerzahler/Steuerzahlerin* 'tax-payer-N.M/N-F; resp. male/female' appears to indicate the increased use of gender-sensitive

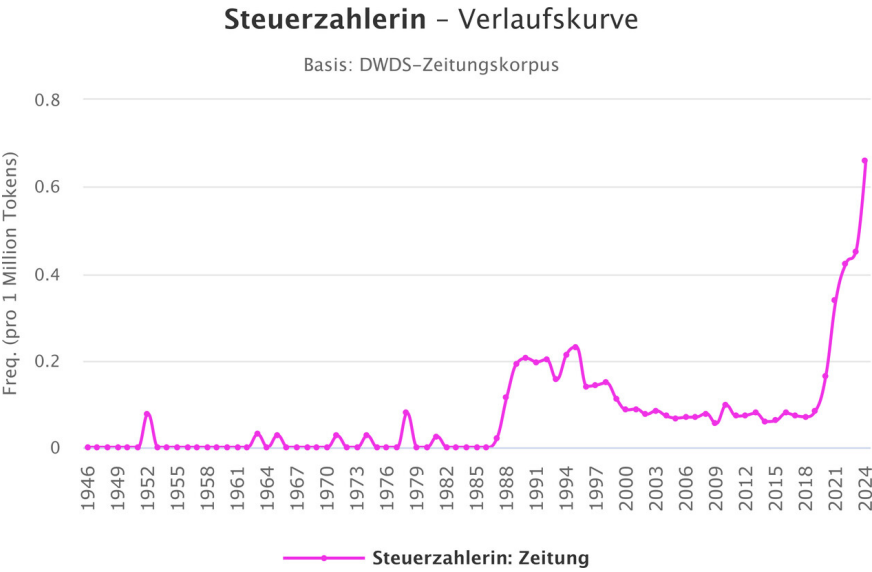


FIGURE 1.6 Frequency of *Steuerzahlerin* ('tax-payer-N.F') in DWDS

language. The history of the latter female form in newspaper language (based on data in DWDS) reflects the development of gender discussions. The female form is first attested with 2 examples in 1952. The attestations remain extremely low until 1986; in 1990, there are 15 attestations in newspapers. The number of occurrences rises in 1995 to 49 examples, in 2019 it reaches 79 examples, and in the first half of 2024 (up to June 18, 2024, the date of writing this text) 156 examples were attested.

Example:

- (2) *Sie ... hält es mit ihrem Gewissen »für unvereinbar«, als **Steuerzahlerin** zum Wehretat der Bundesrepublik beizutragen.* [Der Spiegel, 19.09.1988]
'She ... considers it "irreconcilable" with her conscience to contribute as tax-payer-N.F to the military budget of the (German) Federal Republic.'

These figures show that the masculine form (used for both genders, e.g., *Firmen und andere Steuerzahler* 'firms and other tax-payers-N.M.PL') has been recessive since 2009 (when there were 17,998 attestations) up to 2024 (so far only 2,458 attestations). While the generic masculine is still an option for both genders, it is now less used and restricted to plural forms.

Gender-sensitive language is by now the predominant norm in Germany. Mikołajczyk and Aptacy (2023) showed that, in political tweets, there is predominant usage of gendered forms by five out of six political parties in Ger-

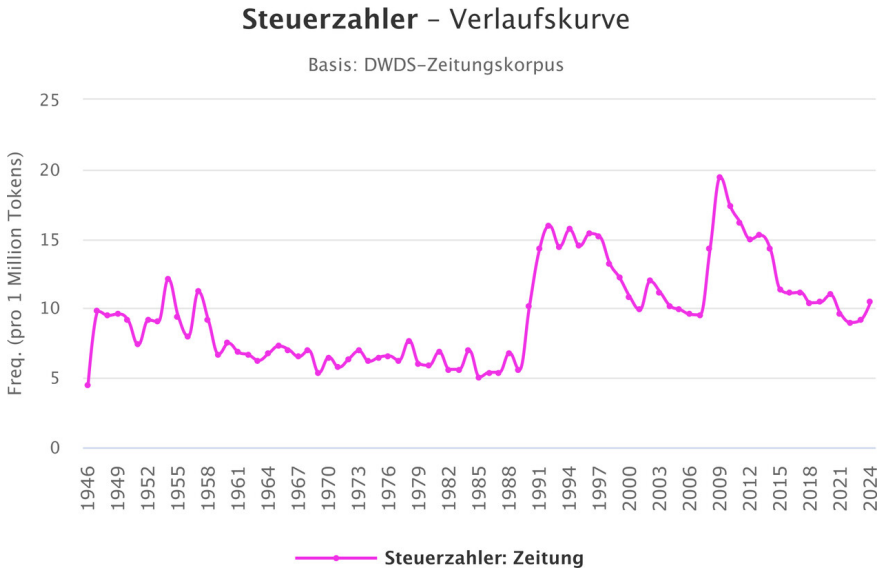


FIGURE 1.7 Frequency of *Steuerzahler* ('tax-payer-N.M') in DWDS

many (only the extreme right-wing AfD does not do so), whereas in Poland only two of the eight political parties use gender-sensitive language in political tweets.⁹ Such national contexts additionally frame gendered forms.

3.2 Migrants

Discourse frequencies of different words for migrants also tell the story behind them. Firstly, *Gastarbeiter* 'guest worker' and the feminine form *Gastarbeiterin* 'guest worker-N.F' become frequent when Germany concluded contracts with several Southern European countries in the late 1950s and 1960s to allow immigrant workers with a work permit. There is a peak in the early 1970s (440 occurrences, 11.71 per million tokens); it diminishes after 1973, when the oil crisis constrained this practice. For *Gastarbeiterin*, there are 6 occurrences in 1964 (0.18 per million tokens) and 9 occurrences in 1970 (0.24 per million tokens).

Examples:

- (3) *Seit dem ersten deutsch-italienischen Anwerbeabkommen im Jahr 1955 bis zum Anwerbestopp während der Ölkrise 1973 kamen Millionen sogenannte Gastarbeiter in die Bundesrepublik.* [Die Zeit, 22.04.2017 (online)]
 'Since the first German-Italian recruitment agreement in the year 1955 until the recruitment stop during the oil crisis of 1973 millions of so-called guest workers-N.M.PL came to Germany.'

⁹ This corresponds with general remarks about gender asymmetry in Polish by Łaziński (2006).

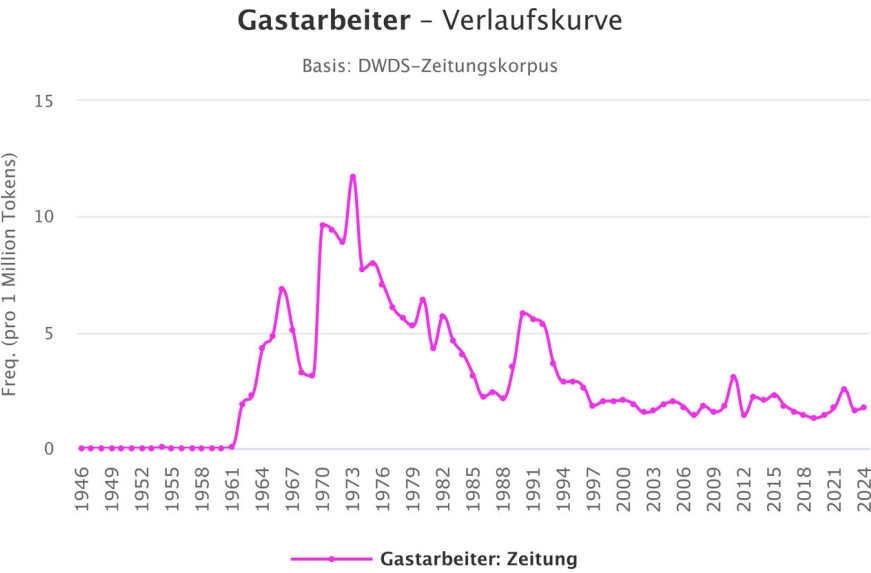


FIGURE 1.8 Frequency of *Gastarbeiter* ('guest worker-N.M') in DWDS

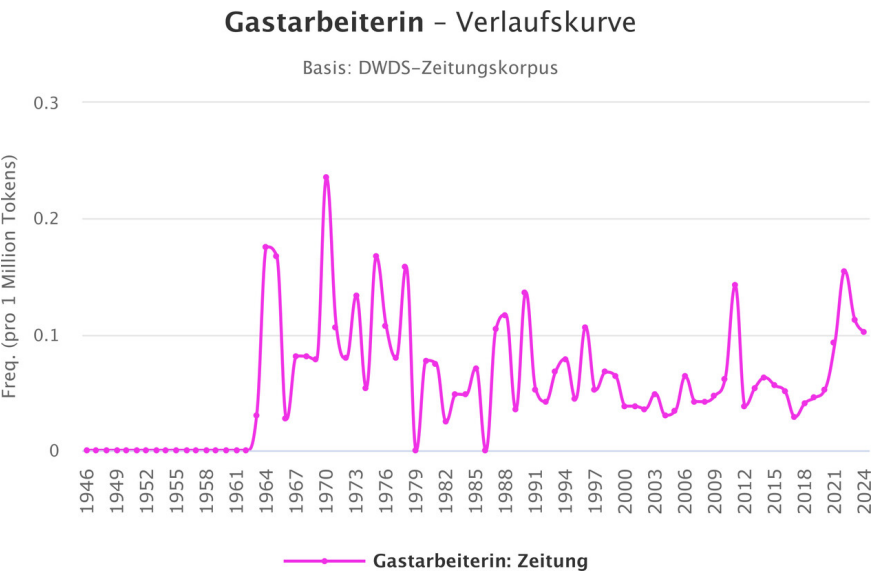


FIGURE 1.9 Frequency of *Gastarbeiterin* ('guest worker-N.F') in DWDS

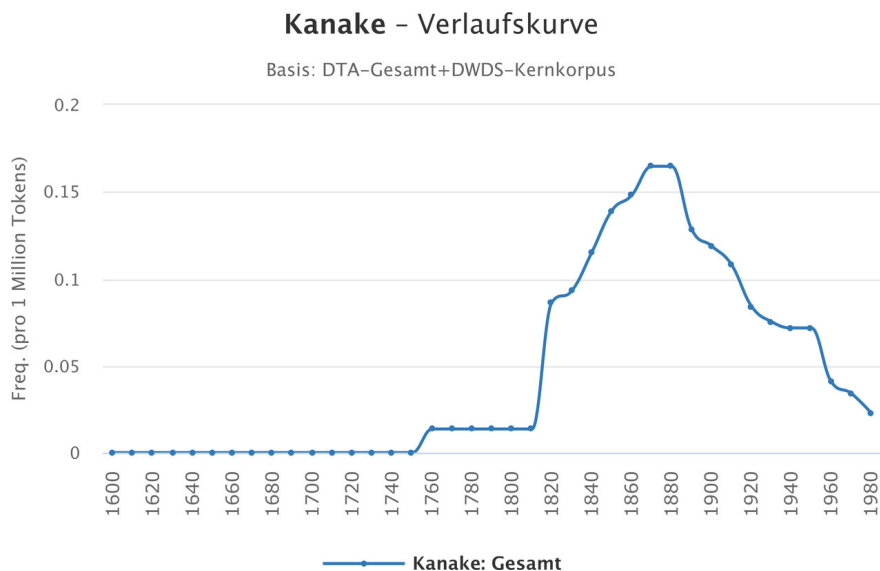


FIGURE 1.10 Frequency of *Kanake* since 1600 in DWDS

- (4) *In den Sechzigerjahren sind ihre Eltern nach Deutschland gekommen, der Vater zum Studieren, die Mutter als Gastarbeiterin.* [Süddeutsche Zeitung, 07.11.2023]
 'Her parents came to Germany in the 1960s, her father to study, her mother as a guest worker-N.F.'

These nouns occur in texts in singular and plural forms (mostly generic). The work these guest workers are doing usually remains unspecified, as in example (4), where the juxtaposition of the academic pursuits of the father against the mother's guest worker status implies that the latter represents a group that has been relegated to perform unskilled work.

When the need for guest workers subsided after the oil crisis of 1973, there was an expectation that these guest workers, the biggest group of which were Turks, would leave Germany. However, they did not. As a reaction, an old loanword, *Kanake* (from *kanaka* 'human'; see Figure 1.10 for frequencies rising in the 19th century), was revived. According to DWDS (entry on *Kanake*, see below), it used to denote inhabitants of Polynesia and the South Pacific Islands, then transferred to people from other colonies (Unified Germany had colonies between 1884 and 1919, but individual states already had them in the 17th century) and more generally foreigners. However, the first attestation of *Canace* was different. It occurred in a poetic text based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (see example (5) below), mentioning Canace, a woman who fell in love with her

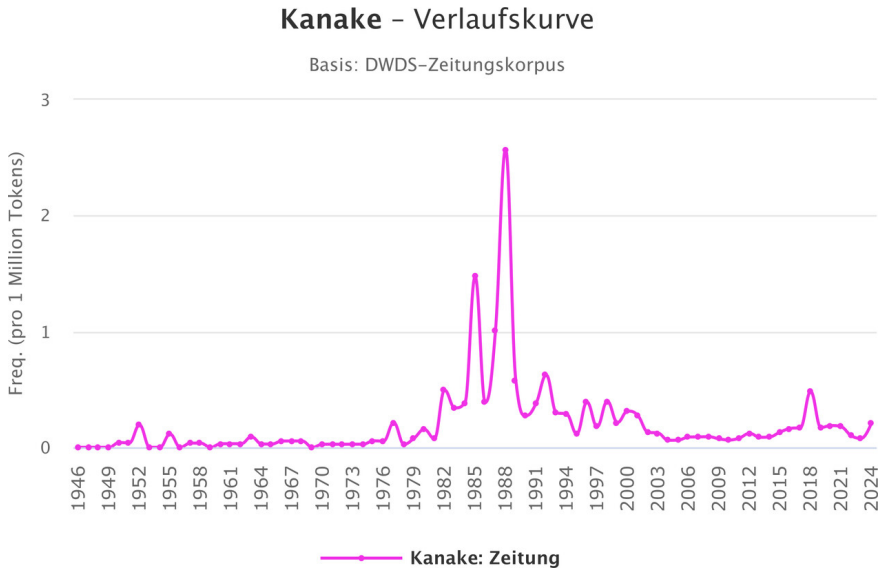


FIGURE 1.11 Frequency of *Kanake* since 1946 in DWDS

brother Macareus, bore him a child, and was forced into suicide by her father, Aeolus. This story continued to be retold in texts until the 19th century.

- (5) */Die Thisbe/ Canace/ vnd Dido führn das Schwerdt/* [Opitz, Martin. 1624. Teutsche Pöemata und Aristachvs Wieder die verachtung Teutscher Sprach. Straßburg]
 ‘Thisbe, Canace and Dido wield the sword’

In the 18th century, travelers and sailors attributed this name to inhabitants of Polynesia and the South Pacific Islands and subsequently also to other colonial territories and languages, as illustrated by example (6) below (first attested in a Swedish original, published in German in 1794).

- (6) *Den gelben Turmalin, welcher ebenfalls Maturese Diamant, malabarisch und cingalisch Kaneke Turemali heißt ...* [Thunberg, Carl Peter: Reisen durch einen Theil von Europa, Afrika und Asien [...] in den Jahren 1770 bis 1779. Bd. 2. Übers. v. Christian Heinrich Groskurd, 1794, 220. Berlin. https://www.deutschestextarchiv.de/book/view/thunberg_reisen02_1794?p=516]
 ‘The yellow turmaline, which like matara diamond, is in Malayalam and Cingalese Canac (language) called *Turemali*.’

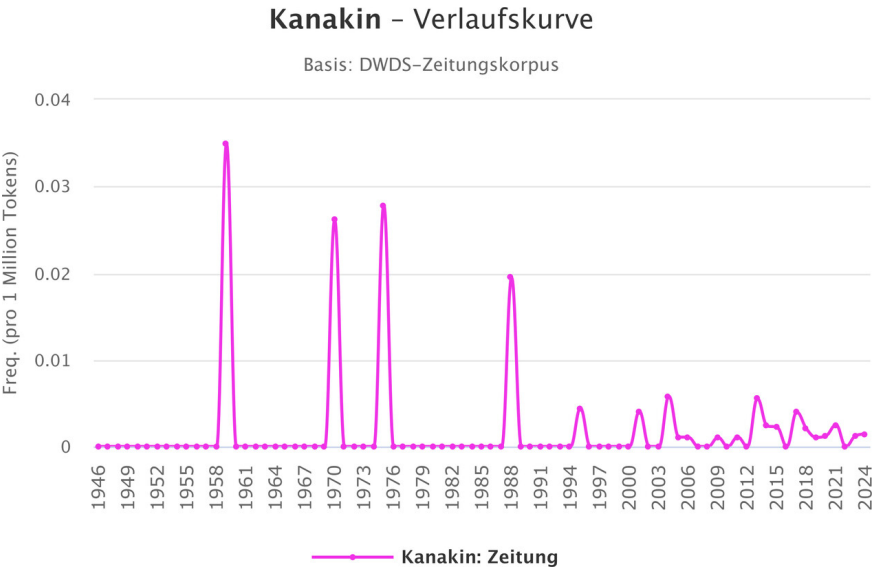


FIGURE 1.12 Frequency of *Kanakin* since 1946 in DWDS

As already stated, in the 20th century, *Kanake* resurfaces in discourse after the oil crisis of the 1970s in reference to the fact that immigrants, most numerous Turks, did not leave Germany in the 1980s. In 1985, the noun *Kanake* was attested 62 times (1.40 per million tokens), and only three years later, in 1988, had as many as 132 attestations (2.57 per million tokens). For the feminine noun *Kanakin*, there is 1 attestation in 1959, 1 in 1970, 1 in 1975, 1 in 1988, 5 in 2004, and 5 in 2013.

DWDS gives the following three meanings for *Kanake*: 1. “inhabitant of Polynesia and South-Sea islands”; 2. “foreigner, foreign worker, especially Turkish”; 3. “a stupid, uneducated person”.

Given the analysis presented here, the sequence of the semantic shift should be as follows: 1. ‘inhabitant of Polynesia and South-Sea Islands’; 2. ‘inhabitant of western colonies (underdeveloped)’; 3. ‘foreigner, foreign worker, especially from non-European areas’. Meaning 2 developed in the context of foreign travels and colonies by the end of the 18th century and led to clear stigmatization during the official colonial period in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Meaning 3 developed after the oil crisis of the 1970s. All the attestations, including the ones pertaining to a female hero transgressing Western moral boundaries (and even the one showing that the Canac languages do not properly distinguish precious stones), contain othering and stigmatization based on a comparison to Western cultural values. This persists to the present day.

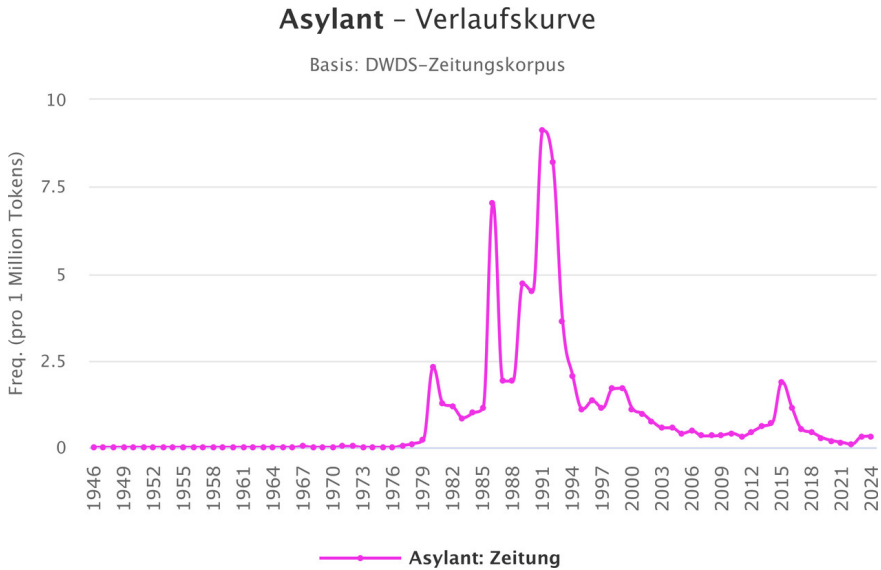


FIGURE 1.13 Frequency of *Asylant* ('asylum seeker-N.M') in DWDS

Example:

- (7) *Man hat uns als Kanaken beschimpft, gedroht, unser Haus anzuzünden.*
 [Der Tagesspiegel, 13.03.2002]
 'We were scolded as Canacs "Kanake-N.M.PL.PEJ", they threatened to set
 our house on fire.' (report by a migrant)

In addition to *Gastarbaiter/Gastarbaiterin* and *Kanaka/Kanakin*, over the past few decades, several new expressions for migrants came into use and were partly abolished for reasons of suggesting discrimination. Perhaps the clearest example is *Asylant* 'asylum seeker', which changed from neutral to stigmatized. In 1991, there were 582 attestations (8.61 per million tokens) of *Asylant*; for *Asylantin*, there were only 8 attestations in 1986 (0.18 per million tokens). The stigmatized status is also explicitly mentioned in texts.

Example:

- (8) *In den 1990er-Jahren hat sich das Wort Flüchtling gegen das abwertend klingende Wort »Asylant« durchgesetzt, indem Flüchtlingsinitiativen es aufgriffen, neben dem ebenfalls korrekten Wort »Asylbewerber«. Ja, »Asylant«, das klang wirklich negativ. Das Wort »Flüchtlinge« war also ein Fortschritt: Flüchtlinge sind Menschen, die willkommen sind, weil sie auf der Flucht waren und Schutz brauchen.* [Süddeutsche Zeitung, 02.09.2017]

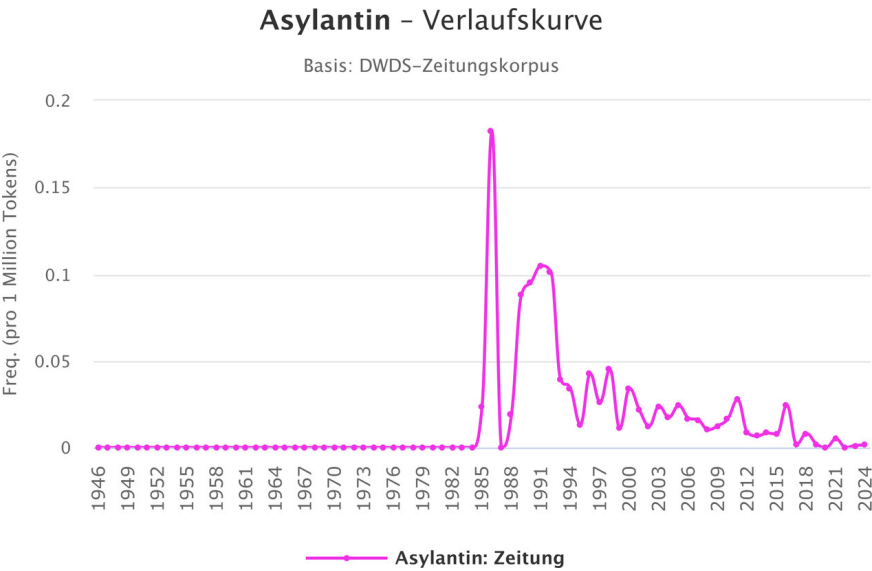


FIGURE 1.14 Frequency of *Asylantin* ('asylum seeker-N.F') in DWDS

'In the 1990s the word *Flüchtling* 'refugee', along with the correct form *Asylbewerber* succeeded the derogatory word *Asylant* "asylum seeker", because organizations of refugees protested against it. Indeed, *Asylant* sounded really negative. The word *Flüchtlinge* "refugee-N.PL" was thus an improvement: refugees are people who are welcome, because they have to flee and need protection.'

- (9) *Heute betreibt die Anwältin, die 1989 als politische Asylantin nach Deutschland kam, in Kiel die Flüchtlingshilfsorganisation "Refugio".* [Die Zeit, 16.03.2006]
- 'The female lawyer, who came to Germany in 1989 as a political *Asylantin* ("asylum seeker-N.F"), is currently in charge of the refugee help center *Refugio* in Kiel.'

Example (8) also shows that semantic struggles have been going on in the public discourse for several decades.

Asylbewerber ('asylum seeker-N.M'), mentioned as neutral in example (7), peaks almost immediately after *Asylant* (in 1992 with 8,046 attestations; 73.27 per million tokens), and *Asylbewerberin* in 1989 with 118 attestations (2.08 per million tokens).

Asylbewerber and *Asylbewerberin* are legal terms; they were particularly used directly before and during the Yugoslavian war, with many refugees in Germany

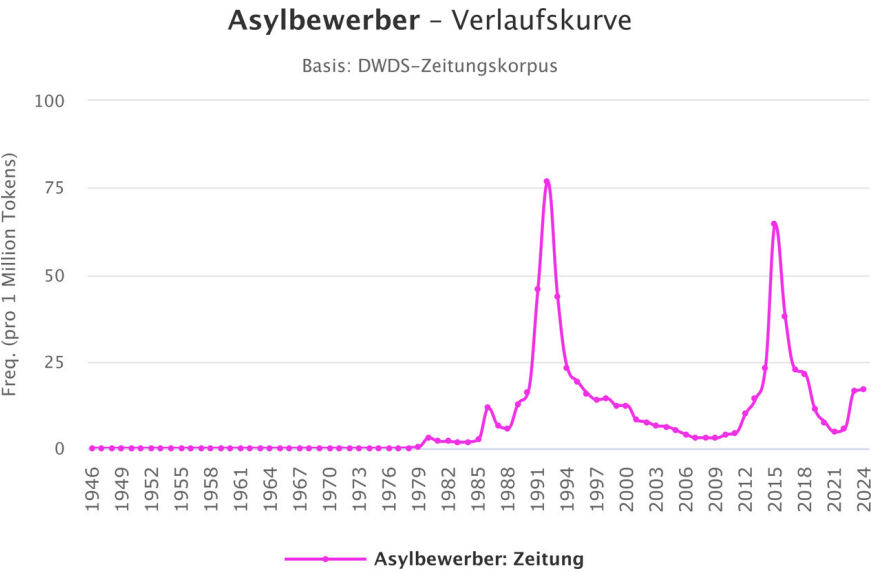


FIGURE 1.15 Frequency of *Asylbewerber* ('asylum seeker-N.M') in DWDS

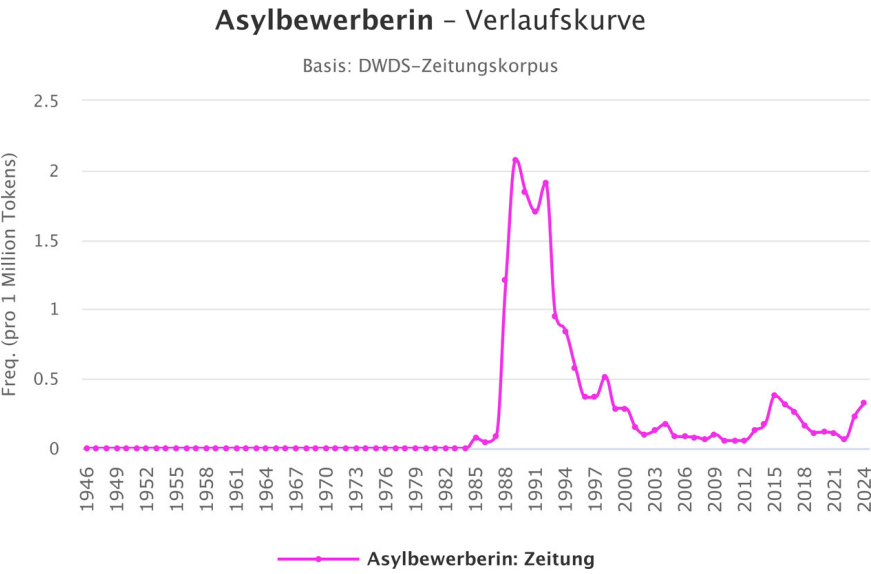


FIGURE 1.16 Frequency of *Asylbewerberin* ('asylum seeker-N.F') in DWDS

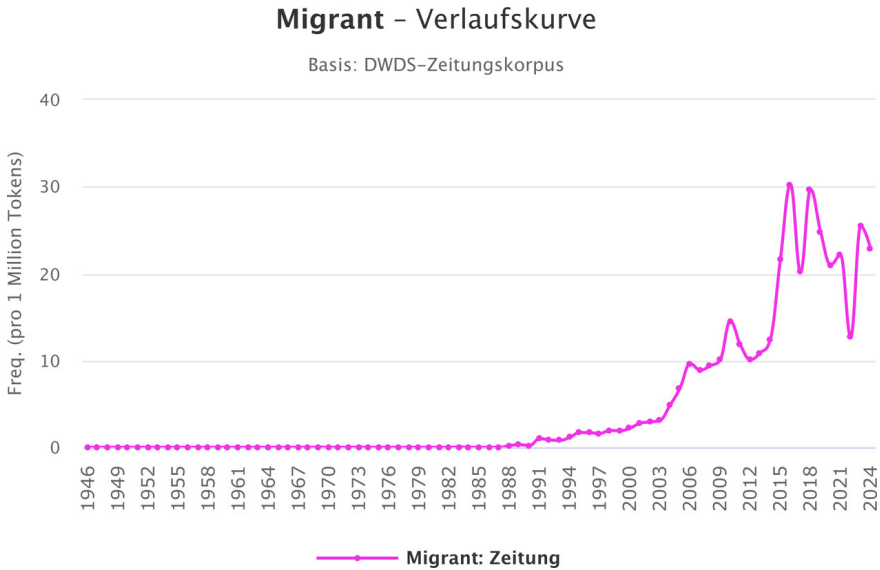


FIGURE 1.17 Frequency of *Migrant* ('migrant-N.M') in DWDS

seeking legal status after the war instead of returning to their country of origin, and again in 2015 and 2016, with the new migration wave.

Example:

- (10) *Im Jahr 2017 hatten Asylbewerber durchschnittlich 10,7 Monate auf eine Entscheidung warten müssen.* [Die Welt, 12.02.2019]
 'In the year 2017, asylum seekers had to wait for 10,7 months on average to obtain a decision.'

In addition to these terms, *Migrant/Migrantin* ('migrant-N.M/N.F') came into use as a relatively neutral expression with the wave of migrants from former Yugoslavia.

Although the internationalism *Migrant* appeared in the context of the Yugoslavian war, its frequency peaks in 2016 with 27,703 attestations (29.89 per million tokens). Interestingly, *Migrantin* already becomes noticeable in discourse in 1995 with 250 attestations (1.15 per million tokens) and peaks in 2006 (1,775 attestations; 1.91 per million tokens), long before *Migrant* gains frequency in the media due to the recent migrant wave. This expression is predominantly used in the plural, with characteristics illustrated by example (10) ascribed to the entire group, and varies between neutral and negatively connotated.

Example:

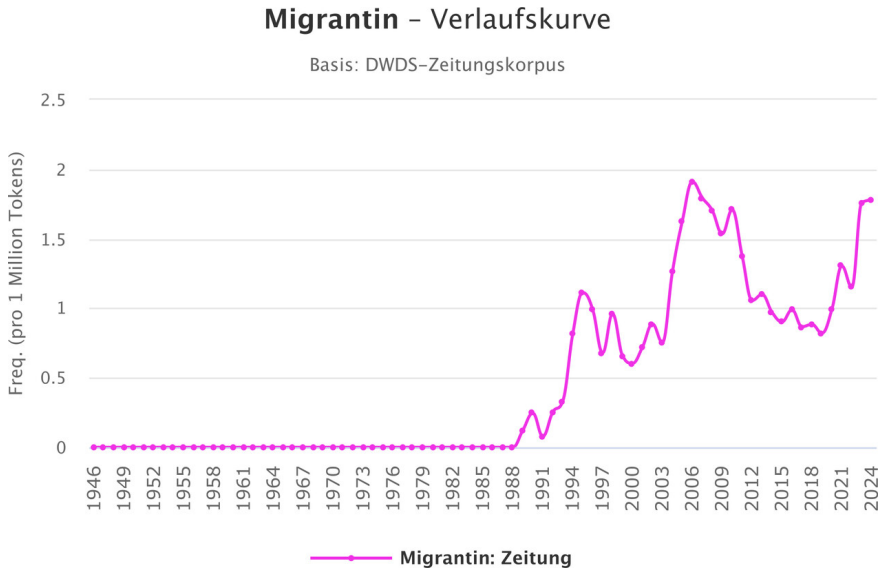


FIGURE 1.18 Frequency of *Migrantin* ('migrant-N.F') in DWDS

- (11) *Die schwarz-gelbe Bundesregierung will im Ausländer- und Zuwanderungsrecht den Druck auf integrationsunwillige Migranten erhöhen.* [Die Zeit, 21.10.2010 (online)]
 'The black-yellow government [i.e., the Christian-Democrat and Free-Democrat government] want to raise the pressure on integration-ready migrants in the Law on Foreigners and Migration.'

- (12) *Sie ist gleichzeitig Migrantin und Nachkomme von Ausgewanderten, eine Frau mit multiplen Identitäten.* [Die Zeit, 14.07.2011]
 'She is at the same time a migrant and descendant of emigrants, a woman with multiple identities.'

Flüchtling 'refugee-N.M' also reflects past migration waves and strongly peaks in 2015 with 307,172 attestations (350.55 per million tokens).¹⁰

Example:

- (13) *Im Dezember 2015 wählte die Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache (GfdS) Flüchtlinge zu ihrem Wort des Jahres 2015.*
 'In December 2015 the Society for the German Language chose *Flüchtlinge*-N.M.PL as the word of the year 2015.'

¹⁰ *Flüchtlinge* is both the feminine form and the plural male/generic form; the attestations are not separately encoded in the corpus.

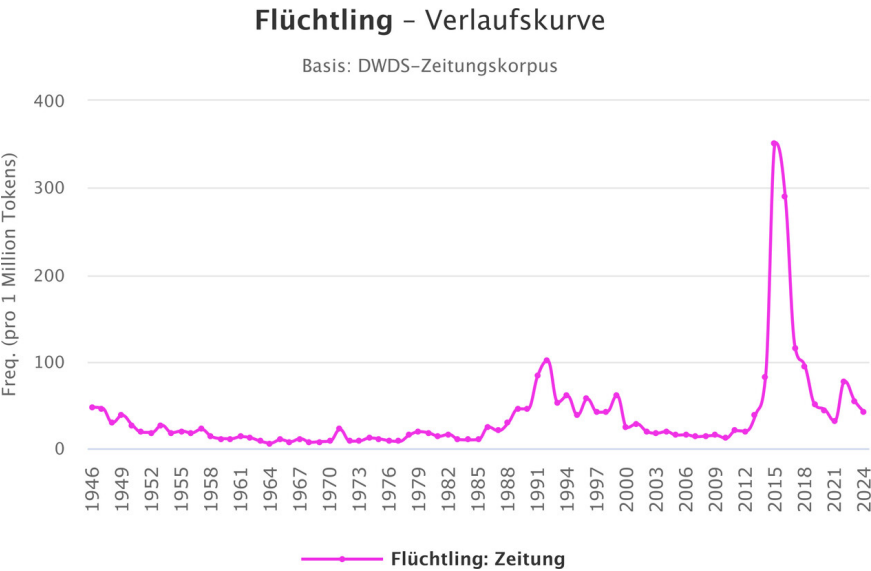


FIGURE 1.19 Frequency of *Flüchtling* ('refugee-N.M') in DWDS

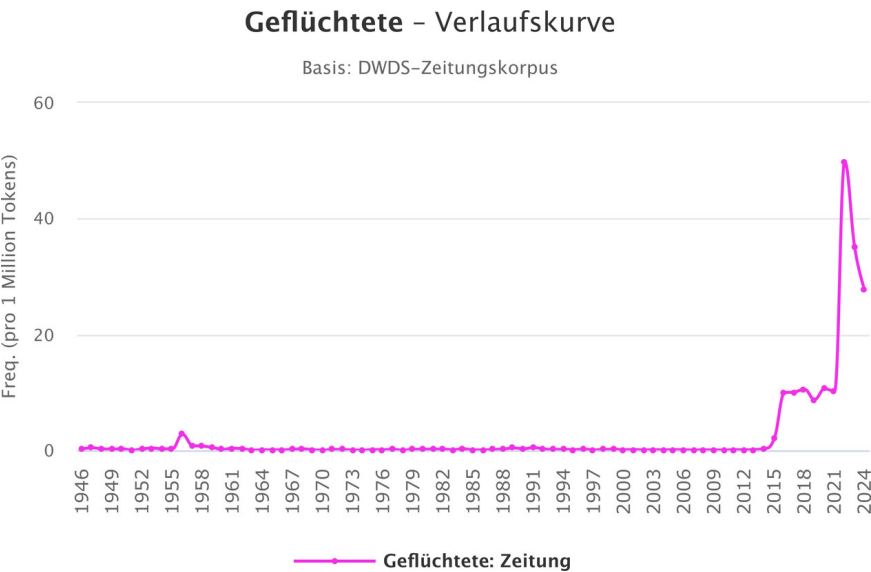


FIGURE 1.20 Frequency of *Geflüchtete* ('people who have fled-N.PL') in DWDS

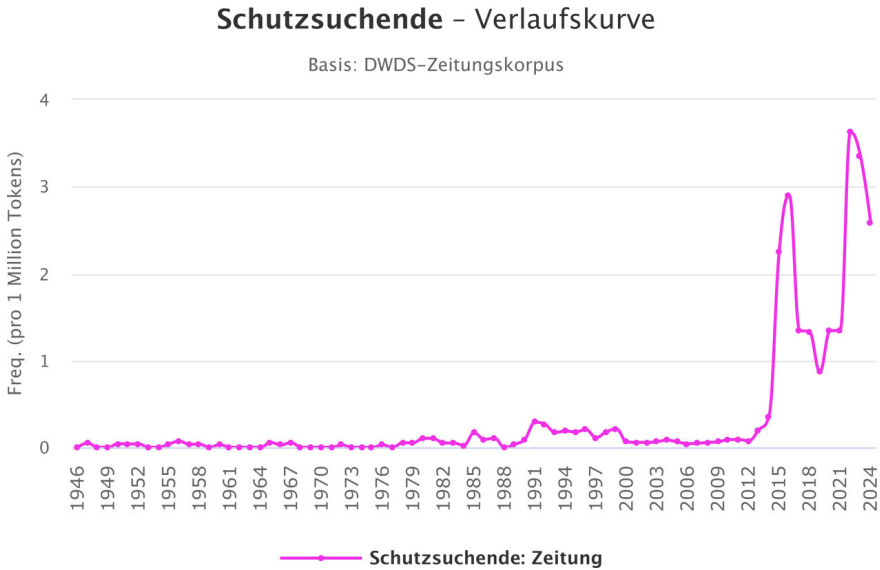


FIGURE 1.21 Frequency of *Schutzsuchende* ('shelter-seeking people-N.PL') in DWDS

Geflüchtete (past participle of the verb *fluchten* 'to flee', i.e., 'lit. people who have fled') peaks in 2022 with 39,905 attestations (50.06 per million tokens).

This form can be used for both genders and singular and plural with appropriate articles, the plural use being predominant, but the singular possible, as in the following example.

Example:

- (14) *Der Geflüchtete wurde von der inzwischen alarmierten Volkspolizei in der Finowstraße entdeckt und ergriff wiederum die Flucht.* [Berliner Zeitung, 11.05.1958]

'The refugee-N.M.SG was discovered by the alarmed police in Finowstraße and took flight again.'

Schutzsuchende ('lit. those seeking shelter; shelter-seeking people'; present participle of the expression *Schutz suchen* 'to seek shelter') peaks in 2016 with 2,684 attestations (2.90 per million tokens) and then again in 2022 with 2,814 attestations (3.53 per million tokens).

Example:

- (15) *Er beschreibt konkrete Probleme die für die Schutzsuchenden daraus entstehen.* [Die Zeit, 30.08.2013, Nr. 36]

'He describes concrete problems that emerge for the refugee seeking.'

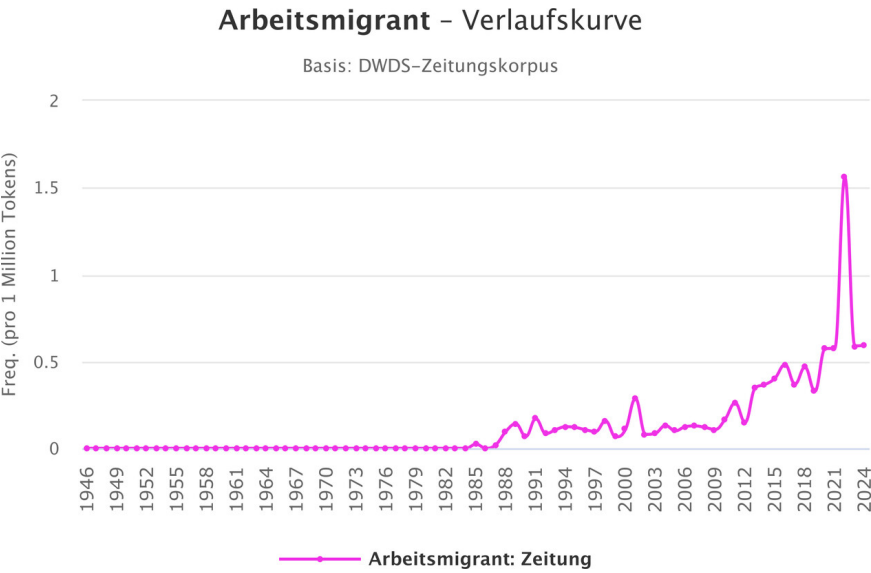


FIGURE 1.22 Frequency of *Arbeitsmigrant* ('economic migrant-N.M') in DWDS

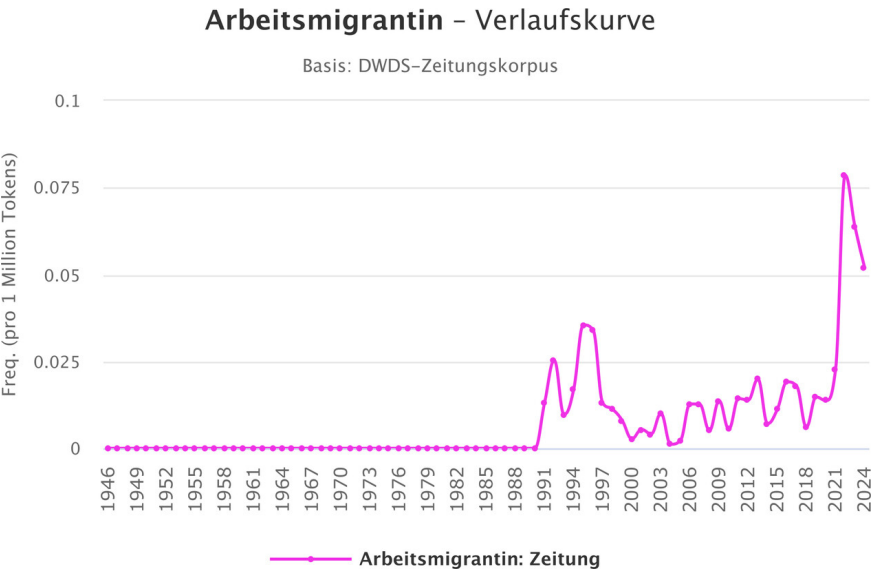


FIGURE 1.23 Frequency of *Arbeitsmigrantin* ('economic migrant-N.F') in DWDS

Arbeitsmigrant ‘lit. work migrant; economic migrant-N.M’ peaks in 2022 with 1,222 attestations (1.53 per million tokens). *Arbeitsmigrantin* (‘economic migrant-N.F’) also peaks in 2022, with 63 attestations (0.08 per million tokens). Both are used predominantly (> 95 %) in the plural.

Example:

- (16) *Die Restauration der kapitalistischen Nachkriegsökonomie wäre ohne die massenhafte Anwerbung von Arbeitsmigrantinnen und -migranten nicht möglich gewesen.* [konkret, 2000 [1991]]

‘The renewal of the capitalist postwar economy would have been impossible without massive recruitment of female and male economic migrants.’

3.3 Grammatical Number of These Attestations

There is a systematicity in the distribution of grammatical number, as shown by the SketchEngine data offered for German:

- *Kanakin* and *Asylantin* occur (at least in modern texts) only in the singular;
- *Kanake* and *Asylant* occur predominantly (> 95 %) in the plural;
- *Gastarbeiterin* occurs in about 20 % of cases in the singular and 80 % in the plural, *Gastarbeiter* predominantly (> 95 %) in the plural;
- *Migrantin* nowadays occurs exceptionally (1–2 %) in the singular, otherwise in the plural (under *Migrantin*, SketchEngine calculated also *MigrantInnen*, used for both genders), *Migrant* (also including *Migrant*innen* and *Migrant/-innen*) predominantly in the plural;
- *Migrant*, *Flüchtling*, *Geflüchtete*, and *Schutzsuchende* occur predominantly (> 95 %) in the plural.

This survey, based on the modern language attested in SketchEngine, shows that the established stigmatized expression *Kanake/Kanakin* occurs in the singular, whereas the male and generic forms occur (at least in modern language) significantly more often (> 95 %) in plural forms. This finding corroborates Niehr’s (2020) general statement about the use of plural forms in the designation of migrants. This holds even for politically correct expressions such as *Geflüchtete* and *Schutzsuchende*. This systematic use of plural forms is a linguistic means of construing migrants not as individuals but as a group with shared properties (as corroborated by the analysis by Saicová Římalová, Kopřivová, and Rejzek in the present volume). These properties are, as a rule, negative, as shown by collocating words (e.g., *geflohen* ‘flee-V.PP’, *abgeschoben* ‘expel-V.PP’, and *parasitär* ‘parasitic-ADJ’; one attestation states: *sie ist eine würdige Asylantin* ‘she is an honorable asylum seeker-N.F’, implying that this would not generally be the case). Indiscriminate assignment of properties to a group is the prototypical procedure of stigmatization, applied even to originally posi-

tive expressions (such as *Schutzsuchende* ‘shelter-seeking people’). The rise in frequency and plural use are indicators of othering, attested whenever a group starts to be seen as threatening. This again attests to the situated character of othering.

The terms, and specifically changes in their frequency over time, tell the following story. As long as migrants are construed as necessary to the economy, they are welcome guest workers. The moment they outstay their welcome and are no longer needed, they become otherized through a historical, colonial term (*Kanake*). Interestingly, refugees from the Yugoslavian war are not initially strongly othered (see the frequency data on *Migrant*); by contrast, since the refugee crisis in 2015, they become othered again as economic migrants compared to refugees. The story also reflects the migrants’ and their allies’ attempts to prevent othering (the case of *Asylant* vs. *Asylbewerber*). These changing attitudes entrenched in linguistic expressions confirm the situated character of othering.

4 A Brief Comparison with Croatian

In order to see whether treating migrants as a single undifferentiated group is language-specific for German or culturally specific for Germany, a comparison with Croatian can be illustrative. Croatia is an EU country socioculturally embedded in the same Central European heritage as Germany (see above), and Croatian is linguistically similar in distinguishing gender and number grammatically. I compared the recently adopted internationalism *migrant* in Croatian (with a feminine counterpart, *migrantkinja*) with the corresponding Croatian word *izbjeglica*, ‘refugee’ (with no possibility to distinguish gender; this is one of the Croatian morphologically feminine derivatives used generically). Based on hrWaC 2.2 in SketchEngine, *izbjeglica* is used for both genders. The feminine form *migrantkinja* occurs in only 11 examples (compared to 2,176 for *migrant*), all in the plural.

In hrWaC 2.2, *migrant* (2,176 attestations) is predominantly (> 95%) used in the plural (even *ilegalni migrant* ‘illegal migrant’ occurs in 188 instances in the plural and only once, *ako si ilegalni migrant* ‘if you are an illegal migrant’, non-referentially, in the singular). *Izbjeglica* ‘refugee, of both genders’ (‘from’–‘flee’–APP–desinence; i.e., prefix–verb root–suffix for active past participle—desinence for a bearer of a property) follows the same formation pattern as, e.g., *pridošlica* ‘newcomer, of both genders’. However, *pridošlica* (2,109 attestations) has a rather even distribution between the singular and plural, whereas *izbjeglica* (17,882 attestations on May 30, 2024) exhibits a strong preference

(> 95 %) for plural forms (singular forms are used with *ako* 'if' or *kao* 'as'). This points to the same discourse strategy in Croatian as in German.

5 Conclusion

We have seen two different instances of the construal of othering in discourse, demonstrating that discourse is indeed more than the involved semiotic elements (be they politically correct expressions such as *Geflüchtete* in German, or politically incorrect such as *Asylant*). As shown by the quantitative data, grammatical categories such as number are employed in the construal of migrants as an indiscriminate group with the same, predominantly negative, properties. The discourse strategy of employing plural designations is valid both in Germany and Croatia.

By contrast, in the case of women, it is not the frequencies of masculine and feminine forms that are revealing, but the rhetorically fixed expressions that are employed in the construal of women as not equally qualified for a position as a man would be. In this case, the qualitative data have been much more revealing.

While it is mainly grammatical means that underlie the construal of migrants as Others pertaining to an indiscriminate group, women are construed individually as weak by discourse strategies including hedges (e.g., *so to say*) and faint praise (e.g., *she has the capacity to grow and develop*). We may ask how these results relate to Brons's definition of *othering* as "the attribution of relative inferiority and/or radical alienness to some other/out-group" (2015, 83). Both investigated cases point to the contextualization of othering as a matter of situated sociocultural judgment; in this sense, alienness is relative and contextually embedded, as is relative inferiority (construed with reference to adopted sociocultural norms with the aim of maintaining the established order). Concerning Brons's distinction between *crude* and *sophisticated othering*, the data show that (apart from scolding using the word *Kanake*, against which a legal complaint can be filed), in countries where discrimination is legally forbidden, indirect othering (e.g., through indiscriminate group treatment) is basically the norm in public discourse; this may be called *sophisticated othering*.

In all the investigated instances, clear language cues could be established, leading discourse participants to the underlying othering and potentially lesser achievement of the entire undifferentiated group. In this sense, language plays an even greater role than assumed by Foucault, and both grammar and lexicon contribute to the construal of underlying meanings in discourse in addition to fixed rhetoric means. Othering is indeed a situated judgment of deviation from

a sociocultural norm. Once triggered in resistance to a social group transgressing real or imagined boundaries, othering becomes embedded in the system of sociocultural values through language and is relatively resistant to dynamism and change.

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We are *my* ‘Us’ and They Are *migranti* ‘Migrants’, *emigranti* ‘Emigrants’, *přistěhovalci* ‘Immigrants’, *uprchlíci* ‘Refugees’, and Others *Othering in the Context of Migration in Czech*

Lucie Saicová Římalová, Marie Kopřivová, and Jiří Rejzek

1 Introduction

The discourse on migration in Czech uses a large number of lexical units for those who are migrating from one place to another, such as *migrant* ‘a migrant’, *imigrant* ‘an immigrant’, *emigrant* ‘an emigrant’, *běženec* ‘a refugee’ (derived from the verb *běžet* ‘to run’), *utečenec* ‘a refugee’ (derived from the verb *utéct* ‘to run away’), *uprchlík* ‘a refugee’ (derived from the verb *uprchnout* ‘to flee’), and *exulant* ‘an exile’. Even though these words might look synonymous, analyses of linguistic data show significant differences in their meaning and usage, as well as changes in their meaning and usage over time. However, all these lexical units share the potential to “label” groups of people through the mechanism of othering: to distinguish those who are “us” and those who are “them”, “the other”.

In this chapter, we analyze othering in the context of migration in Czech and from the point of view of speakers of Czech as it can be reconstructed from various types of texts representing the broadly understood public discourse. Using linguistic data from multiple corpora and other sources, we focus on the following research questions: How do speakers of Czech perceive and understand migration and migrating people, especially those coming to the “Czech” region? What linguistic means do speakers of Czech use when talking about them? What are the denotative and connotative meanings of these lexical units, and how do they change over time? What is specific and culture-dependent in the “Czech” naming strategies for migrating people?

In the following parts of the chapter, we summarize the theoretical background of our research (section 2). Then we present an overview of lexical exponents of the “us”—“them” opposition in contemporary Czech (3), followed by three case studies of selected Czech nouns denoting migrating people across three different periods: from Old Czech to Early Modern Czech (4.1), the

totalitarian period (1948–1989) (4.2), and contemporary Czech from the last 25 years, including a reconstruction of the linguistic image of migration and migrating people (4.3). We conclude with a summary of cultural factors that influence the discourse about migration and the related process of othering (5).

Our research combines several theoretical approaches (cognitively and culturally oriented analysis, corpus linguistics, and etymological and historical research) to offer a multifaceted analysis of the relevant lexical units from both synchronic and diachronic perspectives. The analysis is based on data retrieved from a complex array of sources, such as selected dictionaries, several Czech corpora, and others. The relevant data and methods are introduced at the beginning of the respective sections.

2 Theoretical Background

The theoretical background of our research is formed by the concepts of *othering*, the “us” versus “them” opposition, and selected general principles of human interaction. We perceive othering as culture-dependent and changing over time.

Othering is a complex phenomenon influenced by multiple factors. It is often defined as a process situated within a discourse that creates or constructs a group identity for “the others” (e.g., Harmer and Lumsden 2019; Coupland 2010, 244–248; Brons 2015, 73–80). The history of academic interest in othering is relatively long (e.g., Spivak 1985) and can be found within various academic fields and research topics, including philosophy, psychology, and sociology (e.g., Brons 2015; Embrick, Domínguez, and Karsak 2017; Harmer and Lumsden 2019, 15–18; Coupland 2010).

The research up until now has noted that the process of othering focuses on differences. It transforms “individuals into visible Others” (Akbulut and Razum 2023, 1111). “The others” tend to be seen not as individuals but as groups with a group identity, which is, among others, related to stereotypes (e.g., Harmer and Lumsden 2019, 18). The group identity is assigned to “the others”, typically by members of some different, more powerful group (e.g., Spivak 1985; Jensen 2011; Harmer and Lumsden 2019, 15). “The others” are not active agents in the process but rather passive, even silenced “objects” (e.g., Akbulut and Razum 2023). It is worth noting that some aspects of the theoretical construal of the concept have been criticized, such as the inability to see what is situated between the two opposing groups (“us” versus “the others”), or the denial of agency to “the others” (e.g., Jensen 2011; Harmer and Lumsden 2019, 18–19).

Othering is often associated with negative implications such as discrimination, degradation, inequality (e.g., Akbulut and Razum 2023; Embrick, Domínguez, and Karsak 2017), simplified exoticization or idealizing of the others (e.g., Spivak 1985; Akbulut and Razum 2023), homogenization, stereotyping, pejoration, suppression, silencing, or displaying apparent tolerance and “liberalism” (Coupland 2010, 248–254). Othering can also lead to various types of aggressive behavior towards “the others” (e.g., Embrick, Domínguez, and Karsak 2017; Harmer and Lumsden 2019), including communication that is aggressive (e.g., Harmer and Lumsden 2019) or that constructs “the others” in various dehumanizing ways (e.g., Musolff 2015). Othering can be construed both explicitly (e.g., by using selected lexical units) and implicitly (e.g., Coupland 2010). In our research, we focus on cases where the others are explicitly referred to using specific lexical units.

Seen from a broader perspective, othering is related to the general “us” versus “them” opposition that has been discussed within various theoretical contexts (e.g., Brons 2015). Some authors see the construction of the “us” versus “them” opposition as an inevitable process in human interaction (e.g., Duszak 2002, 2–3; Tajfel and Forgas 1981). From the point of view of the conceptual metaphor theory (e.g., Lakoff and Johnson 1980) and the theory of image schemas (e.g., Johnson 1987), the “us” versus “them” opposition is based on the metaphor (or the image schema) of a CONTAINER: “us” are those who are “inside” this container, while “them” are those who are outside it. In the case of migration, the metaphor (or the image schema) of a CONTAINER applies to some region (e.g., the Czech Republic) and to the group of people who live there (e.g., Czechs). The migrating people are then conceptualized as those who have crossed the border and entered this container from the outside. The fact that they come from the “outside” of the container is one of the features that is used in their conceptualization as “them” by those who are “inside” and see themselves as “us”.

Othering is also seen as a process that a given community uses to define its own identity, “us” (e.g., Chovanec and Molek-Kozakowska 2017, 3), and that is used to construe “the others” as “outsiders”, “them”, non-members of the given community. This process can be based on diverse subjective criteria (Chovanec and Molek-Kozakowska 2017, 3). This indicates that othering should be considered in the broader context of general principles of human interaction. The process of defining who is “us” and who is “them” is part of the complex process of creation, maintenance, and negotiation of identities in human interaction (see de Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012, 115–190). We believe that these processes establish a key component in human interaction (see Watzlawick, Beavin Bavelas, and Jackson 1967)—the relational aspects of interaction that

encompass various ways of negotiating who we are, who others are, and what our mutual relationship is.

We see othering as culture-dependent and changing over time, which is in accordance with studies that show changes in othering related to changes in the given culture (e.g., changes in racial practices described in Embrick, Domínguez, and Karsak 2017). We, therefore, observe the changes in othering across selected time periods. We also look for possible cultural and historical factors influencing othering in Czech in a given period, such as the experience of the Czech-speaking people with migration or their perception of countries of origin or the social status of the migrating people (see section 5).

So far, research on the discourse of migration in European languages and cultures has focused on various sociolinguistic aspects of migration (e.g., Rhein-dorf and Wodak 2020; Ife 2020) and on the analysis of media (e.g., Fábíán 2015) and the Internet (e.g., Laineste 2017). The results indicate a strong presence of diverse emotions in the discourse (Laineste 2017 analyzing online discussions in Estonian) and the usage of complex scenarios (e.g., Musolff 2015 analyzing media and Internet discourse in the United Kingdom). Naming strategies for migrating people in the media discourse have been analyzed in various European countries as well, demonstrating a repeated tendency to see migrating people as groups and to portray them in a stereotypical way, as well as a tendency to apply different naming strategies in different political or ideological contexts (Fábíán 2023 analyzing media discourse between the years 2015 and 2017).

As far as the situation in the Czech language and culture is concerned, othering is an under-researched topic, and a complex linguistically-oriented analysis of othering in the context of migration is still missing. The relevant linguistically-oriented research in the Czech Republic to date has focused on such topics as minority languages in the Czech Republic (e.g., Nekvapil, Slo-boda, and Wagner 2009), language management in various multilingual settings (e.g., Sherman and Homoláč 2020; Özörencik and Hromadová 2018, Sherman et al. 2016), heritage languages in Czech-speaking communities outside the Czech Republic (e.g., Stranjik 2022; Bučková and Nekula 2022; Zajícová 2021), or the discourse analysis of the presentation of the Romani people in Czech and Central European mass media (e.g., Nekvapil, Homoláč, and Karhanová 2003). Within the analyses of the “us” versus “them” opposition, Rejzek (2022) has presented a cognitively-oriented study of the Proto-Slavonic root **tjudj-* related to the meaning ‘foreign, strange, the other’ (see 4.1).

3 Lexical Exponents of *my* ‘Us’ and *oni* ‘Them’: An Overview

This section provides a summary of possible general expressions of *my* ‘us’ and *oni* ‘them’ in contemporary Czech, with a special focus on the context of migration.

There are several possible lexical exponents of “us” in the “us” versus “them” opposition, but the overall vocabulary for “us” in the context of migration is not very rich. This can be interpreted as a signal that being “us” is seen as the “neutral”, unmarked state that does not deserve special attention or specific lexical expressions. Contrary to this, the repertoire of possible expressions for “them” as migrating people is very rich. For example, Klégr’s dictionary (Klégr 2007; see 4.3) lists almost two hundred lexical units suitable to express such meaning. This might indicate that migrating people have been drawing the attention of speakers of Czech, and there was a need to have several expressions with various meanings to refer to them (see 5).

As far as the expression of “us” in the given context is concerned, the personal pronoun *my* ‘we’ and the corresponding possessive pronoun *náš* ‘our’ are the first and the least marked options. Other lexical expressions, such as *našinec* ‘somebody who is ours’, tend to be marked (e.g., stylistically) and not very frequent. The noun *Čech* ‘Czech’ (or *Česka* as its female counterpart) is used as well, but the expression may not be neutral in some contexts. This is due to the historical fact that the contemporary Czech Republic encompasses three historical regions whose inhabitants can be referred to by specific nouns: *Čech*, *Moravan* ‘Moravian’, and *Slezan* ‘Silesian’. The noun *Čech* can thus refer either to the inhabitants of the whole Czech Republic or the historical Czech territory only. Some inhabitants of the historical Moravia and Silesia may not like to be referred to by the ethnonym *Čech*. The combination of the pronoun *my* and the noun *Čech* (i.e., *my Češi* ‘we the Czechs’) tends to appear in contexts where various self-stereotypes of Czechs are expressed (e.g., *My Češi máme tendenci vidět spíš to negativní* ‘We Czechs tend to see the negative’; *my Češi jsme chalupáři tělem i duší* ‘We Czechs are “cottagers” in body and soul’).¹

“Them” in the “us” versus “them” opposition can be foregrounded by the pronoun *oni* / *ony* / *ony* / *ona* (‘they-M.AN.PL’ / ‘they-M.INAN.PL’ / ‘they-F.PL’ / ‘they-N.PL’, respectively) as well as a large group of nouns (see 4.3). Interestingly, there might not be a truly neutral general equivalent of “the other” (and, consequently, a simple translation of *othering*) in Czech. From the possible general equivalents (e.g., *oni* ‘they’, *jíný* ‘the other, different’, *druhý* ‘the second,

1 Examples from SYN2020 (Křen et al. 2020).

the other', *cizí* 'foreign, strange'), the pronoun *oni* seems to be the most general unit. However, the experience of the authors as native speakers of Czech indicates that the third-person pronoun may not always be as neutral as one might expect. The reference to somebody by this pronoun has different functions in Czech: apart from a neutral deictic reference, it might be, e.g., a means of distancing oneself from somebody, or it might even be considered impolite in some cases (e.g., referring to somebody by the third-person pronoun when this person is present). *Jiný*, *druhý*,² or *cizí* can all have marked (typically negative) connotations, as indicated by the *Word at a Glance* (WaG) tool for the Czech National Corpus.³ For example, *jiný* is associated with connotations such as "weird", "different", "in opposition", *cizí* with "unknown", "difficult to understand", "different", "distant", "not us", "indifferent to us" (see Rejzek 2022 and 4.1 for more detail), and *druhý* with "less important".

Lexical items (mostly nouns) denoting people who are moving from one place to another are numerous, but some of the expressions listed in dictionaries (e.g., Klégr 2007; see 4.3 for more examples) are rare or obsolete (e.g., *jinorodec* 'born elsewhere; of other origin'). Some expressions are used in specific contexts only (e.g., in the discourse on war, colonization, and sports and games, which are situations that we do not concentrate on in this study) or focus not on the general meaning of migration but on a specific feature of the given person (e.g., nationality, a topic that we leave aside as well). Nevertheless, the excerpted data contain several dozen lexemes that can be applied to the context of migration as we analyze it in this study (see 4.3).

Czech terms for migrants (or "them") are heterogeneous as far as the stylistic features are concerned. There are relatively neutral terms, often used in official public discourse (e.g., *migrant* 'a migrant', *žadatel o azyl* 'an asylum seeker', *cizí státní příslušník* 'foreign state national'), as well as informal or even pejorative and vulgar substandard units. Some of the lexical units are single words, and some are multi-word units. Even though Czech tends to form pairs of grammatically masculine and feminine nouns to denote people of male and female gender (e.g., *emigrant* 'an emigrant', male—*emigrantka* 'an emigrant', female), the frequency of the feminine counterparts is often very low (see 4). The masculine forms are often used as the generic expressions for "migrating people" of any gender;⁴ and corpus studies (see 4.2 and 4.3) indicate that they are typically

2 *Druhý* can function either as a pronoun (which is relevant for our research), or as a numeral ('the second').

3 See <https://www.korpus.cz/slovo-v-kostce/> (last accessed: July 31, 2024).

4 The usage of the masculine form as the generic one is still typical of Czech, even though not all speakers agree with this tradition.

used in the plural (e.g., *uprchlíci* ‘refugees-M.PL’). This corresponds to repeated observations from the scientific literature that the migrating people tend to be seen as groups, not as individuals (see above).

4 Lexical Units for Migrating People in Different Periods

As noted, othering is strongly influenced by complex cultural, social, and historical factors. In the Czech context, this can be well demonstrated by diachronic changes in naming strategies and by the denotative and evaluative meanings of selected lexical units. In the following parts of our chapter, we present three case studies of othering in the context of migration in different historical periods: the period from medieval times to Early Modern Czech (4.1), the totalitarian period (approx. between the 1950s and 1980s; 4.2), and contemporary Czech (approx. the last 25 years; 4.3). We focus on the most general and frequent lexical units such as *migrant* ‘a migrant’, *imigrant* ‘an immigrant’, *emigrant* ‘an emigrant’, *uprchlík* ‘a refugee’, and *exulant* ‘an exile’.

4.1 From Old Czech to Early Modern Czech

Though the medieval way of life was quite different from today, and mass migrations had not affected people’s lives as much as they have in recent centuries, we still assume that older Czech had terms for ‘migrant, refugee, fugitive, exile’, etc. The more important opposition, however, seems to be the opposition ‘old resident, denizen’ versus ‘newcomer, foreigner’.

When we discuss the “us” versus “them” opposition in the history of language, it is worth mentioning how Common Slavic (and subsequently Slavic languages) expressed the concept ‘someone else’s, other people’s’. The basic expressions for this concept in Slavic languages are the continuants of the Common Slavic **tjudj-* (there is a broad consensus that it is derived from IE. **teutā* ‘people, community, land’), the supposed meaning thus being ‘belonging to the people, community’ in contrast to ‘belonging to me or to my family’ (Rejzek 2022). The root *cuz-*, *ciz-*, which had regularly developed in Old Czech from the Common Slavic **tjudj-*, then extended its meaning to other kinds of “strangeness”, also covering the meaning ‘foreign, alien’ (*cuzé kraje* ‘foreign regions’, *v cuzíej zemi* ‘in a foreign country’). The compound words with this element thus started to denote ‘foreigner, stranger’ (*cuzozemec*, *cuzokraj(ě)n(ě)n*, both ‘from a foreign country’).⁵

5 Lexical material for the Old Czech period is based on the entries from *Vokabulář webový*:

Because of the limited migration of rural people in the Middle Ages, strangers and foreigners represented quite a challenging phenomenon, which was reflected in the expressions that were used to talk about them. Besides the aforementioned *cuzozemec*, *cuzokraj(ě)n(ě)í* or the similarly formed *jino-kraj(ě)n(ě)ín*, which denoted ‘people coming from other, foreign countries’, we find a number of expressions for people coming from outside the town or village, strangers. An interesting term is *přěspolný/přěspolní*, literally ‘coming across the field(s)’, which corresponds exactly to the Latin *peregrinus*, which eventually gave English *pilgrim*, e.g., (1):

- (1) *nemuož nižádný svědek przešpolní měštěnána přesvědčiti*
 ‘no witness from out of town can persuade the burgher’ (ProkPraxD 39b)

The less frequent *přěspotočný* literally means ‘coming across the stream’. A lot of expressions denote the sense ‘newcomer’—*příšlec*, *příchodčí*, *příchoda* (all related to *jít*, *chodit* ‘to go on foot’), *přilezlec* (related to *lézt* ‘to crawl’), *novotný* (related to *nový* ‘new’), *novopříšlý* (related to both *jít* ‘to go on foot’ and *nový* ‘new’).

It was said that the old Czech society practically did not have any experience with mass migration. An easy German colonization in the 13th century was probably not noticed by the contemporaries as a process of this kind, and other large movements of the population were unknown to medieval Czechs. Yet there had been mass migration that was sometimes commemorated in Czech medieval texts—the biblical arrival of the Jews to Egypt and their exodus from this country, c.f. (2):

- (2) *milujte pútníka, neb i vy byli ste příchodčí v zemi Ejipta*
 ‘love a pilgrim because even you had been newcomers to the land of Egypt’ (ComestK)

webové hnízdo pramenů k poznání historické češtiny [online]. Prague: Ústav pro jazyk český AV ČR, v. v. i., oddělení vývoje jazyka. © 2006–2020. Data version 1.1.15. Available from: <https://vokabular.ujc.cas.cz> (last accessed: July 31, 2024).

The examples from the Middle Czech period are taken from Nejedlý et al. *Lexikální databáze humanistické a barokní češtiny* [online]. Prague: Ústav pro jazyk český AV ČR, v. v. i., 2021-. Available from: <https://madla.ujc.cas.cz> (last accessed: July 31, 2024).

The lexical data for the Modern Czech period are drawn from *Kartotéka novočeského lexikálního archivu* [online], Prague: Ústav pro jazyk český AV ČR, v. v. i., 1911–1991. Available from: <https://bara.ujc.cas.cz/psjc/search.php> (last accessed: July 31, 2024).

A certain pejorative shade can be felt in the adjective *vandrovný* (from the German *wandern* ‘to roam, wander’) that also could have been used for a ‘foreigner, newcomer’.

Expressions for ‘refugees, fugitives, etc.’ are rarely attested in Old Czech, and as a rule, they are not connected with mass migration but rather with individual flights and getaways. This is, for instance, the case for the word *běhún/běhúně*, e.g., (3):

- (3) *Soběslav, jenž běhúnem v Němcích bieše*
 ‘Soběslav, who was a refugee in Germany’ (Pulk. 97)

Běhún/běhúně and *poběhlec* are both derived from *běhat, běžet* ‘to run’. An interesting word from the same root is *sběh, zběh*, now denoting ‘a deserter’. In Old Czech, it denoted ‘a refugee, an outlaw, an exile’, but also ‘a tyrant, a brute, a robber’.

The forcible emigration of the elites after the defeat of the Protestants in 1620 (see 4.3.1 and 4.3.2) was probably not viewed as a mass migration either, as it was spread over time and space, but it was around that time that the word *exulant* ‘an exile’ was introduced into Czech, e.g., (4) and (5, where the word is used by the exiles themselves):

- (4) *jeden duchovní exulant o tom píše*
 ‘one religious exile writes about it’ (HarPam)
- (5) *že tu [= v Polsku] již ne exulanti, ale domácí bytem jsme, se zdálo*
 ‘it seemed that here [in Poland] not the exiles, but home we are’ (Kom-Man)

Other expressions for ‘migrants, refugees’ used in Czech today come from the modern era. *Přistěhovalec* ‘an immigrant’ has appeared in Czech texts approximately since the middle of the 19th century, replacing the older *přistěhovanec*, attested in Jungmann’s dictionary without any older literary evidence (Jungmann 1835–1839). Jungmann also has an entry for *utečenec* ‘a refugee, an exile’, remarking, however, that this word is not properly formed. The same evaluation is applied to *uprchlenec* with the same meaning; the contemporary form *uprchlík* ‘a refugee’ seems to have gained ground in Czech after WWI only. The same period saw the rise of the word *běženec* ‘a refugee’—it is a borrowing from Russian and, originally, denoted Russian political refugees. Finally, the word *migrant* is not attested in Czech before the 1950s and is, as a rule, associated with economic and political migration abroad (see 4.2, 4.3).

4.2 *The Totalitarian Period (1948–1989)*

During the totalitarian period (1948–1989), migration was strictly regulated, and the official discourse was dictated by an ideology that divided the world into polarized parts. The so-called *East versus West* opposition (see 4.3 and 5) became very salient in this period, even though it was different than today (see 4.3.3.1 and 5). During the totalitarian period, it was a political division that came as a result of the negotiations after WWII, and the “East” meant states under the influence of the Soviet Union.

The official propagandistic discourse that we have analyzed is built upon a specific version of the *East versus West* opposition, namely “us” versus the “West”. “Us” was represented mostly by the former Czechoslovakia and other countries under the communist regime. The “West” consisted above all of the “capitalistic” (labeled often as “imperialist”) countries; it was seen as an enemy and evaluated highly negatively (see below).

It is also important to mention that during the totalitarian period, it was practically impossible to officially leave the former Czechoslovakia for the “West”, and immigration into Czechoslovakia was limited to selected groups of people (e.g., workers, students) from certain countries. Emigration from Czechoslovakia without official permission was considered a criminal act (e.g., Rychlík 2015, 6). Two larger waves of emigration from the country happened and are reflected in the linguistic data: after 1948, when the communist regime took over and started to build the totalitarian regime (e.g., Bělina et al. 1992, 268–271), and after 1968, when the communist regime became tighter once more during so-called normalization (e.g., Bělina et al. 1992, 287–293 and 306; Rychlík 2015). The repertoire of lexical units referring to migrating people was similar to today’s vocabulary, but their meanings, especially evaluative ones, were different. The analysis has shown that emigration of people from Czechoslovakia was the key topic in the official discourse about migration and that it was more important than migration into Czechoslovakia.

In this part of our study, we present an analysis of selected words, such as *emigrant* ‘an emigrant’, *migrant* ‘a migrant’, *imigrant* ‘an immigrant’, *běženec* ‘a refugee’, and *uprchlík* ‘a refugee’ in the official discourse of the period. The analysis is based on data from the corpus Totalita from the Czech National Corpus (Skoumalová et al. 2010; Čermák 2015, 2010). It is a diachronic corpus of written Czech that contains texts from the newspaper *Rudé právo*, as well as books and other printed materials published between the years 1948 and 1989. According to the authors (Skoumalová et al. 2010), the corpus is not representative of the entire discourse of the given period, but it “contains the typical and dominant lexicon of totalitarianism” from published printed materials of that time.

Even though the corpus Totalita is not balanced, certain tendencies in the totalitarian and propagandistic discourse are apparent. For example, those who voluntarily emigrated from the regime in the 1950s and 1970s are typically referred to by the noun *emigrant*, and they are seen as traitors and as those who deserve to live a hard life. The destination of their emigration is often a country in the “West” (see above and 5), and both the act of emigration and the target country tend to be evaluated negatively in the official discourse. Nouns such as *migrant* or *imigrant* often refer to migrating people in other countries rather than in the former Czechoslovakia (e.g., in Vietnam or the USA), while *utečenec* can denote both the emigrants from the former Czechoslovakia and migrating people in other countries. People referred to by these nouns can also be construed as people who just “happened to get” to some country in the “West” and who are oppressed there. The “West” is often labeled negatively as, e.g., an “imperialist” foreign country. The noun *přeběhlík* ‘somebody who has changed sides’ has a strong negative connotation (e.g., a traitor). All analyzed nouns are used predominantly in plural forms, which is in accordance with the previous observation that migrating people tend to be conceptualized as a mass, not as individuals (see above).

In the following part, we summarize the results for the analyzed lexemes, adding some illustrative examples from the corpus. The words *emigrant* ‘an emigrant’ and *uprchlík* ‘a refugee’ are the most frequent among the analyzed lexical units: there are 193 instances of the noun *emigrant* (ipm 12.1⁶) and 183 instances of *uprchlík* ‘a refugee’ (ipm 11.48) in the corpus. There are 57 instances (ipm 3.57) of the word *přistěhovelec* ‘an immigrant’ in the corpus as well. In all three cases, the plural forms prevail. Other words are much less frequent in the corpus: *utečenec* ‘a refugee’—12 instances, *exulant* ‘an exile’, and *přeběhlík* ‘somebody who has changed sides’—6 instances each, *běženec* ‘a refugee’—5 instances, *migrant* ‘a migrant’—3 instances, *imigrant* ‘an immigrant’—1 instance, no instance of *azylant* ‘an asylum seeker’.

In relation to the former Czechoslovakia, people referred to by the word *emigrant* ‘an emigrant’ are typically construed as people from Czechoslovakia who left their country. The reversed perspective (i.e., people who emigrated from some other country and came to the former Czechoslovakia) is not used. The combination *naši emigranti* ‘our emigrants’ is repeatedly attested. The evaluative meanings of *emigrant* are typically negative, as well as the evaluation of their actions. The target country of their emigration is typically a country in

6 ipm—instances per milion, measure of relative frequency; see <https://wiki.korpus.cz/doku.php/en:pojmy:ipm?s%5b%5d=ipm> (last accessed: July 31, 2024).

the “West”. The following example construes emigrants as traitors who had left their country and who were then trying to secretly carry out plans to harm it. The usage of the pronouns *naš* ‘our’ and *k nám* ‘to us’ is significant for the period, e.g., (6):

- (6) *Mluv[e]ní o Mnichovu mělo našim emigrantům sloužit pouze k tomu, aby tím maskovali svůj vlastní vlastizrádný plán, který k nám chtějí vpašovat pod heslem federované Evropy.*

‘Talking about Munich was only intended to serve our emigrants to disguise their own treasonous plan, which they wanted to smuggle to us [= into our country] under the slogan of a federated Europe.’⁷

Emigration is often depicted as a tragic act that creates emptiness in one’s life. The idea that emigrants would like to come back but cannot is significant for the period as well. When migration between countries other than Czechoslovakia is discussed, the negative consequences of emigration and the difficult living conditions of emigrants are underlined. The focus on negative aspects of emigration is consistent with the fact that the regime did not want to support emigration nor the image of a better life elsewhere, especially in the “West”.

People referred to by the noun *uprchlík* ‘a refugee’ typically seem to be those who had to leave the place where they had lived for some serious reason, such as war. The examples usually describe situations in countries other than the former Czechoslovakia (e.g., Israel, Korea, Palestine, Uganda). The noun is used in official titles of institutions as well, e.g., *Mezinárodní organizace pro uprchlíky* ‘The International Refugee Organisation’.⁸

The word *přistěhovalec* ‘a refugee’ seems to be relatively neutral, without a strong ideological content. It is used in more general contexts, e.g., (7):

- (7) *AUSTRÁLIE PŘIJME 7 MILIÓŇŮ PŘISTĚHOVALCŮ v příštích 30 letech*
‘AUSTRALIA WILL TAKE IN 7 MILLION REFUGEES in the next 30 years’

7 The extract mentions the so-called Munich Agreement in 1938 that forced Czechoslovakia to agree with German annexation of Czechoslovakian regions with a high percentage of German inhabitants, the so-called *Sudetenland* (see Bělina et al. 1992, 187–191).

8 See: <https://www.unhcr.org/cz/161-czo-nas-html.html#:~:text=%C3%9A%C5%99ad%20Vysok%C3%A9ho%20komisa%C5%99e%20Organizace%20spojen%C3%BDch%20n%C3%A1rod%C5%AF%20pro%20uprchl%C3%ADky,pokus%C5%AF%20omezin%C3%A1rodn%C3%ADch%20subjekt%C5%AF%20poskytnout%20ochranu%20a%20pomoc%20uprchl%C3%ADk%C5%Afm> (last accessed: July 31, 2024).

Přistěhovalec is used to refer to a person who has moved within the same country as well, e.g., people who moved to the land around the borders after the expulsion of the German inhabitants from these regions after the end of WWII (see Bělina et al. 1992, 252–254).

Among the less frequent words, *utečenec* ‘a refugee’ is typically conceptualized negatively as a person who has deserted Czechoslovakia and joined the “imperialists” in the “West”. The following example (8) depicts them, among others, as dangerous enemies (the expression *naš lid* ‘our people’ is typical of the official discourse of that time):

- (8) *Kolikrát nepřátelé našeho lidu—a byli to právě ti utečenc[i], kteří kdysi sloužili Hitlerovi, kteří dnes do roztrhání těla slouží za žold americkým imperialistům a štvou proti naší svobodě a samostatnosti—kolikrát kaceřovali komunisty jako “vlastizrádce”, jako příslušníky nenárodní strany*
 ‘How many times did the enemies of our people—and it was precisely those refugee[s] who once served Hitler and who today would be ready to tear themselves apart serving as mercenaries to the American imperialists and conspire against our freedom and independence—how many times did they castigate communists as “traitors of the country”, as members of a non-national party’

The word is used for those who have left Czechoslovakia after 1968 as well—they and their situation are once more depicted as highly negative.

The word *přeběhlík* ‘somebody who has changed sides’ is associated with a strongly negative evaluation. The noun *exulant* ‘an exile’ typically refers to people who have left the country due to religious reasons during the forced re-Catholicization in the 17th century. There are five instances of the word *běženec* ‘a refugee’ in the corpus; three of them are from the year 1952, and they refer to Korean people from North Korea, the other two examples are from the year 1977 and refer to Palestinians. People referred to by the noun *běženec* who are not related to the former Czechoslovakia can be depicted negatively as well, for example, as possible spies for the “West”, e.g., (9):

- (9) *který v emigrantských táborech verbuje běžence pro americkou špionáž*
 ‘who recruits refugees for American espionage in emigrant camps’

All three instances of the word *migrant* ‘a migrant’ come from the year 1977. People referred to by the noun *migrant* move to countries other than Czechoslovakia (typically in the “West”). Likewise, the only instance of *imigrant* ‘an immigrant’ refers to migrating people in countries other than Czechoslovakia.

4.3 *Contemporary Czech (approx. 1998–2023)*

The last part of our analysis focuses on the current situation: the Czech Republic is an independent democratic state that joined the European Union 30 years ago and where people can travel freely. It has also experienced several waves of mass migration into the region in recent years, which is reflected in the analyzed data. Our analysis of contemporary written Czech covers approximately the last quarter of a century (approx. 1998–2023), and it should demonstrate more longitudinal tendencies (4.3.1). We supplement our study with an analysis of the most recent usage based on the latest data available in the Czech National Corpus (4.3.2). We conclude with a more general analysis of the so-called linguistic image of migration in contemporary Czech based on lexical units (nouns) relevant to the topic (4.3.3).

4.3.1 Written Language from the Period 1998–2017

The first part of the analysis of the contemporary situation focuses on written Czech from the years 1998–2017, which is the period covered by the *syn_v7* corpus from the Czech National Corpus (Křen et al. 2018). We also apply the tool *Word at a Glance* (Machálek 2019, 2020; Křen et al. 2018) that uses mainly the corpora *syn_v7* (Křen et al. 2018), *syn_v8* (Křen et al. 2019), and *SYN2015* (Křen et al. 2015). The *syn_v8* corpus contains 4,499,370,372 tokens (without punctuation) from texts up until 2018, and it is used for frequency data. The comparison over time is performed on the *syn_v7* corpus of 4,255,216,412 tokens (without punctuation) containing texts up to 2017. The corpus *SYN2015* is used to identify collocations and distributions in text types (genres). It is a balanced corpus of 100,838,568 tokens (without punctuation).

The corpora divide text types or genres into three main groups: fiction (labeled as *FIC*), newspapers and magazines (*NMG*, we use the term “journalistic texts” for this group of genres in our chapter), and specialized non-fictional literature, such as scientific, professional, and popular literature, textbooks, and similar types of texts (*NFC*, we use the term “specialized literature” for this group of genres in our chapter).⁹ Both *syn_v7* and *syn_v8* are dominated by journalistic texts (*NMG*). We cannot rule out that the data could be slightly skewed, but we can observe certain tendencies that are in accordance with our other sources (see below). *SYN2015* contains one-third fiction (*FIC*), one-third journalistic texts (*NMG*), and one-third specialized professional, scientific, etc. literature (*NFC*). We adhere to the genre classifications of *FIC*, *NMG*, and *NFC* in this part of our chapter.

9 E.g., https://wiki.korpus.cz/doku.php/pojmy:txttype_group (last accessed: July 31, 2024).

We have supplemented this analysis with results from the word embedding models¹⁰ of the semantic similarity of words from the tool SEMĚ, developed by the Slovak National Corpus (see Garabík 2020; <https://www.juls.savba.sk/sem%C3%A4/>). This tool uses a neural network that can create semantic categories and model meanings as vector spaces (e.g., Garabík and Wachtarczyková 2022). The data are retrieved from the Czech corpus from the Aranea corpora family, which is a long-term collection of texts from the Internet (Benko 2018). The corpus is not specially cleaned or updated, yet, thanks to its large size, it is suitable for the word embedding models.

We believe that the analysis in this part of our chapter represents the more longitudinal and more general linguistic picture of migration in public discourse, mainly in journalistic texts. We divide the analysis into three parts: (a) basic lexical units referring to migrating people, (b) selected lexical units associated with fleeing from somewhere, and (c) selected lexical units associated with settling somewhere.

4.3.1.1 *Basic Lexical Units Referring to Migrating People* (emigrant ‘an Emigrant’, exulant ‘an Exile’, migrant ‘a Migrant’, immigrant ‘an Immigrant’)

Words in this group strongly profile motion (e.g., *migrant*) and its direction (e.g., *emigrant*, *immigrant*, *exulant*; see the profiles discussed in 4.3.3.1). According to the *Word at a Glance* tool,¹¹ these words have similar frequency in the corpus, but they tend to be present in different contexts. *Immigrant* is frequent in journalistic texts (NMG, see above for the genre delimitation). *Emigrant*, *migrant*, and *exulant* all appear in specialized literature (NFC) as well. Table 2.1 shows text types (genres) that the given word appears predominantly in, the ipm, and the year of the highest frequency (see below).

The frequency of usage of the lexical units changes significantly between 1998 and 2017 (see Figure 2.1). Since the year 2015, the frequency of *migrant* has been rising significantly, while the frequency of the other three words has been decreasing. This might be due to various factors, including the influence of English and the frequency of the word *migrant* in the international general discourse about human migration. The frequency of *immigrant* shows several waves of growth: in 2004–2006, 2010–2011, and a high increase in 2014. This is probably caused by events related to migration in the extra-linguistic reality. The highest observed frequency of *emigrant* was in 1990 (not included in Figure 2.1),

10 E.g., https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Word_embedding (last accessed: July 31, 2024).

11 <https://www.korpus.cz/slovo-v-kostce/compare/cs/emigrant--migrant--imigrant--exulant> (last accessed: July 31, 2024).

TABLE 2.1 *Emigrant, exulant, immigrant, and migrant*: dominant text types, ipm, and years of the highest frequency

Lexical unit	Predominant text group	IPM	The highest number of occurrences
<i>emigrant</i>	NFC	4.32	1999
<i>exulant</i>	NFC	1.03	2003
<i>immigrant</i>	NMG	4.86	2014
<i>migrant</i>	NFC	7.24	2016

SOURCE: SYN_V8; KŘEN ET AL. 2019

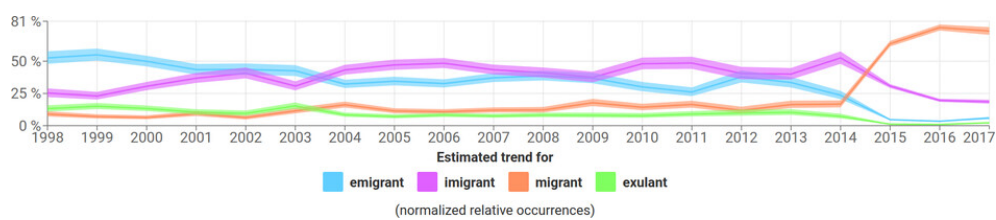


FIGURE 2.1 *Emigrant, exulant, immigrant, and migrant*: changes in frequency between 1998 and 2017
SOURCE: SYN_V7; KŘEN ET AL. 2018

and it has been on the decline since then. This tendency is in accordance with other observations from our data (see below), and it is connected to the discourse about people who emigrated from the former Czechoslovakia and were able to return after 1989.

Each of the four lexical units has specific strong **collocations** as well. In this group of vocabulary, the legality of the stay and the country of origin or nationality seem particularly salient. Significant collocations of *immigrant* relevant for our topic are *kubánský* ‘Cuban’, *československý* ‘Czechoslovak’, *český* ‘Czech’, and *politický* ‘political’. *Exulant* strongly collocates with *český* ‘Czech’ and appears predominantly in historical contexts. Important collocations of *immigrant* are *ilegální* ‘illegal’ and *legální* ‘legal’, and those of *migrant* are *pobývající* ‘residing’ and *legální* ‘legal’. Some collocations correspond to structures where the analyzed words function as complements, such as *integrace* ‘integration’ and *postavení* ‘status’ in relation to *migrant*, and *příliv* ‘high tide’ in relation to *immigrant*.

This analysis of collocations can be further elaborated by the **word embedding** analysis of **semantically similar words** (Garabík 2020; <https://www.juls.savba.sk/sem%C3%A4/>; see above as well) that confirms that the lexical

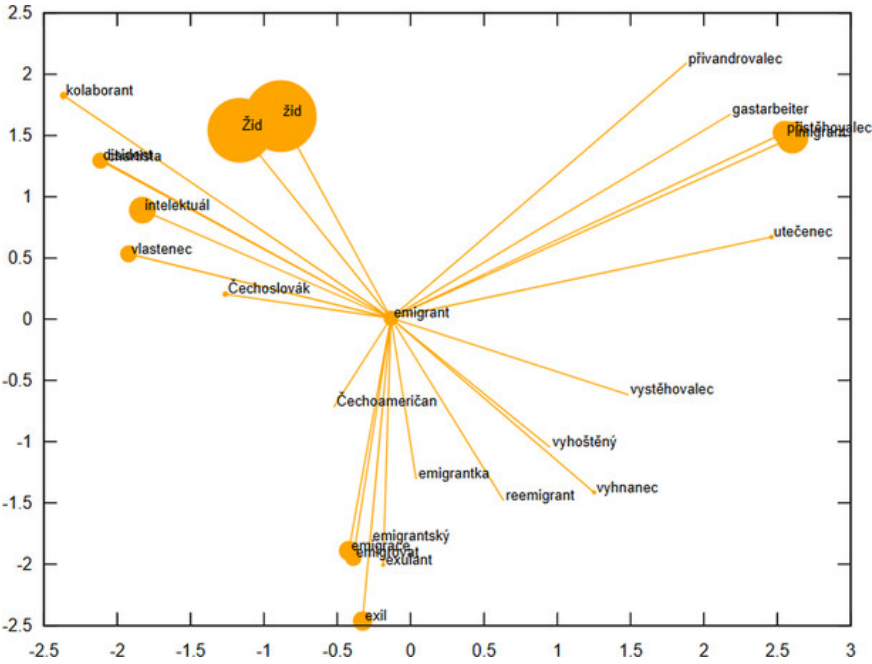


FIGURE 2.2 Word embedding—visualization of semantically similar words for the lexeme *emigrant*

units *migrant*, *emigrant*, *imigrant*, and *exulant* are relatively close to each other. The results of semantic embedding for *emigrant* are exemplified in Figure 2.2.¹²

The word embedding analysis for *migrant*¹³ shows that this lexical unit has a strong connection to words such as *běženec*, *uprchlík*, *utečenec* (all meaning ‘a refugee’), and *azylant* ‘an asylum seeker’ that are used, e.g., in the administrative, legal discourse. *Migrant* and *imigrant*¹⁴ seem to be similarly associated with particular groups of people that are or were perceived as salient participants in migration in various time periods, e.g., *Afričan* ‘African’, *Róm* ‘Romani’, *muslim* ‘Muslim’, and *Syřan* ‘Syrian’. The connection to being illegal (*ilegál*) appears as well.

12 Source: <https://www.juls.savba.sk/sem%C3%A4/?lang=cs&kio=lemma&visualse=gnuplot&topn=24&wpos=emigrant&wneg=> (last accessed: July 31, 2024).
13 <https://www.juls.savba.sk/sem%C3%A4/?lang=cs&kio=lemma&visualse=gnuplot&topn=24&wpos=migrant&wneg=> (last accessed: July 31, 2024).
14 <https://www.juls.savba.sk/sem%C3%A4/?lang=cs&kio=lemma&visualse=gnuplot&topn=24&wpos=imigrant&wneg=> (last accessed: July 31, 2024).

The word embedding analysis of *emigrant* (see Figure 2.2) confirms the specific and complex meaning of this unit in contemporary Czech. It points towards three semantic areas:

- (a) people who were forced to leave the former Czechoslovakia during the communist regime, including the expulsion of (among others) the Sudeten Germans after WWII (see above). In this case, the analysis points out that these people left for the USA (see *Čechoameričan* ‘Czech-American’) and that some of them returned after 1989 when the communist regime ended (see *reemigrant* ‘re-emigrant’);
- (b) associations with various “types” of people who were leaving during the communist regime (*intelektuál* ‘an intellectual’, *vlastenec* ‘a patriot’, *disident* ‘a dissident’, [Č]echoslovák ‘Czechoslovak’) and with Jews during WWII (*Žid*);
- (c) various more general “labels” for migrating people and their subgroups (e.g., *utečenec* ‘a refugee’, *přivandrovalec* ‘an immigrant’, *přistěhovalec* ‘an immigrant’, *gastarbeiter* ‘a guest worker’).

In contrast to the three preceding lexical units, *exulant* appears to be strongly oriented towards the Czech population. The results of the word embedding analysis¹⁵ point towards three semantic areas that the lexeme covers:

- (a) the post-White Mountain¹⁶ non-Catholic emigration in the 17th century (e.g., *nekatolík* ‘non-Catholic’, *evangelík* ‘Evangelical’);
- (b) the forced expulsion of the Sudeten Germans after WWII or the emigration of people from the former Czechoslovakia after 1968 (see above and Bělina et al. 1992, 252–254; Rychlík 2015); which is related to
- (c) various expressions for people who were forced to leave (*disidenti* ‘dissidents’, *literáti* ‘writers’) and their persecution (e.g., *perzekuovaný* ‘persecuted’).

4.3.1.2 *Lexical Units Associated with Fleeing from Somewhere* (uprchlík, běženec, utečenec, *All Meaning* ‘a Refugee’)

The words *uprchlík* and *utečenec* clearly indicate a direction of motion away from somewhere, while the word *běženec* primarily indicates motion in general, but it can imply motion away from somewhere as well (see 4.3.3.1). The

15 <https://www.juls.savba.sk/sem%C3%A4/?lang=cs&kio=lemma&visualsel=gnuplot&topn=24&wpos=exulant&wneg=> (last accessed: July 31, 2024).

16 Battle on White Mountain on November 8, 1620; see above and Čornej et al. (1992, 285–288).

TABLE 2.2 *Uprchlík*, *běženec*, and *utečenec*: dominant text types, ipm, and years of the highest frequency

Lexical unit	Predominant text group	IPM	The highest number of occurrences
<i>uprchlík</i>	FIC	12.3	2012
<i>běženec</i>	NMG	0.83	2015
<i>utečenec</i>	NFC	1.33	2011

SOURCE: SYN_V8; KŘEN ET AL. 2019

analysis of these words in *Word at a Glance*¹⁷ reveals significant differences in frequencies. Table 2.2 shows the text types that the given word appears predominantly in, the ipm, and the year of the highest frequency (see above).

Uprchlík is the most frequent word. It has the most general meaning, and it does not refer exclusively to migration, since the word occurs frequently in fiction (FIC; it can refer to, for example, an escaped prisoner). However, most of the texts (over 90 %) are journalistic (NMG), and the collocations point towards migration. The frequency of the word *utečenec* corresponds to the frequency of the words *migrant*, *emigrant*, and *imigrant* mentioned above. The highest frequency of *utečenec* is in specialized literature (NFC). *Běženec* is the least frequent word and appears most often in journalistic texts (NMG).

The usage of the words shows interesting changes over time (see Figure 2.3). The frequency of *uprchlík* has been growing since 2002, with a mild decrease in 2015, followed by another wave of popularity. *Běženec* was relatively frequent from the 1990s until 2006, when the frequency started to decrease, but it has been growing again since 2015. The frequency of *utečenec* is more or less steady, but the word is quite rare overall. Its highest frequency was observed around the year 2011 and it has been gradually decreasing since.

As far as the **collocations** are concerned, the low frequency of *běženec* and *utečenec* is reflected in their “neutral” collocations (mostly function words, e.g., prepositions). Contrary to this, *uprchlík* (in the relevant context of migration) mostly collocates with adjectives denoting origin: *židovský* ‘Jewish’, *palestinský* ‘Palestinian’, *válečný* ‘war’, *severokorejský* ‘North Korean’, and *syrský* ‘Syrian’. It combines closely with the words *tábor* ‘camp’ and *Československo* ‘Czechoslovakia’ as well.

17 <https://www.korpus.cz/slovo-v-kostce/compare/cs/uprchl%C3%ADk--b%C4%9B%C5%BEenec--ute%C4%8Denec> (last accessed: July 31, 2024).

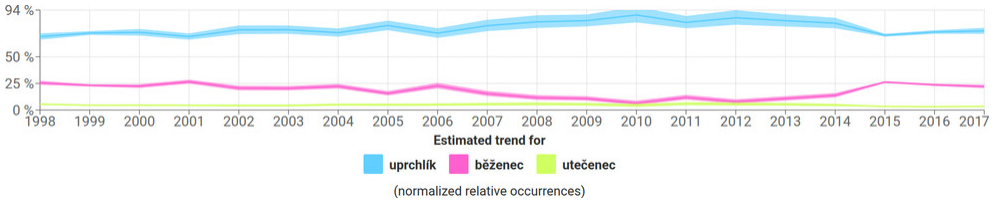


FIGURE 2.3 *Uprchlík, běženec, and utečenec*: changes in frequency between 1998 and 2017

SOURCE: SYN_V7; KŘEN ET AL. 2018

The **word embedding** analysis of *uprchlík*¹⁸ is quite similar to the word embedding analysis of *utečenec*, and it points towards two basic semantic areas: various institutions and facilities associated with migration (e.g., *uprchlický* ‘refugee-ADJ’, *utečenecký tábor* ‘refugee camp’) and other expressions for migrating people (e.g., *běženec* ‘a refugee’, *vysídlenec* ‘a forcibly displaced person’, *migrant* ‘a migrant’, *ilegál* ‘an illegal’, *imigrant* ‘an immigrant’). Some particular nationalities are mentioned as well, e.g., *kosovský Albánec* ‘Kosovo Albanian’, *Palastinec* ‘Palestinian’, *Iráčan* ‘Iraqi’, and *Syřan* ‘Syrian’. A female counterpart appears among the results as well (*uprchlice* ‘a refugee-F’). The word embedding analysis for *běženec* contains the words *utečenec*, *uprchlík* (both meaning ‘a refugee’), *uprchlice* ‘a refugee-F’, and *vysídlenec* ‘a forcibly displaced person’. Other areas cover nations from Africa and Asia (*Afghánec* ‘Afghan’, *Iráčan* ‘Iraqi’, *Syřan* ‘Syrian’, *Eritrejec* ‘Eritrean’) and religion (*muslim* ‘a Muslim’).

4.3.1.3 *Lexical Units Associated with Settling Somewhere* (*přistěhovelec* ‘an Immigrant’, *azylant* ‘an Asylum Seeker’)

The word *přistěhovelec* is more frequent, but the frequencies of both words are comparable. *Přistěhovelec* is more frequent in journalistic texts (NMG), while *azylant* is more frequent in specialized literature (NFC). The following table (Table 2.3) shows text types that the given word appears predominantly in, the ipm, and the year of the highest frequency (see below). The following figure (Figure 2.4) shows changes in frequencies of the two lexical units between 1998 and 2017 (see below as well).

The important **collocations** of *přistěhovelec* are *ilegální* ‘illegal’, *příliv* ‘high tide’, *legální* ‘legal’, *muslimský* ‘Muslim’, *irský* ‘Irish’, *potomek* ‘descendant’, and

18 <https://www.juls.savba.sk/sem%C3%A4/?lang=cs&kio=lemma&visualsel=gnuplot&topn=24&wpos=uprchl%C3%ADk&wneg=> (last accessed: July 31, 2024).

TABLE 2.3 *Přistěhovalec, azylant*: dominant text types, ipm, and years of the highest frequency

Lexical unit	Predominant text group	IPM	The highest number of occurrences
<i>přistěhovalec</i>	NMG	6.74	2005
<i>azylant</i>	NFC	1.12	2015

SOURCE: SYN_V8; KŘEN ET AL. 2019

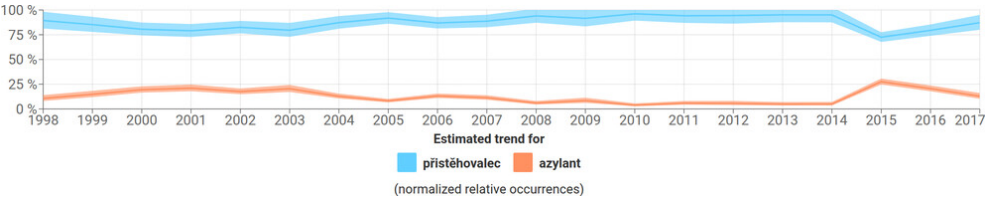


FIGURE 2.4 *Přistěhovalec, azylant*: changes in frequency between 1998 and 2017

SOURCE: SYN_V7; KŘEN ET AL. 2018

chudý ‘poor’. The analysis of collocations of *azylant* revealed only the function word *a* ‘and’, probably due to the low frequency of the word in the corpus.

The **word embedding** analyses of *přistěhovalec*¹⁹ and *azylant*²⁰ reveal, e.g., the word *cizinec* ‘a foreigner’. In addition to this, the word embedding analysis of *přistěhovalec* points towards lexical units such as *muslim* ‘a Muslim’ and *ile-gál* ‘an illegal’, and the word embedding analysis of *azylant* leads to *uprchlík* ‘a refugee’ and *Róm* ‘a Romani person’.

4.3.2 Contemporary Online Usage (2021–2023)

In order to capture the most recent state of the analyzed topic, we have decided to take into account data from the Online2_Archive of the Czech National Corpus (Cvrček, Jeziorský, and Henyš 2022) from the period April 2021 (archive)–November 2023. Online2_Archive continually monitors the content of the Czech Internet (the data are updated regularly, and therefore also change continually). The corpus contains approximately 10⁹ words and contains various

19 <https://www.juls.savba.sk/sem%C3%A4/?lang=cs&kio=lemma&visualsel=gnuplot&topn=24&wpos=p%C5%99gist%C4%9Bhovalec&wneg=> (last accessed: July 31, 2024).

20 <https://www.juls.savba.sk/sem%C3%A4/?lang=cs&kio=lemma&visualsel=gnuplot&topn=24&wpos=azylant&wneg=> (last accessed: July 31, 2024).

text types, such as Internet journalistic texts, some discussions, social media, etc.²¹ The corpus provides the most current information about the contemporary period, which is not covered by other corpora, but we are aware that some occurrences may be distorted by repetitive publishing, and that it is not possible to expect a similar quality of text treatment as in a “traditional” corpus. In the collocation analysis, we use the logDice²² on lemmas for the association measures, because the corpus is large, and the logDice can eliminate random collocations and highlight the important ones. However, due to the frequent repetition of entire texts in the corpus, even the logDice is not very reliable in this case.

Because of space limitations, we present results for *emigrant* ‘an emigrant’, *exulant* ‘an exile’, *imigrant* ‘an immigrant’, and *migrant* ‘a migrant’ only. In the case of *emigrant* and *exulant*, the feminine forms were present in the data as well (*emigrantka*, *exulantka*).

4.3.2.1 Emigrant, emigrantka ‘an Emigrant’ (Masculine, Feminine Form)

There are 2,922 instances of the word *emigrant* (ipm 2.15), but only 146 instances of the female form *emigrantka* (ipm 0.11). The plural forms of the generic masculine *emigrant* prevail, which agrees with other findings indicating that emigrants are often seen as a group. Contrary to this, singular forms of the female counterpart *emigrantka* are more frequent than the plural ones. The feminine noun tends to refer to individual people (e.g., *polská emigrantka* ‘Polish emigrant-F.SG’, *někdejší emigrantka Lída Rakušanová* ‘former emigrant-F.SG Lída Rakušanová’).

According to the corpus data, the word *emigrant* seems to be used in various general journalistic genres, and it does not seem to be significantly frequent in tabloid or anti-system websites. Important collocations of the masculine form *emigrant* in the corpus are the following: *kubánští emigranti* ‘Cuban emigrants’, *disident* ‘a dissident’, *exulant* ‘an exile’, *gruzínský* ‘Georgian’, *potomek* ‘descendant’, *Československo* ‘Czechoslovakia’, *dosídlení* ‘re-settlement’, *poúnorový* ‘post-February-ADJ’ (i.e., after February 1948 when the communist party took over the government, see Bělina et al. 1992, 264), *východoněmecký* ‘East German’, and *nezákonní* ‘illegal-ADJ.PL’.

The corpus data support our expectation that emigrants are currently understood mainly as those who have returned to the Czech Republic after the

21 See Cvrček, Jeziorský, and Henyš (2022).

22 See [https://wiki.korpus.cz/doku.php/pojmy:asociacni_miry#:~:text=Asocia%C4%8Dn%C3%AD%20m%C3%ADry%20\(association%20measures\)%20jsou%20matematic%C3%A9](https://wiki.korpus.cz/doku.php/pojmy:asociacni_miry#:~:text=Asocia%C4%8Dn%C3%AD%20m%C3%ADry%20(association%20measures)%20jsou%20matematic%C3%A9) (last accessed: July 31, 2024).

change of regime in 1989, as well as those who leave their countries (other than the Czech Republic). In the latter case, the country of origin tends to be emphasized (see *kubánští emigranti* above). To be more precise, *emigrant* often refers to people who emigrated from the former Czechoslovakia or other countries under the communist regime to the “West” (see 4.3.3.1 and 5), or from countries such as Cuba (emigration to the USA) or Georgia (emigration to Russia). A specific case of emigration from Greece to the former Czechoslovakia during the civil war in Greece in the 1940s appears as well.

The migration mentioned in the corpus is typically illegal and often politically motivated. In the case of Czech society, emigrants are often mentioned in contexts where the past of the country is dealt with, e.g., where those who have emigrated want to return to the Czech Republic and participate in its life or where those who had harmed them are discussed (e.g., trials involving the perpetrators). In some contexts, a potentially negative feeling in contemporary society towards emigrants who left Czechoslovakia and towards re-emigrants is mentioned, but this topic is not as salient as we had expected.

4.3.2.2 Exulant, exulantka ‘an Exile’ (*Masculine, Feminine Form*)

There are 670 instances of *exulant* in the corpus (ipm 0.49) and 8 instances of *exulantka*. However, the numbers are not reliable, as there are many repetitive instances in the corpus. The female form tends to be used in the singular and refer to individual women (e.g., *dokument iránské exulantky Mitry Farhaniové* ‘a documentary by an Iranian exile-F.S.G Mitra Farhani’), which is similar to the female form *emigrantka* (see above). Important collocations of *exulant* relevant for the context of migration are *pobělohorský* ‘post-White Mountain’ (after the battle on White Mountain in 1620, see above), *vzdělanec* ‘a scholar’, *talibánský* ‘Taliban-ADJ’, *kubánský* ‘Cuban’, *pronásledovaný* ‘persecuted’, *ujgurský* ‘Uighur-ADJ’, *tibetský* ‘Tibetan’, and *chartista* ‘a Chartist’ (a signator of *Charta 77*, a protest initiative against the communist regime from 1977; see Bělina et al. 1992, 303). Similarly to our other sources (see above), *exulant* in the contemporary online corpus refers to people who left the Czech region at the end of the 17th century, often for religious reasons (e.g., the noun is a part of a place name associated with them). It can refer to political exiles from other countries as well.

4.3.2.3 Imigrant ‘an Immigrant’

There are 8,647 instances of the male form *imigrant* in the corpus (ipm 6.36). Interestingly, the word seems to be relatively frequent in tabloid and anti-system websites. The word seems to be close to the word *migrant*, as both are used to refer to similar groups of people, often in the same text.

4.3.2.4 Migrant ‘a Migrant’

There are 60,848 instances of *migrant* in the corpus (ipm 44.77). The noun is used predominantly in the plural, which is similar to the other analyzed masculine forms. The word is frequent in the mainstream media as well as in the tabloids. The corpus allows us to list dates when the frequency of the word was highest on the Czech Internet. In the case of *migrant*, the highest frequency was noted on September 17, 2021, and then several days in the middle of November 2021, which was around the time of the parliamentary elections in the Czech Republic. The increase in frequency might indicate growing interest in the topic of migration at the time of elections (e.g., migration might have been used as one of the election topics), but we have not analyzed this question in detail.

The word *migrant* is typically a neutral, “official” lexical term referring to migrating people, and it appears mainly in neutral contexts. Important collocations of the word on the Czech Internet are rich and reflect various current topics associated with migration in the given period, including countries of origin of the migrating people, their destination countries, EU policy, means of transport, etc.: *legální* ‘legal’, *příliv* ‘high tide’, *ilegální* ‘illegal’, *Bělorusko* ‘Belarus’, *hranice* ‘border’, *převaděč* ‘trafficker’, *přijímání* ‘acceptance’, *zadržen* ‘detain’, *přerozdělování* ‘re-distribution’, *Afrika* ‘Africa’, *běloruský* ‘Belarusian’, *Sýrie* ‘Syria’, *Litva* ‘Lithuania’, *lod* ‘a ship’, *zadržený* ‘detained’, *legálně* ‘legally’, *Lukašenko* ‘Lukashenko’, *nastěhovat* ‘move in’, *převážet* ‘transport’, *kvóta* ‘quota’, *pašerák* ‘a smuggler’, *Minsk*, *bělorusko-polský* ‘Belarusian-Polish’, *muslimský* ‘Muslim-ADJ’, *východ* ‘East’, *člun* ‘a boat’, *přijímat* ‘accept’, *azyl* ‘asylum’, and *stře-dozemní* ‘Mediterranean’.

4.3.3 The Linguistic Image of Migration in Contemporary Czech

In this section, we present a reconstruction of the so-called *linguistic image* (*linguistic worldview*) of migration and migrating people in contemporary Czech. In accordance with Jerzy Bartmiński’s school of cognitive ethnolinguistics (Bartmiński 2009), we define *linguistic image* (called *linguistic worldview* by Bartmiński 2009) as an interpretation of the world that is present in language and, as such, tends to be transferred between generations within the given linguistic community (e.g., Bartmiński 2009, 23). A linguistic image of the world is connected to categorization and the values of the community (Bartmiński 2009, 67). The values are expressed in the language and in the way speakers use it (e.g., Bartmiński 2009, 39).

In our analysis, we reconstruct the linguistic image of migration and migrating people from lexical exponents available in contemporary Czech, namely the inventory of lexical units presented in sections 3 and 4.3 above, and further

data retrieved from dictionaries of Czech (especially Klégr 2007). We focus on Czech in the 21st century, but we are aware that the interpretation of the world fixated in language often has a much longer tradition. In the case of migration, changes in meaning and evaluation fixated in language between the totalitarian period (see 4.2) and today (see 4.3), and differences between older speakers who have experienced the totalitarian language and younger speakers without this experience, are especially important. This topic deserves more detailed research, but due to the limited size of the chapter, we have to leave it aside. In the following sections, we present how contemporary speakers of Czech “see” migrating people, including the various perspectives (profiles, see Bartmiński 2009) they conceptualize migration from.

The linguistic image reconstructed from this type of linguistic data reveals several profiles or “facets” (see Bartmiński 2009) of the contemporary “Czech” conceptualization of migrating people, some of them related to the culture-specific dimensions of othering (see 5). We divide them into four basic sub-types: space and motion-based profiles; temporal profiles; social profiles; and quantity profiles.

4.3.3.1 *Profiles Based on Space, Motion, and Direction of Motion*

Space, motion, and direction are the most prominent features in the Czech linguistic image of migration. Many lexical units reflect motion and its direction in their morphological structure: they are derived from words (especially verbs) denoting such types of motion as “moving”, “running”, or “fleeing,” and/or they contain prefixes with directional meaning. The verbs used in the word-formation processes are, for example, *běžet* ‘to run’ (e.g., *běženec* ‘a refugee’), *prchnout* ‘to flee’ (e.g., *uprchlík* ‘a refugee’, derived from the prefixed verb *uprchnout* ‘to flee away’), *stěhovat* ‘to move, to migrate’ (e.g., *přistěhovalec* ‘an immigrant’, derived from the prefixed verb *přistěhovat* ‘to move in’). Motion is apparent in the words of foreign origin as well (*migrovat* ‘to migrate’, e.g., *migrant*, *emigrant*, *imigrant*). The prefixes used in this context are, e.g., *vy-*, *u-*, and *při-*. They specify the direction of motion (e.g., *při-* tends to denote motion towards the goal and thus profiles the motion as ‘coming’). The lexical units that profile motion and direction of motion can be thus interpreted as related to the CONTAINER metaphor (see 2) and conceptualizing migration as motion within, out of, or into the given region conceptualized as a container.

The spatial profile focuses on the source of the movement, and it differentiates between people coming from another part of “our” place or country, the Czech Republic (i.e., internal migration), and from some other country (i.e., immigration). In the case of internal migration within the Czech Republic, the notion of “our” place can be relatively narrow, e.g., a village, and the category

“they” typically refers to “new” inhabitants that have moved to the location from some other part of the “Czech region”. Lexical exponents for “them” in this context are, e.g., *ten nový* ‘the new one’, *novousedlík* ‘newly settled’, or *přespolní* ‘coming across the field’. Some lexical units have negative evaluative meanings (e.g., *náplava* ‘somebody brought by a flood’).

The vocabulary used for people who come from other countries (immigration, which is the core topic of our analysis) is much richer. The choice of a particular term frequently reflects the country or region of origin: people coming from different countries or regions may be referred to by different lexical units. In this case, the *East versus West* opposition, which we have defined as a specific case of folk geography, based more on psychological than geographical factors (see 5 as well), seems to be the most salient culture-related influencing factor. Our analysis has traced some changes in the *East versus West* opposition as well: the delimitation and evaluation of each of the “poles” of the opposition were different in the totalitarian period (see 4.2, where the results are limited to the official propagandistic discourse) and today (see below).

In contemporary Czech, the “West” seems to be associated with prestige and pertains to countries that are seen by Czech speakers as “rich”, highly developed, “safe”, as political and societal models for the Czech Republic, etc. This is, among others, related to the idea that economic prosperity is linked to political freedom. The “West” encompasses, for example, so-called Western Europe, Northern America, and even some countries that are not geographically “Western” to the Czech Republic, but fit its “psychological profile”, such as Japan and Australia.²³ People coming to the Czech Republic from these regions can be referred to by their nationality or citizenship (e.g., *Američan* ‘American’, *Němec* ‘German’), their foreign origin (e.g., *cizinec* ‘a foreigner’, *cizí státní příslušník* ‘a foreign state national’, or units containing the adjective *zahraniční* ‘foreign; from across the border’). The expression *expat* is used in some cases as well. Contrary to this, expressions such as *migrant*, *uprchlík*, *běženec* are usually not used to refer to this group (this usage is influenced by the fact that some of the lexical units function as legal terms as well, i.e., a person has to fulfill some conditions to become, e.g., a refugee or an asylum seeker).

The “East” is associated with lower prestige, poverty, danger, being underdeveloped, or being “worse” than the Czech Republic. Within the folk geography, the “East” probably covers some (but not all) countries from the for-

23 The delimitation of the folk concepts of “East” and “West” and their changes over time call for further research. The position of most African countries is unclear as well.

mer “communist” regions and some countries from the Middle East and Asia. The “East” tends to be associated with involuntary migration and/or migration for safety, economic, religious, or political reasons. Labels such as *migrant* ‘a migrant’ or *uprchlík* ‘a refugee’ are used for people coming from such regions.

Some groups of people (e.g., Slovaks) appear to be seen as specific and outside the *East versus West* opposition. This can be attributed to the historical context (e.g., the existence of Czechoslovakia as a common state in the 20th century) and the closeness of languages and cultures.

The direction of migration is another salient profile. Expressions such as *imigrant* ‘an immigrant’ or lexical units with the prefix *při-* (e.g., *přistěhovalec* ‘an immigrant’) profile the motion towards a goal, e.g., towards the place occupied by “us”. Other expressions (e.g., *uprchlík* ‘a refugee’, *emigrant* ‘an emigrant’, and lexical units with *vy-*, such as *vystěhovalec* ‘an emigrant’), are associated with motion away from some place, e.g., away from “us” or away from some other place. More complex motion, for instance, motion away from some country and a later return to it can be profiled as well (e.g., *reemigrant* ‘a re-emigrant’). A certain direction of motion is implied even in lexical units that seem to be formally neutral from this point of view (e.g., *migrant*, *beženec*, both meaning ‘a migrant’): a person referred to by these lexemes is typically fleeing from a place that is not good or safe to a better one. Several lexical units form directional opposites, e.g., *imigrant* ‘an immigrant’—*emigrant* ‘an emigrant’, *přistěhovalec* ‘an immigrant’—*vystěhovalec* ‘an emigrant’, but the formation of directional opposites is not consistent. In the case of *vyhnanec*, ‘a forcibly displaced person’, not only the direction of motion but also the fact that the migration was **forced** are profiled.

4.3.3.2 *Temporal Profiles*

Time is reflected in the analyzed lexical units in two ways: how long the stay of the given person is going to be, and whether it is temporary or permanent. Both dimensions have blurred boundaries and are interwoven. People who stay temporarily (and voluntarily) and typically for a shorter period are labeled as “tourists” or “guests”, e.g., *turista* ‘a tourist’, *návštěvník* ‘a visitor’, *návštěva* ‘a visit’, or *host* ‘a guest’, with some differences in associations regarding the closeness of the relationship between the visiting person and the local inhabitants. People who stay long-term or even permanently either do not have a specific label, or they are referred to by expressions such as *cizinec* ‘a foreigner’, *cizí státní příslušník* ‘a foreign state national’, *migrant* ‘a migrant’, *uprchlík* ‘a refugee’, etc. The usage of these lexical units depends on the context and seems to be related to the country of origin and reasons why the person has come to the Czech Republic (see above).

4.3.3.3 *Social Profiles*

The lexical units used for migrating people reflect certain social aspects as well. For example, *gastarbeiter* ‘a guest worker’ or *zahraniční dělník* ‘a worker from abroad’ are typically used to refer to people doing unqualified work. People in qualified or prestigious positions tend to be referred to by a more specific noun (e.g., a specification of their profession) and an adjective stating their “foreign” origin (e.g., *zahraniční vědec* ‘a scientist from abroad, a foreign scientist’). General expressions such as *zahraniční zaměstnanec* ‘an employee from abroad, a foreign employee’ can refer to people of various positions.

Interestingly, the **religion** of migrating people does not seem to play an important role in the linguistic image of migration, and there are no frequent lexical exponents that specifically profile the religion of the people who are coming to the Czech Republic. Religion is sometimes reflected in the discourse, especially when it is different from the religious tradition of the Czech Republic (lexical units such as, e.g., *muslim* ‘a Muslim’ are used). The “lack of interest” in religion may be the result of the contemporary religious situation in the Czech Republic (see 5).

4.3.3.4 *Quantity Profiles*

The factor of quantity, i.e., the number of people coming to the Czech Republic at a given time or from a given region, is not reflected in the vocabulary itself, but it influences the usage of the language, i.e., in figurative expressions. For example, large numbers of migrating people are associated with danger and conceptualized by dehumanizing metaphors (see Musolff 2015) such as *příliv migrantů* ‘high tide of migrants’ or *migrační vlna* ‘migration wave’ that both conceptualize migrating people as a large amount of water entering the metaphorical container inhabited by “us” (see the CONTAINER metaphor in 2).

5 Conclusion: Culture-Specific Features Relevant to the Discourse on Migration in Czech

The analysis of lexical units used by Czech speakers to refer to migrating people, based on data from dictionaries and selected corpora of the Czech language, has several components: a) an overview of the linguistic means used to conceptualize migrating people as the others in the period from Old Czech to Early Modern Czech (4.1); b) a case study of meanings, connotations, and context of selected relevant lexical units in the official propagandistic discourse in the totalitarian period of the Czech history between 1948 and 1989 (4.2);

c) a comparison of the meanings, collocations, and context of the key lexical units denoting migrating people in contemporary Czech, including the most recent Internet discourse (4.3.1, 4.3.2); and d) a sketch of a contemporary linguistic image of migration and migrating people with several different profiles (e.g., spatial, directional, motion, temporal, social, quantitative; 4.3.3).

We are aware that (despite our attempt to triangulate the data from various sources) our research is limited, and further research in multiple directions would be desirable. For example, we have focused on nouns used by Czech speakers to refer explicitly to migrating people, but research into other linguistic means (e.g., other parts of speech, more complex syntactic and discourse phenomena) and implicit othering (e.g., figurative language) would be desirable. We have used corpora, which means that our results are dependent on their size and content and that we have worked with contexts of limited size (e.g., up to a paragraph); an analysis of larger and more complex contexts would be fruitful as well. We have covered only selected periods, but the historical development of othering in the context of migration is much more complex. Finally, we know that the discourse on migration is influenced by the self-stereotypes of Czechs as well, because the delimitation of “us” and “the other” is interwoven. This topic has not been covered by our research, but it deserves further investigation.

Despite all the above-mentioned limitations, our analysis has pointed towards several factors related to the Czech culture that influence the process of othering in the context of migration. The most general influencing factor is the community’s **experience with migration**. Czech culture is not nomadic, and it has been settled in the given region for a long time, even though the precise delimitation of the region has changed through history.

The large repertoire of expressions for migrating people in various historical periods signals that the fact that these people are “on the move” has been attracting the attention of Czech speakers for a long time and that the community felt the need to have specific linguistic means to describe these people. Specific experiences with migration and with freedom of movement (or the lack thereof) are also reflected in the Czech language and its use, as illustrated by changes in the denotative and connotative meanings of some expressions in different historical periods (e.g., changes related to *emigrant* ‘an emigrant’). The fact that somebody is moving away from the given region is worth the special attention of speakers as well. The perception of mass migration may also change over time, for example, what might be perceived as a mass migration today, could have been conceptualized as individual migration in the Middle Ages.

The linguistic image of migrating people in Czech (see 4.3.3) shows that the fact that someone has come to the region from elsewhere is interrelated with other factors, such as the length and purpose of their intended stay, and their number, country or region of origin, and various social features.

The most salient distinction reflected in the data is **the *East versus West* opposition**, which is a socio-psychological distinction rather than a geographic one. It is influenced by the historical experience of the community, and we interpret it as a case of **folk (lay) geography**. The delimitation of the “East” and the “West” is relatively vague and deserves further research. Our analysis has revealed at least two versions of this opposition. The first version was from the official propagandistic discourse from the totalitarian period (see 4.2) and was influenced by the ideological division of the world during the second half of the 20th century and the ideology of the communist regime in the former Czechoslovakia. For example, it conceptualized the “West” highly negatively. Another version of the opposition manifests itself in contemporary Czech in a certain tendency to “degrade” the so-called “East” and the people coming from this region and to “admire” or “idealize” the “West” and people coming from there. This represents two different types of othering: a tendency to degrade the other (in relation to the “East”) and the tendency for a simplified idealization of the other (in relation to the “West”). Both tendencies are traceable in our data.

Othering in Czech differs depending on the **social status** of those who are coming to the Czech Republic, and this factor seems to be relatively strongly associated with the *East versus West* opposition. Some groups of people tend to be associated with unqualified work and poverty (often those coming from the “East”), while others are associated with prestigious and well-paid positions (often those coming from the “West”). The distinction is manifested in the different lexemes used to refer to the two groups of people (see above).

The conceptualization of migrating people depends on their amount as well (**the quantitative factor**). High numbers of people may be conceptualized as a danger, and this may lead to dehumanizing naming strategies and metaphors.

Initially, we expected **language** and **religion** to be significant factors in othering in Czech, but these factors have not manifested themselves saliently in our data. We know (e.g., Hroch 1999) that good knowledge of Czech is an important feature of in-group membership. However, our data focus on the moment when somebody is coming (or leaving), which is not a moment when language is as important (language becomes more important once one is settled somewhere), therefore, it is not reflected strongly in our material. Our data reveal one period when religion played an important role in the emigration of

people from the Czech region—the religiously motivated emigration of non-Catholic people during the forced re-Catholization after 1620. Currently, interest in migrating people's religion is weak, which might be related to the fact that Czech society today is secularized, with a diminishing role for religion, especially in its “institutionalized” form (e.g., Havlíček, Klingorová, Lysák et al. 2017, 10).

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PART 2

Naming for Othering in an Identity Debate



Naming the Other in Croatian Purist Discourse: A Study of Croatian Online Forum Debates

Iva Petrak

1 Introduction

The concept of language as a bearer of identity has long been recognized (e.g., Sapir 1921; Whorf 1956; Labov 1966; Hymes 1974; Bourdieu 1991; Fishman 1991; Assman 1999). It is widely understood that language is not merely a tool for communication but also a fundamental component in shaping and expressing cultural identity. Language serves as the carrier of history, traditions, and values, playing a crucial role in preserving collective memory and cultural identity. Within this framework, shared identity presupposes commonalities among those who share the same history, traditions, and values, while simultaneously highlighting distinctions from those who do not. This is also true for linguistic identity. The perception of shared linguistic identity inherently involves a notion of *otherness* based on linguistic norms and values. This tension and interplay between linguistic sameness and difference frequently become popular topics in both expert and non-expert discourses, and often manifest in discursive struggles where speakers negotiate and renegotiate the boundaries between (linguistic) values and identities.

In the Croatian context, language has consistently played a vital role in identity-building. Throughout history, it has served as both a carrier and a symbol of Croatian national consciousness and identity. This role has been particularly significant given Croatia's extensive history under foreign rule, where the preservation and promotion of the Croatian language became essential for maintaining a distinct national identity and resisting political and cultural assimilation pressures (see section 3.2 for more details). As a result, the language has frequently been central to scholarly and popular discussions and debates. In this regard, language debates in Croatia have often been accompanied by linguistic purism, which served a differentiating function and played a key role in negotiating the relationship between in-groups and out-groups. The interplay between linguistic purism and identity reflects broader sociopolitical dynamics and the enduring importance of language as a marker of collective identity.

This chapter explores the landscape of puristic language debates in contemporary Croatian discourse. Since Croatia has been an independent sovereign country since 1991, this examination aims to uncover how Croatian linguistic and national identities are negotiated and renegotiated within puristic discourse through delineation from other languages and varieties in the contemporary context. It also seeks to identify the underlying (language) ideologies driving this discourse. Additionally, the chapter analyzes how “the other” is delineated in the discourse and what labels are employed to this end.

2 Language Debates and Identity

Socioculturally driven beliefs, perceptions, and expectations about language are evident in various forms of language use and frequently become subjects of detailed metadiscursive discussions. These discussions, which focus on language as a topic or a target and in which language ideologies are expressed, can be subsumed under the term *language ideological debates*. Jan Blommaert defines *language ideological debates* as patterns of “interrelated discourse activities often with a fuzzy beginning and the end, of which we usually remember the highlights, the most intense and polarized episodes” (Blommaert 1999, 9). These debates typically revolve around issues such as the purity and impurity of languages, the social value of different languages and their varieties compared to others, the sociopolitical desirability of using one language or variety over another, the symbolic significance of languages and varieties as national symbols, their cultural authenticity, or any other similar issue. Regardless of the specific topic, these debates are always embedded in a larger historical and sociopolitical context. These discussions unfold through a series of interactions involving various social actors, such as politicians, policymakers, academic and non-academic experts, interested members of the public, and the media.

The discursive struggle of language ideological debates develops over different definitions of social realities and values. In the process, “various representations of reality are pitted against each other—discursively—with the aim of gaining authority for one particular representation” (Blommaert 1999, 10). As such, language ideological debates provide a space where identities are continuously shaped and reshaped through the negotiation and renegotiation of values, with the boundaries established in this process acting as reference points for the positioning of self and other. In this regard, Bucholtz and Hall’s (2004, 371) explanation of the connection between identity negotiation and the dynamics of “self and other” effectively captures this dichotomy. They observe

that the perception of a shared identity necessitates the presence of an “other”, against whom those considered similar are contrasted. Thus, shared values presuppose a shared identity that is differentiated from those whose identity is based on different values.

When the topic of the language debate is puristic in nature, the dynamic of “self” and “other” formation becomes particularly evident. Discussions about the purity and impurity of language revolve around notions of acceptability or unacceptability of certain elements, delineating what should be included in a language, and what should not. This process highlights what is considered “inherent” to the language versus what is deemed “foreign”. Therefore, the phenomenon of purism can be fundamentally understood as “an articulation of changes in relations between the Self and Others in the medium of language” (Jernudd 1989, 5). The following section provides a brief look into the notion of linguistic purism in order to show how puristic discourses serve as a productive framework for negotiating values and identities, especially national identity. Additionally, it addresses the particular sociopolitical importance of linguistic purism within the Croatian context, considering historical and contemporary perspectives.

3 Linguistic Purism

3.1 *Linguistic Purism: Defining Characteristics*

Linguistic purism is often perceived in popular discourse as merely the rejection of foreign elements in a language. However, this is a rather narrow definition that fails to capture the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon. Linguistic purism encompasses a broad range of activities and attitudes at different levels aimed at preserving, restoring, or revitalizing a language’s perceived purity. Additionally, as we will see, linguistic purism is deeply intertwined with cultural, political, and historical contexts, reflecting broader concerns about national identity, cultural heritage, and social cohesion.

Various attempts have been made to define and describe *linguistic purism* in the scholarly literature (Barnes 1854; Hall 1942; Axmanova 1966; Auty 1973; Ševčík 1974; Keipert 1977). However, two comprehensive and functional descriptions stand out. Thomas (1991) defines *linguistic purism* as follows:

Purism is the manifestation of a desire on the part of a speech community (or some section of it) to preserve a language from, or rid it of, putative foreign elements or other elements held to be undesirable (including those originating in dialects, sociolects, and styles of the same language). It may

be directed at all linguistic levels but primarily the lexicon. Above all, purism is an aspect of the codification, cultivation, and planning of standard languages.

THOMAS 1991, 12

Thomas's definition highlights that linguistic purism is not merely about rejecting foreign elements but also involves the societal desire to maintain and cultivate a language. It underscores the elitist aspect of purism and its integral role in language planning and standardization. Purism is as much about the rejection of undesirable elements as it is about the preservation of desirable ones. At the same time, it can target not only external foreign elements but also internal elements, such as dialecticisms or jargon, and can apply to all levels of language, not just vocabulary. Thomas emphasizes the social dimension of puristic practices but acknowledges that a sociological approach alone is insufficient to fully account for them. In this sense, linguistic purism emerges from social practices projected onto language, reflecting situated language use.

The societal role of linguistic purism is also emphasized by Annamalai (1989), who describes *linguistic purism* as follows:

a linguistic manifestation of a social act to reject dominance and assert self-identity. It arises in certain contexts of social conflict and it is an indicator of change in the structure of social control. It is a societal and not an individual phenomenon.

ANNAMALAI 1989, 230

The motivation for purism is its defining characteristic and a prerequisite for classifying it as such. Therefore, the mere rejection of non-native elements is insufficient for a phenomenon to be classified as puristic; the act must be value-laden to be considered puristic. In this context, linguistic purism, as the acceptance or rejection of particular elements, can be seen as a manifestation of identity construction and an articulation of changes in relations between the "self" and "others" through the medium of language (Jernudd 1989: 5). The puristic discourse surrounding the (un)desirability of certain linguistic elements serves as a platform for identity negotiation and renegotiation. An analysis of puristic discourse patterns can reveal underlying concepts of identity construction, showing how speakers position themselves in relation to external influences and within their community. In this regard, the notion of *purism* is closely related to the concepts of *nation*, *national identity*, and *national consciousness*. The role of national consciousness in the formation of purism is so significant that purism is often considered an epiphenomenon of nation-

alism (Thomas 1991, 43). Targets of puristic activity are often identified with cultures perceived as threats to national integrity. The perceived menace to the national language from external elements is usually based on a fear of foreign domination, primarily on the linguistic level, but also on the levels of culture, politics, or religion (Thomas 1991, 43–49). Linguistic purism is thus directed at what appears to be the most threatening foreign language or linguistic variety in the given circumstances. This is not absolute, as the targets can change over time or with shifts in political or social circumstances.

This perspective provides the framework for examining and analyzing Croatian puristic discourse in this chapter. It must be understood within the historical and sociopolitical contexts that have surrounded and shaped it. To this end, the following section will provide a brief overview of the sociohistorical circumstances of Croatian purism throughout the history of the Croatian literary language.

3.2 *History of Linguistic Purism in Croatia*

Linguistic purism in Croatian is based on a long tradition dating back to the Renaissance. As Turk notes:

In the Croatian language, the aspiration for linguistic purity has always been clearly expressed. It has been present in the Croatian literary language since its beginnings and has marked its entire history.

TURK 1996, 69; translation mine

In the Renaissance, authors who wrote in Croatian sought to preserve the purity of the language by avoiding or banning foreign words. These efforts reflected the geopolitical and sociopolitical conditions of the Croatian-speaking regions. The northern and inland parts of Croatia were under the control of the Habsburg Monarchy, while the coastal regions, particularly Dalmatia, were largely dominated by the Republic of Venice, which exerted significant influence from the early medieval period until the late 18th century. Meanwhile, the southeastern parts of Croatia, along with areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina, were under the influence or direct control of the Ottoman Empire, which gradually expanded into Croatia during the 15th and 16th centuries, creating a complex and often changing political landscape.¹ In this context, as Turk observes:

Linguistic purism in the Croatian language needs to be viewed within the context in which it originated to be understood: historically, it has often

¹ For a more detailed history of Croatian literary language, see Vince (1990), Moguš (1993).

been identified with resistance to the encroachments of other entities and the assimilation of the Croatian language, which has been exposed to influences from Latin, Italian, Turkish, Hungarian, German, and Serbian languages.

TURK, 1996, 68; translation mine

The first clear, albeit implicit, indications of purism in the Croatian language can be found in the works of Dalmatian dramatists and poets of the 16th and 17th centuries. Explicit purist tendencies are particularly evident in the writings of early Croatian authors, who often expressed dissatisfaction with the degree of purity of the Croatian language in the prefaces to their works. For example, Petar Zoranić (1536) noted that the Croatian language was replete with Italian words, while Pavao Ritter Vitezović (1684) lamented that people from the local regions used too many foreign words (Samardžija 1997, 165).

The Renaissance was also a period when language academies were founded, inspired by the Italian *Accademia della Crusca*, which aimed to preserve linguistic purity. Following these European trends, Croatian academies sought to build and standardize a national language, accompanied by strong purist efforts against foreign influences. At the same time, they showed great openness towards incorporating Croatian dialects.² The purist tendencies are also observable in the first dictionaries that were being published at the time. These tendencies are manifested by the avoidance of foreign elements, and a preference for neologisms and loan translations can be recognized (Samardžija 1997, 166).

Efforts to achieve linguistic purity continued into the 18th century, most notably expressed by the Slavonian writer Matija Antun Reljković. He spoke out strongly against the use of Turkish words in the Croatian language, believing that the local population possessed sufficient native words to name every object (Kostanjevac and Tomas 2010, 237).

In the 19th century, purist aspirations were interwoven with ideas of national rebirth and standardization efforts, as is clear from the lexicography of the time. Germanisms from the Zagreb area, Italianisms from Dalmatia, and Turkisms and Hungarianisms from the region of Slavonia were denied access to dictionaries, even though they were widely used in the vernacular (Thomas 1996, 53). On the other hand, loan translations from other Slavic languages were permitted if they could be fully adapted to the Croatian language, as this corresponded to the Illyrian-Panslavist ideology, which was widespread at that time.

2 For Croatian language academies, see Košutar and Tafra (2010).

Purist disputes continued in large numbers in the second half of the 19th century, but these were no longer directed solely against linguistic elements from other languages but also against Croatian dialecticisms. In line with the establishment of the Štokavian dialect as the dialectal basis for the standard Croatian language, Štokavian became the benchmark for linguistic correctness toward the end of the 19th century.

The 20th century was characterized by the issue of the position of the Croatian standard language within the Štokavian continuum, which encompassed Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Montenegro. After World War I and the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, increasing linguistic unitarism restricted the use of Croatian. During World War II, the Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska* (NDH)) emerged as a puppet state influenced by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, existing from 1941 to 1945. The regime, led by the *Ustaše* movement, pursued radical nationalist policies, including efforts to shape Croatian national identity through various means, notably linguistic purism. Linguistic purism in the NDH emphasized removing foreign influences from the Croatian language, particularly Serbian linguistic elements, and promoting the revival of archaic terms and orthographic rules.³

After World War II, the newly established socialist Yugoslavia reversed many of the policies of the NDH, adopting a more inclusive approach towards the languages spoken in its constituent republics. However, nationalist and purist sentiments persisted. The trend towards linguistic unitarism resurfaced, with the official language policy promoting the concept of Serbo-Croatian as a unified language. This led to a distancing of the Croatian language from the strong Serbian influence, and a clear demarcation between the two standard languages emerged (Turk 1996, 73), reflecting the political situation in moderate linguistic purism. In the late 1960s, systematic efforts to suppress the Croatian language intensified nationalist sentiments, strengthening purist tendencies within the linguistic sphere. In 1967, *Matica hrvatska*, a prominent cultural institution, along with other Croatian intellectual organizations, issued the "Declaration on the Name and Status of the Croatian Literary Language". This declaration was a formal assertion of the distinctiveness of the Croatian language and a protest against its perceived marginalization within the Serbo-Croatian framework. It demanded equal recognition of Croatian as a separate and autonomous literary language. The advocacy for linguistic purism and the assertion of Croatian language distinctiveness had significant political and cultural implications.

3 For the language in the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), see Samardžija (2008).

It was part of a broader Croatian national movement seeking greater autonomy within Yugoslavia. The 1970s witnessed escalating tensions, culminating in the Croatian Spring—a political movement advocating for increased rights for Croatia, including linguistic rights. The movement was suppressed by the Yugoslav government, but it left a lasting impact on Croatian national consciousness.

During the war of independence in the 1990s, linguistic purism and prescriptivism were particularly prominent in Croatian language discussions. Purist tendencies were focused on eliminating Serbian elements from Croatian, leading to intense debates, prescriptive manuals, language guides, and dictionaries on differences between Serbian and Croatian (e.g., Brodnjak 1991). According to Thomas (1991, 180), Croatian speakers had developed a collective awareness over time regarding language correctness and appropriateness. This was especially evident in the lexical hierarchy and distinguishing function between standard and non-standard forms or synonym pairs, where non-standard forms often overlapped with Serbian standard forms.

One of the primary objectives of linguistic purism in the 1990s was to eliminate or substitute words shared with the Serbian standard language. This was part of a broader effort to purify Croatia from foreign influences and emphasize its unique characteristics. Lexical purism involved reviving archaic Croatian terms or creating new words to replace those borrowed from Serbian or other languages. Such expressions and language use were often referred to in public discourse as *Novohrvatski* 'New Croatian'.

4 Data Set and Analytical Framework

For the present study, I utilized a self-compiled corpus of computer-mediated texts derived from Croatia's largest online forum platform, Forum.hr. The corpus comprised forum posts extracted from 25 threads identified as puristic. The process of compiling the corpus commenced with a preliminary search on the platform, specifically within the subforum *Jezikoslovlje* 'Linguistics', to locate discourses classified as language-critical purist discussions. This initial exploration involved a manual examination of forum contents and threads to confirm the presence and productivity of such discourses. Once established, further identification of relevant threads was conducted using targeted search terms in conjunction with "Forum.hr" on the Google search engine. The keywords employed included *purizam* 'purism', *puristički* 'puristic', *jezični purizam* 'linguistic purism', *purist* 'purist', *čistoća jezika* 'linguistic purity', *jezično čistunstvo* 'linguistic puritanism', *čisti jezik* 'pure language', *čisti hrvatski jezik*

'pure Croatian language', *čuvanje jezika* 'language preservation', *njega jezika* 'language care', *njegovanje jezika* 'nurturing the language', *strane riječi* 'foreign words', *posuđenice* 'loanwords', *tudice* 'foreignisms', *novokovanice* 'newly coined words', *neologizmi* 'neologisms', *anglizmi* 'anglicisms', *anglicizmi* 'anglicisms', and *srbizmi* 'Serbisms'. Each potentially relevant forum thread identified through this method underwent a meticulous manual inspection to ensure relevance and adherence to predefined inclusion criteria for the corpus. The final corpus comprised a total of 5,216 posts amounting to 528,972 words. The posts spanned the period from September 2006 to March 2023.⁴

The corpus analysis was conducted using the theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis. To bridge the gap between micro and macro levels, particularly language use and the construction, negotiation, and perpetuation of identity and ideology, the study employed Norman Fairclough's approach of "textually oriented discourse analysis" (Fairclough 1992, 2003). This approach examines texts as products of social events that both shape and are shaped by social structures and practices (Fairclough 2003, 2–3). The study focused on the linguistic features of evaluation and modality. According to Fairclough, the textual structuring of evaluation and modality can be used to explore underlying identities and ideologies in discourse by examining what "authors commit themselves to, with respect to what is true and what is necessary (modality), and with respect to what is desirable or undesirable, good or bad (evaluation)" (Fairclough 2003, 164). These features helped identify and organize speakers' attitudes and emerging patterns.⁵

4 The period from the year 2000 to the present has been identified as the contemporary period in Croatian linguistic discourse, marked by the following three significant sociocultural and political changes: (1) The turn of the millennium saw the Internet become an essential tool for communication. The increased interest and adoption of Internet technology greatly influenced communication practices and linguistic trends. (2) Franjo Tuđman, the first president of the independent Republic of Croatia, died on December 10, 1999. His death symbolized the end of an era characterized by the war for independence and the language policies associated with it. (3) In January 2000, the Social Democratic Party of Croatia, in coalition with the Croatian Social Liberal Party, won the national parliamentary elections. This victory marked a significant change in Croatia's political and linguistic landscape, ushering in a new period of governance and policy-making that influenced the linguistic discourse in the country.

5 Here, I would like to acknowledge the ethical-methodological concerns that accompany the use of computer-mediated data for linguistic research. The use and publication of authentic real-life examples arise from the blurred lines of privacy on the Internet, particularly regarding informed consent, privacy protection, and anonymity of research subjects. In line with this, when presenting examples, this study adheres to ethical principles concerning privacy and anonymity on the Internet. Following Bruckman's "moderate disguise" approach (2004, 229), direct quotes were utilized while altering names, pseudonyms, and identifiable details to

Attitudes and beliefs of non-linguists have been recognized as a legitimate branch of contemporary linguistics (Preston 1993, 1994, 1996; Niedzielski and Preston 2000; Garrett 2010), seeking to investigate laypeople's views on language. This field aims to understand how non-linguists perceive language development, what they consider good or bad language qualities, and their general beliefs about language. Language attitudes create or reinforce realities and communities through language ideologies, stereotypes, and myths, making them crucial for studying identity construction and reproduction.

Additionally, the representation of social actors and identity construction was examined through the lens of structuring pronouns and associated identifiers. The notion that personal pronouns, especially in political discourse, play a significant role in representing socio-political ideologies provides valuable insights into the social landscape and the ideologies that shape it. Pronouns serve as fundamental grammatical tools that create distinctions between various groups. Specifically, deictic pronouns are frequently employed to establish the “us” versus “them” dichotomy and to structure in-groups and out-groups (Wodak 2001; 2009).

5 Data Analysis

The corpus analysis revealed that contemporary Croatian puristic discourse centers on two distinct “targets”, representing two external linguistic influences perceived as threats to the integrity of the Croatian language. The first topic frequently addressed in language debates concerns the influence of English as an international language, whose pervasive use in everyday language is seen as encroaching upon Croatian.

- (1) *Čitao sam izjavu jednog našeg jezikoslovca koji prilično olako shvaća ovu navalu anglizacije hrvatskog. Kao, to je pomodarstvo koje će otići kao što je i došlo ... Meni se, pak, čini da je to jedna jako duboka promjena i da će je biti jaako teško, možda i nemoguće, zaustaviti. [**] Jednostavno, kad trebaju sastaviti neku rečenicu, ljudima se prvo u glavi javi sjećanje na rečenicu koju su pročitali u literaturi pisanoj na engleskom, na prizor iz američkog filma*

safeguard participant anonymity. Although the topic under investigation is not highly sensitive, no directly identifiable personal data from the forum threads were included in the study to ensure participant confidentiality. Even pseudonyms used by participants on Forum.hr were not used to maintain anonymity. For ethics and Internet research, see Ess, Jones, and AoIR 2002; Bruckman 2004; Franzke et al. 2019; Stommel and Rijk 2021; Sugiura 2016.

ili na prilog sa CNN-a. Kad hoćeš precizno opisati neki osjećaj, prizor, misao padne ti na pamet da si TOČNO to vidio opisano u nedavno pročitanoj romanu na engleskom i povučesh jednu ili više riječi od tamo ... Čisti refleksi. Jednostavno, i engleski postaje 'naš' jezik. Naravno da ne opravdamam ovo miješanje jezika kojim govorimo i nastali frankeštajski bastard, ali treba biti svjestan da su uzroci vrlo duboki i da treba puno dosljednosti, dizanja svijesti i napora da bi se to zaustavilo. A ne misliti 'kako je došlo tako će i otići' i tu ideju prenositi novim jezikoslovcima i lektorima koji trebaju dati po prstima širiteljima ove pomame.⁶

'I read a statement by one of our linguists who takes this influx of anglicization in Croatian quite lightly. He suggests it's a fad that will go away as quickly as it came ... However, it seems to me that this is a very profound change, and it will be very difficult, perhaps even impossible, to stop. [**] When people need to compose a sentence, they first recall a sentence they read in literature written in English, a scene from an American film, or a segment on CNN. When you want to precisely describe a feeling, a scene, or a thought, you remember that you saw EXACTLY this described in a recently read English novel and you pull out one or more words from there ... Sheer reflex. As simple as that, and English becomes 'our' language. Of course, I do not condone this mixing of languages we speak and the resulting Frankenstein's mongrel, but we need to be aware that the causes are very deep, and it requires a lot of consistency, raising awareness, and effort to stop it. We shouldn't think "it will leave as it came" and convey this idea to new linguists and editors who need to slap on the wrist those who are spreading this craze.'

The second focus of these debates is the influence of the Serbian language, which continues to be discussed in contemporary Croatian discourse. In the following example, the user comments on what they perceive as the increasing use of the suffix *-ista* for nominative masculine forms, which is typical of the Serbian standard, as opposed to the Croatian standard *-ist* (e.g., Serbian *lingvista* 'linguist' compared to Croatian *lingvist*).

6 The examples are presented in their authentic form as originally written by the authors in the forum threads. However, due to formatting constraints, some changes to the layout have been made. The original structuring of the posts, including indentations, breaks, and other multi-modal features, may have been altered to fit the required formatting. In some cases, where the comments were very long, parts were omitted to present the point more concisely. These omissions are indicated by [**]. When a single word was omitted for privacy reasons, such as a mention of a username, this is indicated by [*].

- (2) *Ulaze i srbizmi u hrvatski, paradoksalno lakše nego za vrijeme jugoslavije jer smo onda bili u neposrednom dodiru sa srpskim, tako smo znali da to nije hrvatski i čuvali smo se ... sad puno lakše neka riječ uđe u govor, pritom nismo svjesni da je to iz srpskog ... jedan primjer koji mi ide na nerve je sve veća pojava nastavka -ista u medijima umjesto -ist ... to se prije ni slučajno nije moglo dogoditi ...*

'Serbisms are also entering Croatian, paradoxically more easily than during the time of Yugoslavia. Back then, we were in direct contact with Serbian, so we knew it wasn't Croatian and we were careful ... Now, it's much easier for a word to enter our speech, and we aren't aware that it's from Serbian ... One example that gets on my nerves is the increasing use of the ending -ista in the media instead of -ist ... This could never have happened before ...'

The analysis revealed that while the influences of English and Serbian on the Croatian language are sometimes discussed in relation to each other and compared in terms of their perceived danger and harm, these discussions primarily occur separately. When discussing both influences, some users argue that Serbian poses a greater threat, while others contend that the influx of anglicisms is more detrimental.

- (3) *Istina, no s anglizmima svi svjetski jezici imaju problema (informatizacija + utjecaj hollywooda). Mi uz sve to, imamo i srbizme, koji su ako mene pitaš daleko opasniji.*

'True, but all world languages have problems with anglicisms (informatization + influence of Hollywood). In addition to this, we also have Serbisms, which, if you ask me, are far more dangerous.'

- (4) *Samo je problem što je hrvatski presličan jednom drugom jeziku sa kojim je eto, politički nezgodno a i nepopularno da bude baš toliko sličan. Ma, bezveze se raspravljamo, ionako će engleski vjerojatno sve poklopiti prije ili poslije.*

'The problem is that Croatian is too similar to another language with which it is politically awkward, but also unpopular, to be so similar to. Anyway, this discussion is pointless; English will probably overshadow everything sooner or later.'

However, an examination of each topic's framing and characteristics indicates that they form two distinct discourses within the corpus. These discourses differ in their motivations, framing, and related topics.

The discourse surrounding the influence of English can be described as linguistically motivated and contemporary. It reflects concerns about the pervasive use of English words in everyday language and the potential erosion of Croatian linguistic identity. This discourse is primarily focused on the present and future implications of English's global dominance.

In contrast, the discourse related to the Serbian language is ideologically motivated, political, and historically loaded. It reflects deeper historical and socio-political tensions stemming from Croatia's past experiences and its relationship with Serbia. This discourse is characterized by concerns about cultural and national identity, sovereignty, and the preservation of historical memory. The discussions are often rooted in historical contexts and are influenced by political ideologies, highlighting the continued sensitivity and complexity of the relations between the Croatian and Serbian languages.

Overall, the corpus analysis underscores the existence of two distinct and divergent discourses within contemporary Croatian puristic debates, each with its own unique set of motivations and ideological foundations. That is why the two puristic discourses, although coexistent, will be discussed in detail separately. Their coexistence in the Croatian context, with their differing characteristics, is encapsulated in the comment (5). Here, the user delves into the intricacies and historically and politically conditioned relationship between Croatian and Serbian and the puristic attitudes they entail while acknowledging the practical, everyday issues posed by English elements.

- (5) *Purizam: Ne znam—tebi se možda ne sviđa zbog skroz nepolitičkih razloga; nisam imao jednu određenu osobu u vidu. No, čini mi se da se utjecaj političke pozadine kod nas ne može zanemariti kao činitelj u 'estetskim' prosudbama je li neka riječ glupa, ružna, nametljiva i sl. Ako memorija na period NDH i ne utječe izravno, utječe preko odnosa prema Tuđmanovom razdoblju kada su od strane države favorizirani oni koji su imali 'posebno istančan osjećaj za stare hrvatske tradicije' a koji su od strane jednog dijela stanovništva doživljavani kao relativizatori negativnosti u NDH. Tu je i odnos prema Jugoslaviji i Srbima uopće te iskustva iz rata 90-ih. Ne može se očekivati da isti odnos prema srpskom jeziku i njegovim utjecajima na hrvatski ima netko koga su progonili udbaši i nekoga tko je srazmjerno udobno živio u SFRJ. Slično i za onoga po kojem su Srbi 'prali' granatama godinama, srušili kuću, ubili nekoga sa jedne strane i, s druge strane, nekoga tko nije sudjelovao u ratu, živio je, recimo, u Istri i drži da su svi nacionalisti isti dinaroidi. No, ne bih volio ovu temu skretati u politiku. Vratimo se engleskom našem svagdašnjem.*

'Purism: I don't know—you may not like it for entirely non-political reasons; I did not have any specific person in mind. However, it seems to

me that the influence of the political background in our case cannot be ignored as a factor in the 'aesthetic' judgments of whether a word is stupid, ugly, intrusive, etc. Even if the memory of the NDH (Independent State of Croatia) period does not have a direct influence, it affects it through the relationship to the Tudman era when those with a "particularly refined sense of old Croatian traditions" were favored by the state and were perceived by a part of the population as whitewashers of the negative aspects of the NDH. There is also the relationship towards Yugoslavia and Serbs in general, as well as the experiences from the war in the 90s. One cannot expect the same attitude towards the Serbian language and its influences on Croatian from someone who was persecuted by the UDBA⁷ and someone who lived relatively comfortably in the SFRY (Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia). Similarly, for someone who experienced Serbian 'washing' with grenades for years, demolishing their house, killing someone on the one hand, and, on the other hand, someone who did not participate in the war, lived, for example, in Istria, and holds the view that all nationalists are the same dinaroids.⁸ But, I wouldn't want to steer this topic into politics. Let's get back to our daily English.'

5.1 *English as the Target Discourse*

The influence of English and the incorporation of English elements into Croatian are predominantly evaluated negatively throughout the corpus. While there are occasional suggestions that using English might be acceptable due to the high value attributed to English culture globally, or the notion that English, like any other foreign influence, can enrich both culture and language, these perspectives are rare. For the most part, English elements are viewed as unwanted and unacceptable within the Croatian language.

- (6) *riječ selfie mrzim iz dna duše, a i ostale nove riječi koje završavaju na -ie.*
'I hate the word *selfie* from the bottom of my soul, as well as other new words that end in *-ie*.'

7 UDBA refers to *Uprava državne bezbednosti* 'Directorate for State Security', which was the secret police organization in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

8 The term *dinaroidi* 'Dinaroids' originally referred to people from the Dinaric Alps, a mountain range in Southern and South-Central Europe. However, colloquially, it is used pejoratively to describe individuals perceived as primitive, uncultured, and narrow-minded. This is the sense in which the term is used here.

- (7) *Ja ih mrzim pogotovo one nepotrebne. Tako su neugodni mojim ušima da mi se kosa diže na glavi. Nažalost danas ne može čovjek upalit televizor a da ga ne bombardiraju sa njima.*
 'I hate them too, especially the unnecessary ones. They are so unpleasant to my ears that they make my hair stand on end. Unfortunately, you can't turn on the television today without being bombarded by them.'
- (8) *Nepotrebni anglizmi su mi nešto grozno (znači ne govorim o posuđenicama koje su ušle u jezik iz potrebe—kao što je recimo meni lijepa riječ—vikend) nego o ovim novokomponiranim riječima od kojih je najnovija "lokdaun". Naježim se kada ju čujem.*
 'Unnecessary anglicisms are something horrible to me (I mean, I'm not talking about loanwords that entered the language out of necessity—like the word *vikend* 'weekend' which I find beautiful)—but these newly coined words, the latest being "*lokdaun*" 'lockdown'. I get goosebumps when I hear it.'
- (9) *Ono što mene žulja je prodor anglizama. Tako je lijepo kazati: Oprostite! Prihvatljivo je: Ispričavam se! I ruska posuđenica: Izvinite! mi je ljepša od svepriustnog: Sorry.*
 'What bothers me is the influx of anglicisms. It's so nice to say: *Oprostite!* *Ispričavam se* is acceptable! Even the Russian loanword *Izvinite!* is more beautiful to me than the omnipresent: *Sorry!*'

Users exhibit a high degree of consensus regarding anglicisms. Their attitudes are grounded in shared values, such as the intrinsic worth of the Croatian language and culture, which they believe should be preserved and safeguarded from the pervasive influence of English. This consensus is further reinforced by the belief in the versatility of the Croatian language, which they argue possesses all the necessary tools to express any concept that might otherwise be adopted from English. Moreover, they emphasize the aesthetic value of Croatian, asserting that the language sounds less pleasing when mixed with English words. The discourse also frequently invokes the idea of linguistic preservation based on the uniqueness of Croatian as a smaller language that requires protection and nurturing in the face of the global dominance of English, as exemplified by the following instances.

- (10) *Strašno me i sve više nerviraju anglikanizmi u našoj javnoj kulturi. Kad se emisija na našoj državnoj televiziji zove Top Ten ili Red Carpet na onoj komercijalnoj ne znam bi li u tv bacija šlapu ili bi bacija tv. Koja to europska*

kultura propagira strani jezik u svojoj kulturi? Misli li itko da to postoji npr. u Francuskoj? Oni bi se prije ubili nego da propagiraju engleski. Rezultat toga je da francuska kultura ima težinu! Jer to se gradi stoljećima a gubi u 1 desetljeću! Argument da smo obasuti američkom kulturom pa kao ionako je svejedno ne stoji! To je tim više razlog da se poštuje i čuva svoje! Kako se zove trgovinski centar skoro u centru Zadra čije ime je smislio netko u ime investitora Grada Zadra? Pazi ovo: City Galleria Zadar! Prvo 'city' na engleskom a onda 'galleria' na talijanskom i na kraju gle čuda bar ime grada je naše. A što bi falilo Gradskoj galeriji? Ne znam kako bi uopće nazva taj trend: uvlačiteljsko-jadni, snobovsko-robovski, ... ako tko ima ideju nek nastavi niz. 'Anglicisms in our public culture are horrible and increasingly irritate me. When a program on our national television is called Top Ten or Red Carpet on that commercial channel, I don't know whether I should throw my slipper at the TV or throw out the TV itself. Which European culture promotes a foreign language in its own culture? Does anyone think this exists, for example, in France? They would rather die than promote English. The result of that is that French culture has weight! Because culture is built over centuries and can be lost in one decade! The argument that we are inundated with American culture so it doesn't matter anyway does not hold! That is all the more reason to respect and preserve our own! What is the name of the shopping center almost in the center of Zadar that someone came up with on behalf of the city investors? Check this out: City Galleria Zadar! First 'city' in English, then 'galleria' in Italian, and finally, at least the name of the city is ours. And what would be wrong with Gradska galerija? I don't even know how to name this trend: suck-up-pitiful, snobbish-servile ... if anyone has an idea, feel free to continue the list.'

- (11) *Trebalo bi rezrezati poseban porez na ta poduzeća i njihove reklame na engleskom. Da bi se to moglo napraviti, potreban je upravo ovakav zakon o zaštiti uporabe hrvatskog jezika. Bez toga zakona, Zagreb i Jadran će, po pitanju natpisa i reklama, za par godina izgledati kao da nisu u Hrvatskoj. Jednostavno, Hrvati će biti stranci u vlastitoj državi. U ostalom meni je 100 puta moćnija fraza, recimo "Za muškarce" nego "For men". I svaka druga engleska fraza mi zvuči puno bolje na Hrvatskom. Zato mi ni te firme što guraju engleski nisu baš jasne. Pa svaka svjetska firma koja imalo drži do sebe prilagođava reklame i ostale sadržaje tržištu gdje posluje.*
- 'A special tax should be levied on those businesses and their English-language advertisements. To do this, precisely such a law on the protection of the use of the Croatian language is needed. Without that law,

Zagreb and Adria will, in terms of signs and advertisements, look like they are not in Croatia in a few years. Simply put, Croats will be strangers in their own country. Moreover, to me, the phrase “Za muškarce” sounds a hundred times more powerful than “For men”. And every other English phrase sounds much better to me in Croatian. That’s why I don’t understand those companies that push English. Every global company that cares about its image adapts its advertisements and other content to the market where it operates.’

These shared values contribute to a discourse characterized by a consistent and measured tone devoid of moral panic or Internet impoliteness. The discussions primarily revolve around the exchange of ideas and experiences and constructive suggestions for the present and future development of the Croatian language. The users engage in debates that are largely civil and revolve around linguistic arguments and criteria. One such debate is the discussion on the use of the words *lajk* ‘like’ and *lajkati* ‘to like’ in everyday speech and Internet jargon, where the users collaboratively discuss how the words can be replaced by Croatian words or better suited for the Croatian language and its everyday needs, as shown by the following examples.

- (12) *Ne koristim te engleske riječi. A zašto i bih kad imam hrvatske? Zašto bih govorio lajkati kad mogu svidati i ostalo.*
 ‘I don’t use those English words. Why would I when I have Croatian ones? Why would I say *lajkati* when I can say *svidati* “to like” and so on?’
- (13) *Svidalica je u redu. Sve, samo da nije anglizam.*
 ‘*Svidalica* “lit. a liker” is fine. Anything, as long as it’s not an anglicism.’
- (14) *Sjetio sam se bolje mogućnosti. Cijenim to. Gramatički ispravno, i nije neki glupi anglizam.*
 ‘I thought of a better option. *Cijenim to* “I appreciate it”. Grammatically correct, and not a silly anglicism.’
- (15) *Ali ovo ‘lajkanje’ ne mogu podnijeti. Pa to čak nije ni izvučeno od nekog posebnog dijela računala ili neke naročite radnje vezane uz rad na računalu. To je, ako se ne varam, od tipke ‘I like’ na facebooku. Je li može gluplje?*
 ‘But I can’t stand this *lajkanje* ‘liking’. It’s not even derived from some special part of the computer or a particular action related to working on a computer. It’s from the “I like” button on Facebook, if I’m not mistaken. Could it be any more ridiculous?’

In this context, the discourse is constructed around shared values among users, forming a cohesive in-group dedicated to the preservation and integrity of the Croatian language. Criticism is primarily directed at individuals who use English words uncritically and excessively, thereby constituting an out-group. These individuals are often characterized as uneducated or as people who use foreign words to impress others, appear worldly or intellectual, or seem trendy. Terms such as *snob* 'snob' and *pokondirena tikva*⁹ are frequently employed in this discourse. These labels serve to reinforce the boundary between those committed to the collective goal of preserving and nurturing the Croatian language and those perceived as adopting unnecessary foreign elements for personal gain or self-promotion. The identification and group delineation are formed by the negative evaluation of the out-group and the use of labels for them. The use of these labels functions to characterize the out-group, portraying them as superficial and lacking genuine cultural or intellectual substance. This dynamic creates a clear delineation between the in-group, which implicitly views itself as sensible citizens who care about the language and culture, and the out-group, which is seen as undermining these values through their uncritical adoption of anglicisms. The frequent invocation of these labels underscores the ideological underpinnings of the discourse, where language use becomes a marker of social allegiance and cultural authenticity. Other labels used for this purpose in the discourse include *anglo snobovi* 'Anglo snobs', *snobovi-robovi* 'snob-slaves', *nepismeni* 'illiterate', *polupismeni* 'semi-literate', *elita* 'elite', *kvazi menadžeri* 'pseudo-managers', *kvazi intelektualci* 'pseudo-intellectuals', *kvazi inteligencija* 'pseudo-intelligentsia', *Europejci* 'Europeans', and *svjetski građani* 'citizens of the world'. Labels like *Europejci* and *elita* are used pejoratively and somewhat sarcastically, emphasizing the fact that these speakers are not really the elite but present themselves as such. The full list of labels can be found in Figure 1.

9 The term *pokondirena tikva* comes from the title of a satirical play written by Serbian playwright Jovan Sterija Popović in the 19th century. In the play, the phrase describes a person who adopts foreign manners, language, or behavior in a pretentious and affected way, abandoning their own cultural roots and traditions. In contemporary usage, it is a derogatory term used to describe someone who is perceived as superficial and pretentious, trying to appear more sophisticated or cultured by adopting foreign elements, often in an exaggerated and insincere manner. In the literal sense, the phrase *pokondirena tikva* could be roughly translated as 'pretending pumpkin'. However, while most Croatian speakers are familiar with its idiomatic usage, they likely would not recognize the literal meaning of its components. For a detailed exploration of the etymology behind the phrase, see Opačić (2009).

- (16) *Mi koji znamo rabiti hrvatski jezik kako treba ne upotrebljavamo strane poštapalice osim kao stilska sredstva. To čine samo polupismeni ljudi. I borba za očuvanje hrvatskog jezika zato ne smije biti borba protiv stranoga, nego za kvalitetno domaće.*

'We, who know how to properly use the Croatian language, do not employ foreign fillers except as stylistic devices. Only semi-literate people do that. Therefore, the fight for the preservation of the Croatian language should not be a fight against foreign elements, but for the quality elements of our native language.'

- (17) *Slazem se da je struka donekle kriva, ali tu je i taj imidz koji postavlja engleski i anglizam (ili englesku kulturu) kao "cool, trendy" i "in". A nasa elita (u svakoj sferi) to, nazalost, podupiru sa rabljenjem tih frazema. Tako i dalje podupirajuci taj imidz.*

'I agree that the linguists are somewhat to blame, but there's also this image that positions English and anglicisms (or English culture) as "cool, trendy" and "in". Unfortunately, our elite (in every sphere) support this by using those phrases, thus continuing to support that image.'

- (18) *Nadam se da ovo neće pročitati netko iz Instituta za hrvatski jezik i jezikoslovlje jer bi onda mogli odmah baciti koplje u trnje. Čemu da se muče svako jutro neumorne lektorice na HRI kako bi nepismenom pučanstvu i 'građanima svijeta', 'europalcima' i ostaloj 'kvazi inteligenciji' objasnile da i hrvatski jezik treba njegovati kao što to rade drugi narodi jer na taj način promiču i štite dostojanstvo naroda koji ga govori.*

'I hope no one from the Institute for the Croatian Language and Linguistics reads this because they might immediately give up. Why should the tireless proofreaders at HRI struggle every morning to explain to the illiterate folk and "citizens of the world", 'Europeans' and other 'pseudo-intellectuals' that the Croatian language needs to be nurtured in the same way other nations do it as this promotes and protects the dignity of the people who speak it.'

- (19) *Mene današnja situacija podsjeća na komediju "Pokondirena tikva" srpskog književnika Jovana Sterije Popovića, gdje glavna junakinja učestalo ubacuje francuske riječi u svoj govor kako bi djelovala otmjeno. Jedina je razlika što danas nije pomodno koristiti francuski, nego umjesto toga engleske riječi. Ubacuje ih se svako malo, i tamo gdje je to nužno, a još češće tamo gdje nije nužno s obzirom da postoje odlični hrvatski ekvivalenti (npr. stejdz—pozornica), a s ciljem da bi se djelovalo svjetski i ostavilo dojam na sugo-*

vornika. U takvoj situaciji mislim da ni zakon o zaštiti hrvatskog jezika ne može puno pomoći ako ga ni mnogi govornici nisu spremni “zaštiti” nego dožive mali orgazam svaki put kad ubace neku englesku riječ ili izraz. A da ne spominjem da mi kolokvijalni jezik mladih Zagrepčana sve više liči na neki pidžin jezik—mješavinu hrvatskog i engleskog. A natpisi po gradu (nazivi trgovačkih centara i ostalih trgovina te natpisi na njihovim izlozima, a i ne samo oni) u sve su većoj mjeri na engleskom jeziku pa se stječe dojam da nam zemlja mic po mic postaje dvojezičnom. Jer valjda nije više fora kupovati u nekom dućanu na kojem umjesto “sale” piše “rasprodaja”.

“Today’s situation reminds me of the comedy *“Pokondirena tikva”* by Serbian writer Jovan Sterija Popović, where the main character frequently inserts French words into her speech to appear refined. The only difference is that today it’s not fashionable to use French, but instead, English words. They are inserted frequently, sometimes necessarily, but more often unnecessarily, given that there are excellent Croatian equivalents (e.g., *stejdž—pozornica*), with the aim of appearing worldly and making an impression on the interlocutor. In such a situation, I don’t think even a law protecting the Croatian language can help much if many speakers are not willing to “protect” it and instead experience a small orgasm every time they insert an English word or phrase. Not to mention that the colloquial language of young people in Zagreb increasingly resembles a pidgin language to me—a mix of Croatian and English. And the signs around the city (names of shopping centers and other stores and signs in their windows, and not just those) are increasingly in English, creating the impression that our country is becoming bilingual step by step. Apparently, it’s no longer cool to shop in a store where it says “*rasprodaja*” instead of “sale”.

5.2 *Serbian as the Target Discourse*

Compared to the discourse surrounding the English language and its influence, the language debates about Serbian exhibit markedly different characteristics. Firstly, these discussions are much more heated, with a higher degree of disagreement among forum users, often marked by moral panic and occasional impoliteness tokens. The debates primarily revolve around two central questions: whether it is acceptable to use words from the Serbian standard (especially in public and in the media), and whether Croatian and Serbian are distinct languages or variants of a single language. These two issues are deeply interconnected and often lead to discussions intertwining both topics. Unlike the discourse on English, where users generally agree, the discourse on Serbian is characterized by users’ distinctly different attitudes and values. This diver-

gence creates two opposing camps, each strongly pitted against the other in the discussions. Users shape the discourse around their beliefs and attitudes on these issues, distinguishing themselves from those whose values they do not share. In the process, the opposing group is negatively evaluated, and identity construction proceeds from this identification of the out-group. Based on this dynamic, two opposing camps can be identified: linguistic purists and linguistic liberals. For each group, the opposing group constitutes the out-group. This division highlights the ideological and emotional intensity of the debates on Serbian language-related issues, contrasting sharply with the relatively unified stance on the influence of English.

5.2.1 Purists as the Out-Group

The purist group is defined in the discourse by specific values, attitudes, and behaviors. They are categorized by their opponents as those who avoid Serbian words at all costs, adamantly assert that Croatian and Serbian are distinct languages, advocate for “Novohrvatski”, seek to purify the language, and employ language with political motivations. Interestingly, the view that the purist group uses the language with a political agenda is strongly contrasted with the self-views of the liberals, who assert that their own positions are apolitical and purely based on linguistic criteria. This is especially relevant to the debate over whether Croatian and Serbian are one or two languages, with proponents of the one-language perspective, i.e., the liberals, claiming that their views are strictly linguistic, given the mutual intelligibility between the two languages. The attitudes of the purists are also often associated by the liberals with right-wing ideologies and political orientations, which are in the discourse occasionally linked to extreme right-wing regimes. The liberals’ discourse on purists is prominently historically framed, often employing historical context-specific labels for them as the out-group. The labels used by their opponents to identify the out-group draw from periods of Croatian history marked by strong purist tendencies in national language policies. These periods include the Independent State of Croatia (1941–1945) and the era of the War of Independence, and the subsequent period of the newly formed Republic of Croatia (1991–1999).

(20) *U ustavu najmocnije drzave na svijetu, Sjedinjenih americkih drzava, uopce nema sluzbenog jezika, iako ta uloga de facto pripada engleskom. Ali nigdje u ustavu ne stoji da to mora biti engleski i sve to opet nije smetalo toj zemlji da opstane i postane globalna sila broj jedan. U maloj i tragikomicnoj Hrvatskoj grupica nacionalista koji sebe smatraju jezikoslovcima kukumacu o ugrozenosti hrvatskog jezika.*

'In the constitution of the most powerful country in the world, the United States of America, there is no official language, although English de facto holds that role. However, nowhere in the constitution does it state that it must be English, and this has not hindered the country from surviving and becoming the number one global power. In the small and tragically comical Croatia, a group of nationalists who consider themselves linguists are lamenting the endangerment of the Croatian language.'

- (21) *Većina nas, barem i nesvjesno, shvaća kako stvari stoje. Usprkos fantazijama nacionalista, mi živimo u jezičnoj realnosti u kojoj se Srbi, Hrvati, Crnogorci i Bosanci besprijekorno razumiju, gdje svi oni jednako jednako slušaju i Rozgu i Karleušu, gledaju i "Bitange i princeze" i "Andriju i Anđelku".*

'Most of us, at least subconsciously, understand how things stand. Despite the fantasies of nationalists, we live in a linguistic reality where Serbs, Croats, Montenegrins, and Bosnians understand each other flawlessly, where they all equally listen to both [Croatian singer] Rozga and [Serbian singer] Karleuša, and watch both [Croatian series] *"Bitange i princeze"* and [Serbian] *"Andrija i Anđelka"*.'

- (22) *Tako isto političke mitologije i nacionalizmi i u jeziku pronalaze neko svoje zlatno doba, kada je jezik bio idealan, naš, neokaljan, čist, prirodan iskonski, a ne kao sada uprljan, iskrivljen, neprirodan, nametnut ... i sada nas naši nacionalisti/puristi/nazi lingvisti pokušavaju vratiti u to zlatno doba, a strani nasilnici i domaće izdajice pokušavaju obmanuti naš napaćen narod ...*

'Similarly, political mythologies and nationalisms find their own golden age in language, a time when the language was ideal, ours, untainted, pure, natural, primal, and not as it is now—dirty, distorted, unnatural, imposed ... and now our nationalists/purists/nazi linguists are trying to return us to that golden age, while foreign oppressors and domestic traitors attempt to deceive our suffering people ...'

When it comes to labels for the purists as the out-group, the most frequent is *nacionalisti* 'nationalist' regularly associated with members who support the aforementioned views. The term *puristi* 'purists' is also commonly used in relation to the out-group and is often interchangeable with 'nationalists' when discussing language. Purists (also frequently referred to by the Croatian word for 'purist', *čistunci*) are seen by the liberals as an archetype of those supporting the views of language preservation, language uniqueness, and the notion of one nation, one language. Purism is understood in its narrower sense as the strict

rejection of foreign elements based on national ideology, particularly Serbian elements, in this context. Labels related to right-wing political orientations in the Croatian context, such as *desničari* 'right-wingers' and *hadezeovci* 'HDZ supporters',¹⁰ frequently appear, as well as those associated with extreme regimes with strong nationalistic components, such as *nacisti* 'Nazis' and *fašisti* 'fascists'. These terms that equate contemporary Croatian speakers with extreme historically specific labels are not that frequent in the discourse but do come up occasionally. Moreover, members of the purist group are often described as being excessively Croatian and are called terms like *veliki Hrvati* 'Great Croats', and variations such as *velikohrvati*, which is a compounded version of the phrase *veliki Hrvati*, 'lit. Great-o-Croats', *Hrvatine* 'Croats-NAUGM', and *turbo Hrvati* 'Turbo Croats'. Another label that surfaces in this context is *domoljubi* 'lit. home lovers; patriots', mostly used negatively and somewhat pejoratively. Interestingly, this is the only label that the purists readily accept, with users embracing and confirming it.

- (23) *Kod nas su čak i nacionalisti falš roba: svugdje na svijetu ima nacionalista, nacionalističkih stranaka i pozitivnog nacionalizma, ali fiksacije na samo jednu naciju—nema. [**] U Hrvatskoj imamo samo fiks-nacionaliste, oduzmi im srbe iz usta i oni nemaju o čemu pričati. Zapravo time—znakovito—dokazuju da ni inače nemaju o čemu pričati. Normalni nacionalisti su za svoju naciju a protiv svih ostalih. Naši—nažalost 'naši'—su samo protiv Srba. Meni to izgleda imbecilno. Takve imbecilije se protežu u hrvatski jezik: ako će taj jezik biti hrvatski samo zato da bude različit od srpskoga onda smo mi svi zajedno bolesna i imbecilna nacija kojoj nema spasa ni na zemlji ni na nebu.*

'Even our nationalists are damaged goods: everywhere in the world there are nationalists, nationalist parties, and positive nationalism, but the fixation on just one nation—that doesn't exist. [**] In Croatia, we only have overly-fixated nationalists; take Serbs out of their mouths and they have nothing to talk about. In fact, by doing so—tellingly—they prove that

10 *Hadezeovci* refers to members or supporters of the Croatian Democratic Union (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*, HDZ), which is a major political party in Croatia. The Croatian Democratic Union is a center-right political party that played a crucial role in Croatia's independence movement in the early 1990s and has been one of the dominant political forces in the country since then. HDZ was founded by Franjo Tuđman in 1989. The name for its adherents, *hadezeovci* is derived from the initialism which constitutes the name of the party in Croatian.

they have nothing to talk about otherwise. Normal nationalists are for their nation and against all others. Ours—unfortunately ‘ours’—are only against Serbs. To me, that seems imbecilic. Such imbecilities extend into the Croatian language: if the language is to be Croatian only to be different from Serbian, then we are all together a sick and imbecilic nation without salvation on earth or in heaven.’

- (24) *Nisam jezikoslovac, samo prenosim misljenja i procjene onih koji jesu (i koji su na lijevoj strani politickog spektra i gorljivi protivnici ovih purista, korijenicara ili slicnih bisera). Ono, postoje razlicite grupacije, ideje, utjecaji itd u znanostima, osobito ovakvim. Ali kada sa svih strana o tebi ima struka isto misljenje, cak i oni koji su medjusobno ekstremno posvajani, pa i oni koji bi trebali biti bliski, onda je pretpostavka kako je u pitanju neki veliki nadljudski biser puno manje vjerojatna od one kako se radi o frustriranoj babi, a trece opcije bas i nema.*

‘I am not a linguist, I am only conveying the opinions and assessments of those who are (and who are on the left side of the political spectrum and ardent opponents of these purists, supporters of root-based orthography, or similar gems). I mean, there are different groups, ideas, influences, etc. in sciences, especially in these ones. But when experts from all sides have the same opinion about you, even those who are extremely at odds with each other, then the assumption that it is some great superhuman gem is much less likely than that it is about a frustrated old woman, or some third option that doesn’t really exist.’¹¹

- (25) *zasto se zale? pa zato sto su nacionalisti uvijek isti. ali to je nebitno. bitno je sto kazu strucni ljudi, a gotovo svi slavisti tvrde o postojanju jednog jezika. to sto neki tamo hadezeovac akademik tvrdi suprotno bitno je samo ovdje. vani se zna da je to jedan jezik, jer nikoga nije briga za misljenje hrv. nacionalista.* ‘Why are they complaining? Well, because nationalists are always the same. But that’s irrelevant. What matters is what the experts say, and almost all Slavic linguists claim there is one language. What some HDZ-affiliated academic claims is only relevant here. Abroad it is known that it is one language because no one cares about the opinion of Croatian nationalists.’

¹¹ *Korijeničari* refers to the proponents of the traditional Croatian (root-based) orthography from the end of the 19th century that was briefly reinstated during the Independent State of Croatia (NDH).

- (26) *kako nacionalizam poglupljuje ljude to je nevjerojatno. znam kako se vj. osjećaju ljudi tvog profila (99 % onih odraslih u hrvatskoj, posebno mlađih i podložnijih manipulaciji, odgajanih na HTV-ovom dnevniku i tuđmanovim poslanicama) kad intimno moraju sebi navečer priznati da je jezik kojim govore isti onaj kojim govore i većina drugih južnoslavenskih naroda s balkana, i da hrvatski baš po ničemu nije poseban, osim po rječci "bok".*

'It is unbelievable how nationalism makes people stupider. I know how people of your profile (99% of those raised in Croatia, especially the younger ones and more susceptible to manipulation, raised on Croatian national television's news and Tuđman's messages) probably feel when they have to admit to themselves at night that the language they speak is the same one spoken by the majority of other South Slavic peoples in the Balkans, and that Croatian is not special in any way, except for the word "bok".'

5.2.2 Liberals as the Out-Group

In the purists' discourse, the out-group of liberals is characterized by specific values, attitudes, and behaviors represented by those who use Serbian words uncritically, employ Serbisms in public and media contexts (particularly public figures like politicians or TV hosts), assert that Croatian and Serbian are one and the same language, and generally exhibit indifference toward the Croatian language. This out-group is frequently associated with left-wing ideologies and political orientations, especially as they are perceived within the Croatian context. The discourse is, again, historically framed, with out-group labels frequently drawing from the broader discourse of Croatian history, specifically the Yugoslav period (1945–1990). This era was marked by the union with Serbia and the efforts to standardize a unified Serbo-Croatian language. The most frequent label used is *jugonostalgici* 'Yugo-nostalgists', referring to those who support political and linguistic ideas promoted during the time of Yugoslavia. Variants of this term, such as *jugoslaveni* 'Yugoslavs', *projugoslaveni* 'Proyugoslavs', *neojugoslaveni* 'Neoyugoslavs', and *jugofili* 'Yugophiles' are also common. Another frequently encountered term is *regijunaši* 'regionalists' and its variants *regijunaši*, *regiyubalkanofili* 'regional Yugoslav-Balkanophiles' and *balkanofili* 'Balkanophiles'. The term *regija* 'region' (*region* in Serbian) is sometimes used to collectively describe the geographical area of the former Yugoslav countries without acknowledging them as separate independent states. The term has, however, acquired negative connotations, and tends to be understood as promoting unitarism among the former Yugoslav states, as well as a marker of left-wing ideologies. Therefore, even those who use the term neutrally in the sense of 'area' often face significant criticism. Similarly, the word

Balkan 'Balkans', referring to the states of the Balkan Peninsula as a collective, has gained similar connotations in this discourse. Additionally, the linguistic liberals are often described as *antinacionalisti* 'antinationalists' or *anacionalisti* 'anationalists'. In this context, these terms are nearly interchangeable, with the former being perceived as those negating the integrity and autonomy of the Croatian language and its status, and the latter referring to those who are indifferent toward it. For the in-group, i.e., the purists, both terms are equally negative. Out-group members are also labeled as *ljevičari* 'left-wingers', supporters of left-wing ideas and policies. Related terms like *komunisti* 'communists' and *boljševici* 'bolsheviks' also appear. Occasionally, labels related to historical extremist regimes and ideologies, such as *jugofašisti* 'Yugofaschists' or *jugonacisti* 'Yugonazis', are used, though these are not as common as in the context of the other group.

- (27) *Za razliku od hrpe jugoslavenčina i štovatelja Vuka Karadžića ovdje smatram da su ovakvi natječaji sjajna ideja i velika nada da će hrvatski jezik i u budućnosti ostati hrvatski. Naravno, strane riječi treba zamjenjivati samo onda kada se izmisli jednako dobra ili bolja riječ. Osobno mislim da je zamjenjivanje automobila samovozom, pištolja samokresom i interneta međumrežjem nekvalitetno, pomalo smiješno i loše i da takve novotvorbe treba napustiti. S druge strane upravo prihvaćeni suosnik umjesto koaksijalnog kabla mi se čini odličnim rješenjem, kao i poveznica umjesto linka ili tipkovnica umjesto tastature. Da je hrvatski jezik zaista na dobrom putu da se samostalno i lijepo dalje razvija najbolje se vidi po tome što su i na samu mogućnost da se izmisle i prihvate neke nove hrvatske riječi odma graknule horde nostalgičnih "lingvisti" koji još plaču za srpskorvackim kojeg vasceo svet i vaseljena razume.*

'Unlike the mass of Great Yugoslavs and admirers of Vuk Karadžić here, I believe that such contests are a great idea and offer a significant hope that the Croatian language will remain Croatian in the future. Of course, foreign words should only be replaced when an equally good or better word is invented. Personally, I think replacing *automobil* 'automobile' with *samovoz*, *pištolj* 'pistol' with *samokres*, and *internet* 'Internet' with *međumrežje* is of poor quality, somewhat ridiculous, and bad, and such neologisms should be abandoned. On the other hand, I find *suosnik* instead of *koaksijalni kabl* "coaxial cable" an excellent solution, as well as *poveznica* instead of *link* 'link' or *tipkovnica* instead of *tastatura* 'keyboard'. The fact that the Croatian language is on the right path to developing independently and beautifully is best demonstrated by the immediate outcry from nostalgic "linguists" at the mere suggestion of creating and

accepting new Croatian words, they are those who still lament for the Serbo-Croatian that is understood by the whole world and the whole universe.'

- (28) *Realno, spikeri bi trebali imati govorne vježbe i stvar bi bila riješena. Bagino "dakanje" znak je njegove neukosti, kao i niza forumaša (počinu 95 % tema s "da li" mjesto "biste li", "je li" itd.). Podcijenjena je važnost jezične kulture u društvu što ide pod ruku s podcjenjenošću bitnih sastavnica nacionalnog identiteta. Nije, dakle, urota, nego manifestacija unutarnjega truljenja, i vlasti trule anacionalne ekipe.*

'Realistically, TV anchors should have speech exercises, and the problem would be solved. Bago's use of the "da-construction" is a sign of his ignorance, as well as that of many forum users (who start 95 % of topics with "da li" instead of "biste li", "je li", etc.).¹² The importance of proper linguistic usage in society is underestimated, which goes hand in hand with the underestimation of essential components of national identity. It is not a conspiracy but rather a manifestation of internal decay and the rotten, anationalistic team in power.'

- (29) *I ja se pitam zašto nema zajedničkih udžbenika za matematiku, fiziku, kemiju, biologiju za Hrvatsku i Srbiju, a zanima me zašto Srbi govore da im poklonjeni hrvatski prijevodi EU pravne stečevine ne koriste jer ih ne razumiju? Zašto se srpski pravni tekstovi prevode na hrvatski i obratno ako su to isti jezici? To mi nitko od ovih regiyubalkanofila koji se mentalno ne mogu otrgnuti iz njihovog regiyuna nije nikad objasnio.*

'I also wonder why there are no joint textbooks for mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology for Croatia and Serbia, and I am curious why Serbs say that the Croatian translations of EU legal acquis that were passed on as a gift are useless to them because they do not understand them. Why are Serbian legal texts translated into Croatian and vice versa if they are the same languages? None of these regionalists who cannot mentally detach from their *regiyun* have ever explained this to me.'

¹² The comment refers to the formation of yes-no interrogatives in Croatian and Serbian standard languages. In the Croatian standard, these types of questions are formed using the main verb of the sentence followed by the interrogative particle *li*, as in, for example, *Je li on dobro?* 'Is he ok?'; *Biste li mi otvorili vrata?* 'Would you open the door for me?'. In contrast, the Serbian standard allows for the question to begin with *da* followed by the interrogative particle *li*, as in *Da li je on dobro?* 'Is he ok?'; *Da li biste mi otvorili vrata?* 'Would you open the door for me?'.

TABLE 3.1 Out-group labels

ENGLISH AS THE TARGET	OUT-GROUP	<i>snobovi</i> <i>snobovi robovi</i> <i>anglo snobovi</i> <i>kuleri</i> <i>fensi ljudi</i>	<i>nepismeni</i> <i>polupismeni</i> <i>“elita”</i> <i>pokondirene tikve</i> <i>skorojevići</i>	<i>kvazi menađeri</i> <i>kvazi intelektualci</i> <i>“Europejci”</i> <i>“svjetski građani”</i> <i>anglofili</i>
SERBIAN AS THE TARGET	OUT-GROUP PURISTS	<i>nacionalisti</i>	<i>vel’ko R’vati</i>	<i>fašisti</i>
		<i>puristi</i>	<i>Velikohrvati</i>	<i>šovinisti</i>
		<i>ksenofobni puristi</i>	<i>Hrvatine</i>	<i>nacišovinisti</i>
		<i>ksenofobi</i>	<i>turbo Hrvati</i>	<i>desničari</i>
		<i>čistunci</i>	<i>ustaše</i>	<i>hadezeovci</i>
		<i>nazilingvisti</i>	<i>NDHisti</i>	<i>domoljubi</i>
		<i>veliki Hrvati</i>	<i>korjeničari</i>	
	OUT-GROUP LIBERALS	<i>jugonostalgičari</i>	<i>jugoljevičari</i>	<i>regijunaši</i>
		<i>jugoslaveni</i>	<i>jugonacisti</i>	<i>antinacionalisti</i>
		<i>šugoslaveni</i>	<i>jugounitaristi</i>	<i>anacionalisti</i>
		<i>jugoslovenčići</i>	<i>jugofašisti</i>	<i>boljševici</i>
		<i>jugoslavenčine</i>	<i>balkanofili</i>	<i>komunisti</i>
		<i>projugoslaveni</i>	<i>regiyubalkanofili</i>	<i>ljevičari</i>
		<i>neojugoslaveni</i>	<i>regijunaši</i>	<i>liberali</i>

Table 3.1 displays the comprehensive list of labels used in the discourse for all identified out-groups.

5.3 Labels and Pronouns

The analysis of pronouns in the corpus revealed that the possessive pronoun *naš* ‘our’ and its various grammatical forms are the most frequently used pronouns in the corpus. Specifically, the query for pronouns with the stem *naš** yielded 1,404 hits, compared to 821 hits for pronouns with the stem *njih** ‘their’, and 193 hits for *vaš** ‘your-2PL’. A closer examination established that labels for the out-group are often used with the possessive pronoun *naši* (‘our’) and a verb in the third-person plural form (see below for an analysis of these rather surprising findings). Although online forum language debates can be categorized as a form of dialogue—or, more accurately, polylogue¹³—where

13 For a description of online discussion forums as polylogues, see Marcoccia 2004.

disagreement is a common occurrence, the second-person singular or plural verb forms are rarely used, particularly in contexts involving in-group and out-group dynamics. This trend may be attributed to the rules and norms of online forum platforms, which often censor posts that can be considered personal attacks. For instance, Forum.hr does not tolerate provocations and inflammatory comments directed at individual posters. Consequently, the third-person plural form may be more appropriate for delineating the out-group whose attitudes one disagrees with. However, these observations require further and more detailed research to be fully substantiated. Nevertheless, the use of the pronoun *naši* with the out-group label reveals interesting dynamics and implications for identity construction within the Croatian purist context. It suggests a complex relationship where the out-group is identified as part of the in-group (a problem that is also tackled by Banasiak and Wnuk in this volume). By referring to the outsiders as “ours”, speakers suggest a paradoxical inclusion of this group within the broader collective identity. This linguistic choice points to an internal tension, where those perceived as deviating from the group’s linguistic or cultural norms are simultaneously recognized as part of the same community.

This dynamic resonates with the concept of the “internal enemy”, as described by Wodak (2009), where divisions within a society are framed not just as external threats but as conflicts within the group itself.

- (30) *To se izgleda neki naši žele praviti većim Englezima od samih Engleza.*
 ‘It seems that some of our people want to act more English than the English themselves.’
- (31) *Našao sam nešto jako zgodno za naše domaće hrvatske anglo snobove kojima je bolje reći Zagreb film festival, Motovun film festival nego Zagrebački filmski festival, Motovunski festival ...*
 ‘I found something very fitting for our local Croatian Anglo-snobs who prefer to say Zagreb Film Festival, Motovun Film Festival rather than Zagrebački filmski festival, Motovunski festival ...’
- (32) *A sad ovo što se tiče pravaša i ljevičara, ja se smatram ljevičarom, ali ne osjećam nikakvu povezanost niti razmišljam isto kao ovi naši hrvatski (jugo)ljevičari, tako da neznam otkud si to izvukao.*
 ‘And now regarding the rightists and left-wingers, I consider myself a left-winger, but I do not feel any connection, nor do I think the same as our Croatian (Yugo) left-wingers, so I don’t know where you got that from.’

- (33) *Neka naši ljevičari kažu: "jesmo Srbi smo i gotovo", pa da mi znamo s kim imamo posla i s kim se zapravo treba obračunati. Ali nemaju ljevičari muda za to kao što nikad nisu ni imali. Preostaje im sjediti u tamnim sobama, osuđenim doživotnim proklestvom koje ih izjeda poput raka.*

'Let our left-wingers say: "Yes, we are Serbs and that's it" so that we know who we are dealing with and who we actually need to confront. But left-ists don't have the guts for that, just as they never have. All that remains for them is to sit in dark rooms, condemned to a lifelong curse that eats them up like cancer.'

- (34) *Znam da nisi mislio na mene, jer imam dijametralno suprotne i političke i duhovne stavove od naših dragih forumskih "jugoslavenčina".*

'I know you didn't mean me, because I have diametrically opposite political and spiritual views from our dear "big Yugoslavs" on this forum.'

6 Conclusions

The examination of contemporary Croatian purist discourse unveils interesting dynamics and patterns of language use that reflect underlying ideological positions and identity constructions. The non-expert language debates on the online platform Forum.hr provide insight into identity construction and out-group formation symptomatic of the broader Croatian socio-political and historical context.

Croatian purism functions with two distinct linguistic "targets"—English and Serbian—each generating a different narrative within the discourse. Discussions about English and anglicisms are primarily focused on linguistic and practical concerns, with users who incorporate English words into everyday contexts often being accused of snobbery and inauthenticity. In contrast, the discourse surrounding Serbian is significantly more politicized and ideologically charged, with a more polarized identity construction. Language debates on the topic of Serbian and its relationship to Croatian reveal a pronounced division within the linguistic community. This division manifests as a delineation of out-groups between two extreme poles of Croatian identity: one side perceived as excessively Croatian, and the other as insufficiently Croatian. Therefore, the negotiation of identity in the purist debates is not a negotiation between national and international but between nationalistic and a(nti)nationalistic.

The patterning of possessive pronouns in connection with out-group labels, especially the frequent use of the pronoun *naši*, highlights the dynamics of the

out-group within and the notion of an internal enemy. This internal enemy concept underscores the ideological tensions and identity negotiations prevalent in Croatian discourse, revealing deeper socio-political undercurrents and the strong influence of past events and discourses on the contemporary perception of Croatian identity.

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Polish Neologisms *cebulak* ‘Onioner’ and *fajnopolak* ‘cool-o-Pole’ as Signs of Othering within the Polish National Community

Dagmara Banasiak and Łukasz Wnuk

1 Introduction

The recent debate among Poles concerning the problem of self-identity has been emotionally charged and polarizing. Undoubtedly, no single socio-political factor could have triggered the polarization and the debate surrounding it; rather, a sequence of in-country and out-country socio-political events and transformations have generated heated discussion and tensions around how Poles currently perceive themselves.

The literature concerning the problem of the self-image of Poles emphasizes that Poles’ opinion of themselves has been worsening significantly over the last 30–35 years (Rogaczewska and Gołdys 2009, 7–9).¹ In 1998, Bartmiński observed that:

Recent years saw a significant intensification of self-critical attitudes among Poles, which—in some circles—took on exaggerated forms, close to losing faith in ourselves.

BARTMIŃSKI 1998, 15; translation ours²

A few years later, Bokszański pointed out that, at the same time, a positive self-image of Poles as romantic, rebellious, and tolerant patriots is recessive or even anachronistic since it is

[...] built with the use of means alluding to relatively archaic, traditional ideas that—to a certain degree—constituted a part of the broader European culture of the 19th century. According to these ideas, Poles are rebel-

1 Some studies go so far as to interpret the increase of self-criticism among Poles in terms of auto-racism (Stankiewicz 2018).

2 Unless otherwise stated, all the translations in this chapter are ours. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Michał Antosiuk in providing English translations for this chapter.

lious souls, unhappy and noble; dreamers, whose defiance and disobedience is accompanied by the awareness that Europe appreciates their willingness to fight for survival.

BOKSZAŃSKI 2003, 51

Difficult years of political and economic transformation in Poland, starting in the 1980s, and the gradual opening to the West culminating in Poland joining the European Union in 2004, have had a significant impact on Polish self-perception. These changes resulted in increased emigration and a lack of barriers prohibiting contact with the so-called “Western mentality” and “Western living standards”. As observed by Rogaczewska and Gołdys (2009, 9), these factors could have influenced the development or deepening of the Polish inferiority complex relative to the Western countries of the European Union, which Poles stereotypically perceive as generally wealthy, modern, and “civilized”, with well-mannered citizens.

As self-stereotypes often draw from heterostereotypes, it is also possible that as Poland opened to the West, some negative heterostereotypes of Polish people started to infiltrate the Polish self-image. Such a possibility is indicated by Bartmiński:

Foreigners' opinions of our nation have always been negative. We've been perceived negatively not only by our closest neighbors: Ukrainians and Lithuanians (who viewed us from the position of weaker nations), as well as Germans and Russians (who observed us from the perspective of the stronger ones), but also by others, e.g., Swedes and, recently, by Czechs and—surprisingly—by Hungarians. These criticisms, often based on very particular sets of presumptions [...] have also played their role in informing our self-stereotype [...].

BARTMIŃSKI 1998, 15

External influences and West-East tensions are not the only sources of the changes observable in the self-perception of Poles. The high degree of polarization in Polish politics and society is visible in the debates around almost all political and social issues in Polish public discourse (e.g., the 2010 Smolensk catastrophe, reproductive rights, and the crisis around the constitutional tribunal of Poland).³ This makes social dialogue difficult and leads to the con-

3 In the journalistic discourse, the idiomatic expression *wojna polsko-polska* ‘the Poland-Poland war’ has been coined to refer to that problem; https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wojna_polsko-polska (last accessed: July 4, 2024).

struction of various in-groups and out-groups that are mobilized by politicians and the media to display contempt towards each other (an issue tackled previously from the linguistic perspective, e.g., by Chlebda 2017a, 2017b).

The socio-political context, outlined here only briefly due to the limited scope of the article, generates new linguistic labels through which we try to capture and describe communication processes accompanying the current debate on Polish identity. Many of these neological labels directly refer to the division into two groups of “us”—better, “real” Poles, and “them”—inferior, “not authentic” ones. The main aim of our article is to investigate how the selected neologisms are involved in creating and upholding that dichotomy and, as a consequence, constructing in-groups and out-groups in the current public discourse on Polish identity.

The lexical material, through the prism of which we try to analyze the dynamics of this process, includes two groups of discursively antagonistic descriptors used as self-stereotype-motivated labels of “them”. The first group consists of a lexical field driven by the neological metaphor POLISHNESS IS ONION-LIKE (e.g., *cebula* ‘onioner’, *cebula*two ‘onionism’); the second is formed by the central compound noun *fajnpol* ‘cool-o-Pole’ and its derivatives. The structural, semantic, and pragmatic analysis of these lexical units constitutes an intermediate stage in our attempt to understand the reasons for constructing discursive and social boundaries between “us” and “them”. A more specific goal of our analysis is to examine the potential of the notion of *othering* in investigating the social divide, which is mirrored by the new lexis communicating the problem of the self-perception of Poles.

2 Research Material

Our corpus consists of two groups of the most active linguistic exponents of the antagonistic debate concerning the problem of the self-perception of Poles, described in the previous section. Both groups consist of relatively new, negatively charged entities that appeared in Polish in the last fifteen years.⁴

4 Most of them have been registered in the online dictionary of Polish neologisms *The Language Observatory of the University of Warsaw* (<https://obserwatoriumjezykowe.uw.edu.pl/>) by one of the authors of the present article and a collaborator of the dictionary. The lexicographical study conducted for the needs of *The Language Observatory of the University of Warsaw* was an inspiration for the topic of this text. It also helped to notice a high level of activity in the lexis we analyze in the current identity discourse among Poles.

The first group comprises an extensive derivational nest driven by metaphorical extensions motivated by negative connotations and associations with the Polish noun *cebula* 'onion'. It includes new derivatives based on the noun *cebula*, such as *cebulak* 'onioner', i.e., a stereotypical Pole who is perceived as envious, mean, or primitive, and *cebulactwo* 'onionism', i.e., behaviors and attitudes stereotypically attributed to Poles, such as being envious, cheap, or primitive.

The second group of neologisms in our corpus consists of new compound nouns (and their derivatives) with the segment *fajn-*, which is the root of the Polish adjective *fajny* 'cool'. It includes one of the central entities in our study, *fajnpolak* 'cool-o-Pole', as well as neologisms like *fajnpolskość* 'cool-o-Polishness', *fajnpolski* 'cool-o-Polish', and *fajnpolaczek* 'cool-o-Polack'. It also includes rarely used entities like *fajnoprawak* 'cool-o-right-winger' or *fajno-kremlak* 'cool-o-Kremlin', and other nouns used more frequently but referring to another semantic field like *fajnokatolik* 'cool-o-Catholic', *fajnoksiądz* 'cool-o-priest', *fajnoteolog* 'cool-o-theologian', or most recently, *fajnonauka* 'cool-o-science' and *fajnonaukowiec* 'cool-o-scientist'. In this chapter, the listed words in the series are used mostly for a semantic structure analysis of the noun *fajnpolak*, which we decided to focus on.

The material illustrating the functioning of these lexemes is Internet-sourced; this type of source does not remain indifferent to the specificity of the semantics and the confrontational, inflammatory pragmatic force of our neologisms, as cyberspace has semiotic potential for using destructive lexis (as demonstrated by Karlińska and Kołos, this volume). The samples were excerpted manually from social media (mainly x.com, facebook.com) and Internet forums (e.g., wykop.pl). Some material has also been excerpted from the Corpus of Contemporary Polish Language.⁵ Importantly, the entities connected with the ONION metaphor could mostly be found in comments and posts, i.e., the forms of communication that tend to employ informal registers. By contrast, the compound words with the segment *fajn-* 'cool' appear in all registers, including official discourse (primarily political and journalistic).

It should be noted that the semantic and pragmatic specificity of the two analyzed lexical series resulted in some visible differences in the selection of the linguistic material and its description. The entities involving the ONION metaphor appeared in Polish earlier than the neologisms founded on the root *fajn-* 'cool', which is why the latter seem to be less entrenched discursively (at

5 <https://kwjp.ipipan.waw.pl/> (last accessed: July 5, 2024). See Marciniak et al. 2023.

least, such was their status while this text was being written). This characteristic is notable particularly in a number of contexts where the users either attempt to define the term *fajnpolak* or engage in trying to capture its range of denotations. Several examples illustrating this process were incorporated into our analysis in order to capture the moment of emerging, negotiating, and stabilizing the meaning of the noun *fajnpolak* 'cool-o-Pole'.

The spelling of the samples quoted in our analysis has been corrected in order to increase their comprehensibility. Unless otherwise stated, the emphasis in the quoted excerpts is ours.

The next section will demonstrate the methodological framework used in the analysis of these neologisms.

3 Theoretical and Methodological Framework

The neologisms included in our corpus can be considered an exemplification of neological key concepts, discursively charged in the sense of representing and identifying Polish discourse on Polishness. Through the semantic analysis of these terms, we try to capture the topics and themes that are most salient in the current discourse on Polishness. Also, modeling the semantics of the analyzed neologisms enables an insight into the argumentation lines in the axiological conflict concerning the current image of Polishness. Theoretical concepts referenced throughout the chapter include the notion of *othering*, the cognitive metaphor theory (applied in section 4), ethnolinguistic studies on stereotypes, as well as selected assumptions of cognitive discourse analysis.

In the confrontational debate concerning the contemporary self-perception of Poles, neologisms founded on the *ONION* imagery and the series of compound words with the segment *fajn-* 'cool' play important pragmatic roles that we try to capture. Among others, they function as callsigns in a discussion on Polishness, but they are also frequently inflammatory signs, triggering antagonistic disputes. In the current public discourse on Polish identity, they are lexical manifestations of the speaker's values and norms related to desirable—or more accurately—non-desirable aspects of Polishness and, at the same time, signals of distancing oneself from those who do not share this vision. This contextualized relationship between the discourse participants can be analyzed using the notion of *othering*.

3.1 *Notion of Othering*

Poul Rohleder, in his primarily psychological approach, defines *othering* in a way that foregrounds three aspects important to our analysis:

“Othering” refers to the process whereby an individual or group of people attribute **negative characteristics** to other individuals or groups of people that set them apart as representing that which is opposite to them. It refers to more than just stereotyping, as this can involve making generalizations about groups of people which may be positive or negative. Othering includes **an affect component**, where those who are othered are **irrationally feared, even hated**.

ROHLEDER 2014, 1306–1308; emphasis ours

The three highlighted elements are mirrored in our linguistic material and correspond to the key mechanisms involved in using the words we analyze, i.e., establishing a group of “others”, ascribing negative characteristics to “them”, accompanied by the emotional involvement of the speaker (often in the form of anxiety or hatred). It should be noted that the presence of “irrational fear” can only be partially confirmed using linguistic data.

From the various approaches to othering, we chose to follow the asymmetric division proposed by Lajos Brons, who notices the differences between *sophisticated* and *crude othering* (Brons 2015, 70–73). We classify the two analyzed neologisms as examples of the latter type of self-other distancing as they require an easily presented distribution of undesirable characteristics in which the self-other identification does not play a decisive role. Conversely, sophisticated othering, as posited by Brons, requires a potentially neutral dissimilarity demonstrated and elaborated in order to draw a conclusion based on self-other identifying that some trait is undesirable. A broader, context-based explanation of this statement will be explored in sections 4 and 5, emphasizing that crude othering frequently serves to display contempt.

Our material also reveals a strong link between the process of othering and the specific emotional and cognitive state of the person who performs it. As previously stated, Rohleder defines *othering* as a negative social categorization based on fear—one of the most primal and basic emotions entailing, among other things, a distance from other people (Rohleder 2014, 1308).⁶ This mechanism is particularly visible in crude othering, exemplified by the words we study. The speaker sets apart a subgroup of “them” within the community of “us” (i.e., Poles) based on a perceived unacceptable property. At the same time, the speaker posits themselves outside of this subgroup for fear of becoming

6 A claim that comes in the form of an aphoristic sentence, “the others come to represent that which we fear in ourselves” (Rohleder 2014, 1308).

“them”. In this sense, the process of othering mirrors the in-group norms, values, and attitudes that its members affiliate themselves with.

Brons’s distinction between sophisticated and crude othering is by no means clear-cut. Since both analyzed nominal structures—*cebulak* ‘onioner’ and *faj-nopolak* ‘cool-o-Pole’—are used by Poles to describe the other members of their own community, the neologisms can also be considered othering that is crude but was originally sophisticated, or othering that seems crude but is actually sophisticated (Brons 2015, 72).

3.2 *Stereotypes and Self-Stereotypes as Point of View Exponents*

Our methodological framework is informed by the linguistic theory of stereotypes as shaped primarily by Jerzy Bartmiński, the founder of the Ethnolinguistic School of Lublin and one of the key researchers behind the notion of *linguistic worldview* (see Zinken 2009). As stated by Bartmiński and Panasiuk, stereotypes are subjective images connecting descriptive characteristics of an entity with emotional assessments and evaluation through cognitive patterns based on a point of view (Bartmiński and Panasiuk 2001, 393–394). In his later work, Bartmiński described stereotypes as “socially entrenched images of people, things and events” (2013, 162), located in the so-called “stereotyped texts” (2013, 169). Stereotypes, self-stereotypes, and point of view are therefore interconnected in communication and discourse on the level of implied meaning.

In our study, which views neologisms as exponents of stereotypization, we refer to three aspects of the linguistic codification of stereotypes proposed by Chlebda (1998, 38): (i) formal, which translates to our retracing the structure of both analyzed neologisms, (ii) pragmatic, which here consists of presenting possible pragmatic functions of the neologisms at play, and (iii) cognitive, which consists of listing the selected foregrounded characteristics of the referents of the neologisms. Our research design also corresponds partly to the selected structural and linguistic aspects listed by Bartmiński (e.g., 2001, 381–382) among the exponents of the stereotypes: (i) analyzing a default feature or characteristic expressed literally, (ii) exploring metaphorical, non-literal meaning acquired in context, and (iii) depicting the so-called “internal form” of a word; its formal structure and motivation behind it.

In other methodological perspectives, stereotypes and self-stereotypes (seen as linguistic phenomena rather than psychological and sociological processes) have been linked with semantic prototypes (an observation made e.g., by Grzegorzczkowska 1998, 111–113; Bartmiński and Panasiuk 2001, 372). They have also been examined in a more traditional way as variants and invariants of the lexical system. An expanded description of the two neologisms may also suggest

the possible metonymic nature of stereotypes⁷ at the conceptual and linguistic level. However, we chose not to follow this promising path in this study.

3.3 *Significance of the Neologisms in the Discourse on Identity*

In psychology, the link between individual and collective identity or their linguistic and discursive exponents was investigated e.g., within the integrative model of social identification proposed by Ruth van Veelen and associated researchers (van Veelen et al. 2016). Two cognitive processes highlighted in this construct are *self-stereotyping* and *self-anchoring*. The former is based on defining, describing, and evaluating the group prototype, and applying the in-group norms and values to the self (van Veelen et al. 2016, 5). The latter consists of the projection of personal characteristics on the in-group and distinguishing it from the relevant out-groups (van Veelen et al. 2016, 6). Discourse strategies used for othering, and in particular, words that trigger it, can be thus analyzed as tools of social identification.

It has already been argued that linguistically oriented discourse analysis could provide ample evidence for key components of collective identity (Czachur 2020, 216). Throughout different discourse practices and formation levels: topic, modality of expression, concept, and strategy,⁸ a neologism can be used innovatively to fulfill the pragmatic function intended by the speaker due to their semantic potential and its lack of semantic stability.

Despite this instability, it is possible to treat these neologisms as topic words that occur with outstanding frequency in a text or collection of texts compared with the reference corpus (Scott 2001) and, as a consequence, concepts (or keywords) that constitute an output discourse (Czachur 2020, 241).⁹ In this article, we focused on the qualitative analysis (i.e., tracing the importance of the words

7 The established path of lexical selection enables the speaker to foreground traits conventional for the stereotype and assign them in the act of nominalization even if they are not exposed in the context. Simultaneously, the act of usage referring to the stereotype can be read out in terms of generalization with a “typical” target being stretched out onto all representatives of the category (see Bartmiński and Panasiuk 2001, 377–378; Bartmiński 2007, 91). Such reasoning can be considered metonymic only based on the recent cognitive linguistic theories foregrounding the “conceptual contiguity” roots of metonymy (see Bierwiazzonek 2013; Kowalewski 2023) and its prototypical structure (see Peirsman and Geeraerts 2006; Barcelona 2011).

8 Within the meaning presented by Foucault (1977) and linguistically adapted by Czachur (2020, 118–121).

9 Czachur refers to those specific expressions in various ways: e.g., as *topic words*, *keywords*, or *flagship words*. He assumes that the most relevant way to indicate them are survey questionnaires, but at the same time, he equates topic words with collective symbols and metaphors, despite the prominent differences in their semantic description.

in the Polish identity discourse) rather than the quantitative one (i.e., calculating the frequency of the neologisms). We assume that the neologisms related to the Polish identity discourse are significant pragmatic exponents of the tendencies and aspirations within the community.

4 Depersonifying Metaphor as a Tool of Crude Othering: The Case of *cebulak* ‘Onioner’

In this section we present quotes that illustrate the use of the *ONION* metaphor to express disdain held by the authors for some manifestations of traditional Polish character. Both the use of *ONION*-related neologisms and the traits discussed fall within the scope of crude othering: “they”, i.e., people who exhibit the feature in question, are inferior to “us” who do not. Although some of the features presented correspond to self-stereotypes or heterostereotypes about Poles in general, the authors of the posts should be understood as distancing themselves, implicitly, yet strongly, from such mindsets. Therefore all references to Polish people and Polishness in our subsection titles and analyses should be understood as a kind of shorthand for “their kind of Poles/Polishness” (see 4.2. for a more detailed analysis).

4.1 *The ONION Metaphor: Lexical Exponents and Their Conceptual and Lexical Function*

The collection of metaphor-driven neologisms, all based on the extension of the metaphor *POLISHNESS IS ONION-LIKE*, includes such terms as: the neosemanticism *cebula* ‘onion’ referring to some mindsets, attitudes, behaviors, perceived traits, and their manifestations, as well as its derivatives: *cebulak/cebularz* ‘lit. onioner’, *cebulaczek* ‘lit onioner-N.DIM’, *cebulactwo* ‘lit. onionism’, *cebulaczyć/cebulić* ‘lit. to onion; to act like an onioner’, *cebulacki* ‘lit. onion-like’, *cebulandia* ‘lit. onionland’. The onion-related metaphor presents some idiomatic potency as well; it results in the derivation of such expressions as: *Polak cebulak* ‘Pole the onioner’, *Polaczek cebulaczek* ‘Polack the onioner-N.DIM’, *kraj kwitnącej cebuli* ‘land of the onion blossom (used with respect to Poland)’. According to the data excerpted using Google Trends, the first appearance of one of the most active terms in the collection, *cebulactwo* ‘onionism’, dates back to 2010.

A short lexicographical query shows that occasional metaphorical expressions based on negative connotations of the noun *cebula* ‘onion’ had been in operation in Polish long before 2010, when the extensive field of study related to Poles and Polishness started developing. For instance, the noun *cebula* ‘onion’

itself occurred in a metaphorical sense as a “deriding nickname for someone who is perceived as a fool” presumably in the 19th century (Karłowicz, Kryński, and Niedźwiedzki 1900, 256–257). Also, its derivative *cebularz*¹⁰ ‘onioner’ occurred in Polish in a similar sense and with the same negative axiology in some regional registers of Polish.¹¹ The Polish language dictionary published in 1807 notes this noun with another metaphorical meaning: “someone who is cheap, stingy” (Linde 1807, 219).¹² These observations could substantiate the claim that the metaphorization of the concept of ‘onion’ has been present in the Polish lexicon for, at least, two centuries.¹³ Also, the Polish *Słownik stereotypów i symboli ludowych* (*Dictionary of Stereotypes and Folk Symbols*; Bartmiński 2022, 295–310) extensively documents the great significance of the onion in Polish language and culture, together with its negative connotations.

The group of new terms listed at the beginning of this section is noteworthy not only because of their new form (e.g., new derivatives *cebulacki* ‘onion-like’, *cebulaczyć/cebulić/cebulować* ‘to onion’) and the neosemantic extensions of two of them (*cebula* ‘onion’, and *cebularz* ‘onioner’). Most importantly, the utterances where these words are being used have a specific new reference. These lexical items refer to a specific concept of Polishness, as perceived by those who use the term and attributed to those Poles to whom the term refers. Their meaning is general and underspecified, though they all share a semantic invariant. This invariant communicates various negative character traits, attitudes, and behaviors stereotypically attributed to Poles by other Poles, or refers, in a broader sense, to features of Poles and the concept of Polishness

10 This noun has the phonetic variants *cybularz* and *cybuloz*.

11 It is registered in Jan Karłowicz’s *Dictionary of Polish Dialects* published in 1900 (Karłowicz 1900, 162). Additionally, Marciniak-Firadza shows the high productivity of the noun *cebula* ‘onion’ in dialectal registers of Polish (Marciniak-Firadza 2017, 16–19).

12 The lexicographical data collected from this source indicate that the noun *cebularz* ‘onioner’ literally referred to a person who sold onions. The chain of associations between the relative cheapness of onions as the object of trading and meanness as a stereotypical feature of their dealers became a cognitive basis of metaphorization which motivates the meaning of the noun *cebularz* ‘someone whose job is to sell onions’.

13 Moreover, the negative associations between onions and stereotypical perceptions of people and their physical appearance, character, behaviors, and attitudes is not limited to Polish but is also observable in other languages. For instance, according to a study by Larivée and Longhi, the British associate onions with the French in a mocking way because the latter use onion in many of their dishes (Larivée and Longhi 2012, 8–10). As per the *Oxford English Dictionary*, American and British slang include the noun *onion*, which metaphorically denotes “a foolish or contemptible person” (https://www.oed.com/dictionary/onion_n1?tl=true#33573588; last accessed: June 27, 2024). These data indicate that negative associations with onions commonly create fertile ground for metaphorical conceptualization of others’ behavior, character traits, etc.

that the writers condemn or at least criticize. We should note that as these are both neological units and metaphorically motivated lexemes, their meaning is not stabilized yet (or will not fully be, as they are strongly discursive-dependent lexemes); it is dependent on contextual activation of a particular metaphorized feature or scenario, therefore rather dynamic. Some neologisms (such as *cebula* 'onion' and *cebulactwo* 'onionism') are also polysemous; their polysemy is motivated by the regular model of metonymic extension PERSON FOR THEIR BEHAVIOR, ATTITUDE, OR FEATURE OF CHARACTER. The metonymic shift enables a personal reference, which plays an important role in construing direct and more explicit distance from a specific group of "them", not only from the abstract features and behaviors projected on "them".¹⁴

The terms listed at the beginning of this section, driven by the metaphor POLISHNESS IS ONION-LIKE, despite their different lexical status and level of stabilization in language, refer to certain sets of qualities which form a number of semantic variants. In the subsequent sections, we synthetically present those that are the most active and stabilized in our research material.

4.1.1 Polish People are Envious

In our data, one of the most common characteristics of Polishness evoked by the ONION metaphor is the stereotypical perception of Poles as people who tend to be envious, not empathic:

- (1) *Typowe polskie cebulactwo. Patrz, patrz, jaką ma furę. Na pewno bogaty albo ukradt.*¹⁵

'Typical Polish **onionism**: "Will you take a look at his posh car! I'm sure he's either filthy rich or a thief!"'

- (2) *Typowy polaczek cebulaczek, boli dupsko, że ktoś z Ukrainy ma lepszy samochód?? Skąd wiesz, cebulaczku, czy ci ludzie nie przeznaczyli większości swojego majątku na pomoc Ukraińcom? Przestań cebulaczyć [...], bo tylko wstyd robisz.*¹⁶

14 The polysemy is not only motivated by a regular metonymic shift but also by a chain of other metaphorical extensions, e.g., a pair of semantic doublets *cebulaczyć/cebulić/cebulować* 'to onion' developed a meaning not related directly to the concept of Polishness: 'to save money excessively' (e.g., *Wydać 5 złotych więcej na normalnego kuriera zamiast cebulaczyć*. 'Why don't you spend 5 more zlotys on a normal courier service instead of acting like an onioner!'; <https://joemonster.org/filmy/108343>; last accessed: June 5, 2024).

15 https://x.com/search?q=cebulactwo&src=typed_query&f=top (last accessed: June 26, 2024).

16 <https://x.com/ironfist666999/status/1650966987730812930> (last accessed: June 26, 2024).

‘Typical **Polack onioner**. Feeling butthurt that someone from Ukraine has a better car?? How do you know that those people didn’t use most of their wealth to help the Ukrainians, you little **onioner**? Stop **onioning** [...]; you’re only shaming yourself!’

- (3) *Najgorsza w Polakach jest ta ukryta cebula—ja nie mam, inni też nie powinni mieć. Nie latam samolotem—zlikwidujemy, nie jeżdżę rowerem—zakażmy, nie mam auta—opodatkujemy, nie korzystam z komunikacji miejskiej—ograniczmy. Byleby druga osoba miała gorzej niż ja.*¹⁷

‘The worst thing about Polish people is that **onion** they hide inside themselves: “If I can’t have something, others shouldn’t have it either. I don’t fly, so airlines should be shut down; I don’t ride a bicycle, so bicycles should be banned; I don’t own a car, so cars should be taxed; I don’t use public transport, so the use of public transport should be minimized. It’s okay, as long as others have it worse than me.”’

According to the study by Rogaczewska and Goldys on Polish self-stereotypes, envy is considered to be one of the main Polish national vices (Rogaczewska and Goldys 2009, 15). From a psychological perspective, it is one of the emotions that is the most devastating for its experiencer and for their relationships (much more than jealousy) because it is entangled with anger and hatred. Envy also involves *schadenfreude* understood as satisfaction over somebody else’s harm or misfortune.

The literature on Polish self-stereotypes suggests that there is a specifically Polish depiction of that trait, which is directly expressed in the quoted material, especially in (3) (the reasoning ascribed to a typical Pole: “If I can’t have something, others shouldn’t have it either”) and (1), where the Polish trait of envy is stereotypically related to a belief that something—an object of envy—has been obtained by another person either illegally, or in an immoral way.¹⁸

Importantly, in contrast to other stereotypical traits communicated through the **ONION** metaphor presented in the following sections, envy did not appear on the list of the most common heterostereotypes of Polishness twenty or so years ago (based on the comparative studies included in Kolarska-Bobińska 2003). However, the study from 2013 conducted by the **MANDS** Agency

¹⁷ <https://x.com/kacpizlyromans/status/1760734989128454326> (last accessed: June 26, 2024).

¹⁸ There are numerous historical and political factors behind such suspicious convictions about others; discussing them is beyond the scope of this study.

provides different results, namely that being intolerant and envious are two major self-stereotypical Polish traits.¹⁹

4.1.2 Polish People are Cheap; *Polish Grift*

Another characteristic of Poles frequently represented in our corpus through the neologisms motivated by the metaphor POLISHNESS IS ONION-LIKE can be presented as a complex of features referring to the stereotype of Poles as cunning penny-pinchers.

- (4) *Lidl wymyślił sobie promocję, w której niezadowolony z towaru klient mógł odzyskać swoje pieniądze, nawet jeśli produkt został całkowicie zużyty. Nie przewidzieli jednego—narodowego cebulactwa. Ludzie zaczęli masowo oddawać wszystko, co zakupili. Trzeba było pokazać puste opakowanie, to wypakowywali towar już na sklepowym parkingu i hura po zwrot pieniędzy.*²⁰

'So, Lidl came up with this promotional gimmick that allows every customer who's unhappy with the product they'd bought to get their money back, even if said product was already spent or consumed. But the company didn't take our national **onionism** into account. One of the conditions was that you had to show them the empty package, so people would simply take the product out of its package in the parking lot and off they went to get their money back!'

- (5) *Cebulandia na każdym kroku. Mieszkam kiedyś przy Parku Chorzowskim. Podjeżdżał koleś. Portfel wypchany nominatami, by zaliczyć wszystkie atrakcje: [...] zoo i parę knajp, a auto zostawiał na trawniku, bo 5 zeta na parking to fortuna.*²¹

'Everywhere you look, you see traces of Onionland. I used to live near Park Chorzowski. There was this guy who used to drive over every once in a while. He carried with him a wallet stacked with cash, so that he could spend it at the local points of interest: [...] the zoo and a couple of bars, but he always parked on a nearby lawn because apparently paying 5 zlotys for the parking lot would have been too much.'

Those utterances relate to one of the main heterostereotypes of Poles represented by the expression *polskie cwaniactwo* 'Polish grift'. It means achieving

19 <https://mands.pl/index.php/wyniki-badan/page/3/> (last accessed: July 5, 2024).

20 <https://antyweb.pl/lidl-promocja-cebula> (last accessed: June 26, 2024).

21 <https://x.com/ComoRasta/status/1666405907587112961> (last accessed: June 26, 2024).

one's goals, often at someone else's expense, by scheming, omitting the law, etc. The association of Polishness with grift is particularly strong in the negative German stereotype of *Polaken*, *Polakke* (Bokszański 2003, 57–61). It is possible that this heterostereotype has become a part of Polish self-stereotype, seen currently through the prism of the ONION metaphor.

4.1.3 Polish People are Primitive, Mannerless

The ONION metaphor tends to be a productive way of associating Polishness with low standards of personal culture and crudeness:

- (6) *Jak zwykle cebulactwo dookoła. Czekał na dworcu na pociąg, a jakaś baba na całą halę drze się przez telefon i wszyscy wiedzą, że czeka na wizytę u lekarza, a księgowa pomyliła się w papierach. Czekał jeszcze na kanapki z kiełbasą w wagonie i będzie komplet.*²²

'As usual, **onionism** all around. I'm at the station, waiting for a train, while some stupid cow is on the phone, shouting at the top of her lungs so that everyone knows that she's waiting for a doctor's appointment and that her bookkeeper has made a mistake in the documents. I can't wait for someone to start eating sausage sandwiches as soon as we board the train.'

- (7) *Można nie spróbować sushi, ale być święcie przekonany, że to obrzydlistwo. Typowe cebulactwo. Tak samo jak klaskanie w samolocie, rękoczynny w Lidlu, kolejki przed otwarciem hipermarketu [...].*²³

'Someone who's never tasted sushi in their life, but they are absolutely sure that it must taste awful. Typical **onionism**. Just like clapping on an airplane, starting fights in Lidl, queuing for an opening of a supermarket [...].'

This trait is strongly connected with perceiving Poles as uncivilized people, which is discussed in the next section. That negative, overgeneralized evaluation of some behaviors (talking too loudly on the phone) and habits (clapping on an airplane after landing) can be motivated by a stereotypically positive image of an average Western citizen who is commonly depicted as well-mannered and "cool" (see also section 5.2).

²² https://x.com/Idgie_M/status/1721421166131196110 (last accessed: June 26, 2024).

²³ <https://gs.uni.opole.pl/moj-kraj-taki-piekny/> (last accessed: June 29, 2024).

4.1.4 Polish People are Backward, Uncivilized, and Too Conservative

The ONION metaphor can also be an exponent of a self-stereotypical belief that Poles are too conservative and therefore backward and uncivilized. These traits are often ascribed in contrast to a more progressive and liberal approach to certain social and political problems, e.g., reproductive rights. In the background of these issues, there are references to the belief that the Polish conservative approach to these problems is motivated by a relatively strong religious (Catholic) faith (however, this is not expressed explicitly in the samples quoted below). There might be some correlations between these references and a decline in public trust in the Catholic Church currently observable in Poland.²⁴

- (8) – *Mamy 2024 rok i radość z przyjęcia tabletki dzień po. [...] mi to tylko uświadamia, jaki ten kraj to jest średniowiecze. Robimy sukces z oczywistości.*
 – *To jest Polska, Polandia, a nawet Cebulandia, nie zapominajmy.*²⁵
 ‘– The year is 2024 and everyone’s cheering the legalization of the morning-after pill. [...] it reminds me how medieval this country is. We’re treating something that should be taken as a given as if it were some great success. – Let’s not forget that this is Poland, Polandia, or even Onionland if you will.’
- (9) [...] *chodzenie w koszulkach z kotwicą to wciąż jest cebulactwo i siara, czy już elegancja i europejski salonowy szyk?*²⁶
 ‘Is walking around in t-shirts with anchors²⁷ printed on them still seen as an example of onionism and cringe, or has it already become a sign of elegance and European haute couture?’

The neologisms used in both of these utterances depict Polish people in a negative way, in contrast to generally positive stereotypical associations with Western countries, prevailing in the consciousness of many Poles.²⁸ This is made

24 This fact is proven by the poll conducted in 2020 by Instytut Badań Rynkowych i Społecznych: <https://www.rp.pl/spoleczenstwo/art915811-sondaz-wzroslo-zaufanie-do-sadow-i-u-e-spadlo-do-kosciola> (last accessed: July 9, 2024).

25 <https://x.com/Gracja1311/status/1760700029273010385> (last accessed: May 26, 2024).

26 https://x.com/dmowski_p/status/1447336669175234561 (last accessed: May 26, 2024).

27 The anchor was a symbol of hope for regaining independence for Poland occupied by Nazi Germany. It was widely used as a symbol of resistance during World War II. Today it is still regarded by some as a distinct patriotic symbol.

28 This aspect of Polish stereotypes of the West is presented by Warchala (Warchala 2003, 80–83).

explicit in (9), while example (8) presents the Polish attitude to birth control as more suitable for the Middle Ages. 'Onioners', therefore, are those Poles who do not have the "Western" or "European mentality" because they are not politically progressive enough, and they are too attached to religion.

4.2 *ONION as a Shaming Symbol and a Tool of Othering*

Which connotations and associations of the Polish noun *cebula* 'onion' have become the source of metaphorical conceptualization and a negative evaluation of Polishness through that metaphor? The metaphorical extension may be activated by the perception of the onion as one of the cheapest vegetables and ingredients. Its cheapness may evoke associations with the so-called *polska bieda* 'Polish poverty',²⁹ as well as an excessive tendency to save attributed to Poles who are, hyperbolically speaking, willing to eat onions just to save money. The smell of onion, sharp and pungent, long-lasting, and difficult to neutralize, is perceived as unpleasant and persistent. Besides, the smell of stewed or fried onions is commonly associated in many cultures with peasant food (e.g., stewed onion with cracklings was and still is popular in many Polish regions). All this can activate an olfactory stereotype: someone who smells of onion is rustic, backward, uncivilized, and therefore uncool. Furthermore, the onion is a very common and easily accessible vegetable that can be preserved from one harvest to another. That could also be one of the reasons why onion is perceived as not a very "sophisticated" vegetable. It can summon stereotypical associations with Polish people, who are thought to be primitive, crude, and ignorant.

These connotations and associations form the basis for synesthetic metaphorical transformation. Its effect is not only linguistic: a new meaning emerges. The case of the metaphorical depiction of Polishness through the *ONION* metaphor can be considered an example of the emergence of supralinguistic structure, since, following Ricoeur's study, the metaphor "[may] bring to language the implicit semantics of the symbol" (Ricoeur 1976, 69). One of the signs of this process taking place can be the popularity of a visual representation of the metaphor *POLISHNESS IS ONION-LIKE* in memes which depict onions as an attribute of Polish people. The symbolic representation of Poles and Polishness is, presumably, a new discursive case. It may also

29 This is a phrase referring to a Polish cultureme functioning as a vehicle for the specifically Polish experience of poverty which has grown in the collective Polish consciousness. Polish poverty is associated, from a historical perspective, with the peasant origin of the majority of Poles and years of war and occupation. From the more contemporary perspective of the 1990s, it is also associated with the difficult time of political transformation.

turn out to be an ephemeral depiction, as stereotypical representations are not completely resistant to change.

Importantly, both the metaphor POLISHNESS IS ONION-LIKE and its discursive symbol are semiotic carriers of a negative evaluation of Polishness and Poles. As already mentioned, in the contemporary Polish discourse on Polish identity, they play the role of exponents of certain pragmatic and discursive strategies of othering understood in this case as identifying “them”, meaning those who are *onioners*, and “us”, *non-onioners*—those who define ourselves in relation to who we are not. There are certain strategies for constructing such borders in the discourse through the ONION metaphor. We list and discuss them separately below, even though in reality these are overlapping processes:³⁰

- 1) stereotyping, which manifests in presenting an overgeneralized, therefore simplified portrayal of “them”, reduced to a set of negative traits;
- 2) hyperbolizing, being a consequence of constructing a stereotypical depiction of “them”, in which minor faults are magnified;
- 3) labeling, which leads to constructing new, substitute “names” that intend to categorize “them” in the collective consciousness as inferior, untrustworthy, suspicious people, therefore not belonging to the labeler’s community;
- 4) ridiculing, understood as attributing negative features (in particular: funny, pathetic) to a person from a position of superiority, which in turn brings the satisfaction of a ruler to the ridiculer. The mocking effect results from the surprising, incongruent, and mechanical reduction of a human being, unique, free, and irreducible, to a vegetable, something not fully alive, very common, and easy to reproduce.³¹ It also arises from evoking associations with the embarrassing bad smell of onions. Activating these associations may lead to the effect of “shaming through ridiculing” (Bergson 1977, 228). Such ridicule has strong pragmatic force and discursive effectiveness because humor is always an attractive and effective way of negating;
- 5) depersonification, manifesting in two aspects: in the deprivation of subjectivity through stereotyping and labeling—thinking and talking about “them” in a categorical, rather than a personalized way, and in ridiculing, discussed above.

30 The list of strategies is based on the typology of Karwat (2007) and van Leeuwen (1996).

31 This explanation refers to Bergson’s so-called mechanistic theory of humor (Bergson 1977), superiority theories on laughter, represented by Hobbes (1954), and the theories of incongruence (Schopenhauer 1995).

All these strategies, discursively interwoven, are used to articulate distance from “them” who belong to an out-group. “They” are relegated to that position because they do not fit “our” vision of desirable modern Polishness. “They” are uncool, cringe-worthy, too conservative. “They” do not have a “Western mentality”. “They” represent all those traits which “we” either do not accept in ourselves or which we fear. Constituting “them”, who are at the same time perceived as “other” and inferior, is necessary for creating a favorable image of “us”—those who are aware of the main Polish vices and those who perhaps have overcome them.

5 Othering through Evoking Seemingly Positive Traits: The Case of *fajnopolak* ‘cool-o-Pole’

5.1 *Structure, First Appearances, and Discursive Underpinnings*

The second of the analyzed neologisms, *fajnopolak*, with the stems *fajn*- ‘cool, great’ and *-Polak* ‘Pole, a Polish person’ connected with an infix, is related to a more progressive approach to national identity and could be rendered in English as the hyphenated compound *cool-o-Pole*. The proposed English translation preserves the structure of the Polish compound and will be used consistently in the following sections.

The first element of the compound is semantically related in Polish with adjectives similar to the English *cool*, *nice*, *great*, *okay*, and *right*. It was originally used as part of the name for the promotional campaign *Fajna Polska* ‘Cool Poland’ organized by journalists from the Polish edition of *Newsweek* magazine led by Tomasz Lis (at that time the editor-in-chief) in May and June 2012, several days before the opening of the UEFA European Championship in Poland and Ukraine. The campaign was announced as “a sign of positive thinking about Poland”³² and a way to work through “that damned inferiority complex in our heads.”³³ Press releases related to the campaign were “presenting Poland as a beautiful, dynamically developing country and Poles as hard-working, resourceful and creative people.”³⁴ The idea behind the campaign and the use of the adjective *fajny* (whose conventional lexical meaning

32 <https://www.newsweek.pl/polska/akcja-fajna-polska-newsweeka-aleksandra-pawlicka/e/kvd77k> (last accessed: September 1, 2024).

33 <https://www.newsweek.pl/polska/fajna-polska-polska-nie-tylko-sympatyczna/mq4osze> (last accessed: September 1, 2024).

34 <https://www.wirtualnemedia.pl/artykul/fajna-polska-nowa-akcja-newsweek-polska> (last accessed: September 1, 2024).

is intrinsically linked with positive evaluation) may imply that Poland and the members of the Polish national community have so far had mostly negative associations, which should be re-evaluated in order to notice and appreciate the positive side of Polishness. Since this image, promulgated as positive and modern, had a clear political background and elaborated important aspects of Polish national identity, the entire idea was considered naïve by the opponents of the campaign, which probably triggered the new nominal coinage *fajnopolak* ‘cool-o-Pole’.

The neologism first appeared as a reaction to *Newsweek*’s campaign and was used primarily within the political discourse to depict a specific group of Poles. As seen below in an excerpt from an essay entitled “*Fajnopolacy*” “‘Cool-o-Poles’”, written by Polish conservative publicist Rafał Ziemkiewicz, the typical referent of the noun *fajnopolak* is utterly individualistic, devoid of community spirit bordering on selfishness, and focused on their own success:

(10) *Pojawia się też element, którego wcześniej nie było: wyraźna niechęć do wspólnoty. Fajnopolak* Lisa “*niczego nie oczekuje od państwa*”, “*liczy sam na siebie*”, i wie, że jego sukces jest jego indywidualną sprawą.³⁵

‘There is also an element that was not there before: a clear aversion to the community. [Tomasz] Lis’s **cool-o-Pole** “does not expect anything from the state”, “counts on himself”, and knows that his success is his individual matter.’

Even in this early usage,³⁶ the referent of the neologism is being discursively othered by a juxtaposition with the name of Tomasz Lis—a journalist with an opposing, more progressive ideological attitude than the one declared by Ziemkiewicz. Thus, the original meaning of the phrase *Fajna Polska* ‘Cool Poland’ was semantically reversed by Ziemkiewicz in order to create an ironic re-evaluation. This connection between the semantic structure and pragmatic function of the neologism in question was initially well preserved and reproduced in its later occurrences. The noun with its ironic tenor was characterized as “a kind of sweet revenge of the right-wing counterculture and their journalistic Blitzkrieg”.³⁷

35 www.rp.pl/komentarze/art3753641-fajnopolacy (last accessed: May 31, 2024).

36 In later posts published on the portal X, Ziemkiewicz credited himself as the author of the noun; however, this trail was not investigated in our study because it falls beyond its scope.

37 www.forsal.pl/artykuly/1414109,fajnopolak-nie-chce-byc-juz-obciachowy-recenzja.html (last accessed: May 31, 2024).

A noteworthy period of the analyzed term's semantic development could be traced back to 2019, when Piotr Stankiewicz, a Polish philosopher and essayist, published the book *My fajnopolacy* 'We, the cool-o-Poles', whose title was borrowed from the author's polemical column written in 2017 for Polish weekly magazine *Tygodnik Powszechny*. Stankiewicz did not seek to provide any particular definition of the word used in the title, which resulted in the readers, reviewers, and commentators attempting to provide one. His intention (Stankiewicz 2019, 13) was to expand the portrait of people who can be classified as *fajnopolacy* 'cool-o-Poles' in order to enable a better understanding of this group. In the final chapter of the book, he appeals to the readers (including himself among them) for a more friendly attitude towards others and a more critical attitude towards themselves:

- (11) *Tę książkę przeczytają—mam nadzieję!—ci, do których ona jest faktycznie adresowana. A więc my, fajnopolacy. Używam pierwszej osoby, bo przecież sam też jestem fajnopolakiem. Sam popełniam te wszystkie błędy i właśnie dlatego o nich piszę, bo znam je dobrze z autopsji* (Stankiewicz 2019, 160)

'This book will be read—I hope!—by those to whom it is actually addressed. That is, us, the cool-o-Poles. And I use the first person, because I am also a cool-o-Pole. I make all these mistakes myself and that is why I am writing about them, because I know them well from my own experience.'

The excerpt demonstrates that Stankiewicz used the label *fajnopolak* 'cool-o-Pole' with a clear focus on the flaws and mistakes typical of the members of this category. Additionally, in his view, this category is broad enough to include almost anyone who identifies with Polishness. Accordingly, some of the definitions of *fajnopolak* 'cool-o-Pole' proposed by the publisher and the readers of the book (as illustrated by (12)–(13) below) retained the ambiguity expressed by the author and stated that specific elements of the stereotypically interpreted *fajnopolak* 'cool-o-Pole' can potentially be relatable to every member of the Polish community:

- (12) *Kim są tytułowi fajnopolacy? Po trochu jesteśmy nimi my wszyscy, a po trochu—nikt. Bycie fajnopolakiem wcale nie jest takie fajne, jak się z pozoru może wydawać.*³⁸

38 www.lubimyczytac.pl/ksiazka/4885657/my-fajnopolacy (last accessed: May 31, 2024).

‘Who are the titular **cool-o-Poles**? All of us are partly them, and partly—none of us is. Being a **cool-o-Pole** is not as cool as it may seem at first glance.’

- (13) *Fajnopolacy to my wszyscy i nikt z nas, bo nikt z nas nie zachowuje się tak, aby pokryć swoją osobowością wszystkich omawianych w książce sytuacji, ale z drugiej strony—niemal każdy z nas choć raz zachował się tak, że mógłby nosić na piersi medal “fajnopolaka”. Czy z dumą?*³⁹

‘The **cool-o-Poles** are all of us and none of us, because none of us behave in such a way as to cover all the situations discussed in the book with our personality, but on the other hand—almost every one of us has behaved at least once in a way that would allow us to wear the medal of a “**cool-o-Pole**”. But would we wear it proudly?’

The observations quoted above prove that the whole concept of a *fajnopolak* ‘cool-o-Pole’ is strongly related to broader abstract categories such as identity, self, and value hierarchy. All of them are being modified in discourse and consequently used to create oppositions, reinforce the emotional component, or, in particular, highlight the antagonisms within the discourse community. These functions were mentioned before as factors of othering and are visible in any act of usage that includes the investigated lexeme.

The increasing number of occurrences of the compound is a tendency that may be related to internal tensions within the Polish national community, as illustrated by the definition proposed in the year 2019 in *The Language Observatory of the University of Warsaw*:

- (14) *Polak budujący poczucie własnej wartości w kontrze do polskości postrzeganej stereotypowo jako cechy prowincjonalnej, zaściankowej.*⁴⁰

‘A Pole who builds their self-esteem in opposition to Polishness stereotypically perceived as a provincial, parochial feature.’

In *The Language Observatory of the University of Warsaw*, the word is marked by the style label *lekceważąco* ‘with disapproval, depreciating’, which means that a person referred to as a *fajnopolak* is somebody who is discursively or rhetorically excluded. Somewhat ironically, the exclusion of the referents of this noun stems partly from the fact that they themselves are perceived as a group who

39 <https://lubimyczytac.pl/ksiazka/4885657/my-fajnopolacy> (last accessed: May 31, 2024).

40 www.nowewyrazy.uw.edu.pl/haslo/fajnopolak.html (last accessed: May 31, 2024). See Kłosińska et al. 2020–2024.

deems themselves superior and acts with disdain towards the not-so-modern members of the community (a feature that we elaborate on in section 5.1.3). Furthermore, there is a clear distinction between supporters and opponents of the attitude in question. There is a considerable difference between the semantic components foregrounded by speakers who do not identify with the concept of *fajnpolak*, and those highlighted by speakers who might define themselves this way. Since our analysis is centered around *fajnpolak* as a lexical means of othering, we concentrate on the former perspective, i.e., on the way this word is used to construe an out-group within the group of people identifying as Poles.

The concept of *fajnpolak* is used predominantly in selected types of discourse to describe people who attempt to marginalize whole communities and who display their superiority over them. At the same time, this lexical entity highlights the wrongness of such an attitude (as seen from the perspective of a person who does not condone a certain notion of Polishness) and enables criticism of it. The fact that the lexeme *fajnpolak* 'cool-o-Pole' is used prototypically as an insult, as well as a vehicle of othering, is what makes the analysis more multidimensional. In this article, we examine utterances that expose negative attitudes towards people called *fajnpolacy* 'cool-o-Poles' or that attribute faults and defects to this group. In this way, *fajnpolak* 'cool-o-Pole' is a label for the out-group treated as inferior, and it can play a part in the process of othering.

The increase in the number of occurrences of the lexical unit over the last five years is a testimony to the importance of this lexeme in evoking stereotypical views of a modern Pole. Selected contexts extracted from the Internet and press sources, as well as from The Corpus of Contemporary Polish Language, suggest three main components of this concept: exaggerated displays of affiliation to the middle or upper class (section 5.1.1), imitating the citizens of developed Western European countries, especially their political beliefs (section 5.1.2), and a contempt displayed towards "others" (section 5.1.3). Interestingly, the group despised by the referents of the noun *fajnpolak* roughly coincides with those depreciated by the users of the metaphor POLISHNESS IS ONION-LIKE.

5.1.1 *Fajnpolak* 'cool-o-Pole' as a Pretender Displaying Their Social Status

The first and most frequently mentioned trait of a person called *fajnpolak* 'cool-o-Pole' is their continuous hankering for a higher status (of the middle or upper class) and struggle to obtain as many status symbols as possible. As the linguistic evidence below demonstrates, the list of such symbols is not rigidly defined, but they are usually associated with social media self-images of being

ambitious and successful, traveling to foreign countries and knowing their cultures, as well as having a skeptical approach to Polish traditions or possibly the whole national identity.

Another trait that can be found in some instances of the word's use is a tendency for the *fajnopolak* 'cool-o-Pole' to acquire attributes confirming their status. The difference between the first and second defining features is the difference between showing aspirations and presenting achievements, which might be self-contradictory, as it requires a person to be fulfilled and goal-oriented at the same time. Moreover, as seen in the utterances below, the expressive display of wealth provokes concern or compassion (15), accusations of affectation and flaunting caused by shame about their rural and potentially peasant origin (16), and mockery (17) from those using the noun *fajnopolak* 'cool-o-Pole' as a discursive tag:

- (15) *Fajnopolak* zawsze nie jest wystarczająco fajny. To jest takie aspiracyjne. To jest aspiracja, która nie jest fajna. To aspiracja, aby sprostać wymiarom fajności, które nie są do końca zdrowe. *Fajnopolak* to ktoś, kto jest fajny przeciwko komuś. Przeciwno tym, którzy nie są dość *fajnopolscy*.⁴¹

'A cool-o-Pole is never cool enough. It's so pushy. It's an aspiration that isn't cool. It's an aspiration to live up to dimensions of coolness that aren't entirely wholesome. A cool-o-Pole is someone who's cool against someone. Against those who aren't like that cool-o-Polish enough.'

- (16) *Fajnopolak* to najczęściej osoba [...], która mieszka w dużym mieście i chce pokazać swoją nowoczesność, fajność i dobry styl, odrzucając tradycję, a przede wszystkim wstydzi się swoich przodków. W linii pokoleniowej—rodzice *fajnopolaka* (pokolenie z lat 50/60) przeprowadzili [się] do miasta ze wsi, a ich dziadkowie grzebali gołymi rękami w ziemi i byli głęboko wierzącymi katolikami.⁴²

'A cool-o-Pole is most often a person [...] who lives in a big city and wants to show off his modernity, coolness and good style, rejecting tradition, and above all, is ashamed of his ancestors. In the generational line—the parents of the cool-o-Pole (generation from the 50s and 60s) moved to the city from the countryside, and their grandparents dug in the ground with their bare hands and were deeply religious catholics.'

41 www.tokfm.pl/Tokfm/7,169490,24884800,fajnopolak-jest-fajny-zawsze-przeciwko-komus-przyklad-wyobrazmy.html (last accessed: May 31, 2024).

42 wykop.pl/wpis/65225413/1-kim-jest-fajnopolak-fajnopolak-to-najczesciej-os (last accessed: June 29, 2024).

- (17) *Niedawny Orlen Warsaw Marathon* (“Warszawski Maraton Orleń” brzmiałoby dla zakompleksionych *fajnpolaków* za mało reprezentacyjnie) w niedzielę 26 kwietnia tradycyjnie zablokował pół stolicy.⁴³

‘The recent Orlen Warsaw Marathon (its Polish name would sound too unprepossessing for those insecure **cool-o-Poles**) on Sunday, April 26, traditionally blocked half of the capital.’

These examples discuss the reasons for specific attitudes of the people being called *fajnpolacy* ‘cool-o-Poles’. Users of this discursive tag, while trying to reconstruct the motivations of this group, pointed to constant dissatisfaction and disappointment (15), being ashamed of lowly social origin (16), and hankering after things that are foreign because of a deep-set inferiority complex (17). Authors of the utterances are construing the referent of *fajnpolak* ‘cool-o-Pole’ as a person with weaknesses that are being desperately masked.

At the same time, the presented examples also show the consequences of the weaknesses: the confrontational attitude towards those more “inadequate” (15),⁴⁴ the efforts to conceal any roots or traces of the past (16), and the preference for foreign names (and practices) combined with reluctance towards Polish ones (17).

Displaying social, economic, political, symbolic, or material upper-class aspirations and achievements is treated as an extralinguistic trigger for attributing further negative characteristics to the portion of Polish society called *fajnpolacy* ‘cool-o-Poles’.

5.1.2 *Fajnpolak* ‘cool-o-Pole’ as an Uncritical Follower

A majority of the utterances representing the political discourse suggest that *fajnpolacy* ‘cool-o-Poles’ are people who have neither personal opinions nor their own political views. As a result, their beliefs are probably copied, imitated, or dependent in another way. This makes them vulnerable to manipulation. They choose to uncritically follow specific political parties that lure them with some promises (e.g., legalizing the morning-after pill) even if apparently more significant economic issues (like increasing tax-free income) have not been tackled (as illustrated by (18)). Additionally, they are unable to provide any real details concerning their socio-political views other than platitudes (a trait that is being mocked in (19)):

43 kwjp.pl/query_corpus/21/ (last accessed: June 29, 2024).

44 This remark will be elaborated further in the chapter, when the alleged tendency of *fajnpolacy* ‘cool-o-Poles’ to demonstrate contempt towards others will be exemplified.

- (18) *I tak to się żyje fajnopolakom. wiecie pigułka dzień po, aborcja. a kwota wolna od podatku? no wiecie głupio wyszło, ale najważniejsze że daliście się nabrać.*⁴⁵

'And that's how **cool-o-Poles** live. You know, the morning-after pill, abortion. But the tax-free income? Well, you know, it came out stupid, but the most important thing is that you fell for it.'

- (19) *Prawica za tych "oszołomów" odkuła się więc "fajnopolakami". Czyli zbiorczym określeniem ludzi nieposiadających własnego zdania, idących za tym, co modne i bezkrytycznie ufającym mediom głównego nurtu. Fajnopolak na pytanie "Jaka Polska?" odpowie "No taka fajna i uśmiechnięta". Zapytany o poglądy, odrzeknie "Takie normalne, zdroworozsądkowe"*⁴⁶

'The right wing has repaid these "madcaps" with "**cool-o-Poles**". That is, a collective term for people who do not have their own opinions, who follow what is fashionable, and who uncritically trust the mainstream media. When asked "What kind of Poland?", a **cool-o-Pole** will answer "Well, so cool and smiling". When asked about his views, he will answer "Simply normal, commonsensical".'

Example (18) can be analyzed as equating being a 'cool-o-Pole' with *slacktivism*, a label that refers to the Internet users who "effortlessly support an issue or social cause that have little or no practical effect other than to make the person doing it feel satisfaction" (Leonard 2009). Supporting women's reproductive rights in utterance (18) is presented as adhering to fashionable shibboleths and not thinking about real issues, such as taxation. 'Cool-o-Poles' are naïve, and it is claimed that they allow themselves to be duped by politicians.

Example (19) alludes to the emergence of the neologism and links it with the revenge of the right-wing participants of the political discourse on their political opponents. It also contains a short description of opinions considered typical for people defined as *fajnopolacy* 'cool-o-Poles'. All of them are presented as clichéd, unfounded, and repetitive, taken uncritically straight from media narratives, possibly similar to those created for the campaign *Fajna Polska* 'Cool Poland' described earlier (see section 5.1).

Both utterances are representative of a frequent line of criticism directed at *fajnopolacy*, i.e., that they display permissiveness and conformity, and (from the

45 wykop.pl/tag/fajnopolacy (last accessed: June 29, 2024).

46 kultura.gazetaprawna.pl/artykuly/1414086,fajnopolak-chce-sie-zmienic-recenzja.html (last accessed: September 6, 2024).

perspective of their ideological opponents) appear to be imitating committed liberals. However, as illustrated by (19), their political beliefs stem from their herd mentality.

5.1.3 *Fajnopolak* 'cool-o-Pole' as a Person who Displays Contempt

The analyzed neologism should be considered pragmatically bidirectional. This is especially salient in contexts evoking contempt. Labeling someone as a *fajnopolak* 'cool-o-Pole' allows the speaker to judge them with disdain because of the assumed contempt that they show to others. Examples (20) and (21) demonstrate that a referent of the word *fajnopolak* 'cool-o-Pole' displays such an attitude towards those who are more conservative, less adaptable, and different from them (i.e., not adhering to their standards):

- (20) *Fajnopolak* rzuca śmiesznymi żartami o Polakach i razem z innymi *fajnopolakami* uważa, że dobrze się śmiać z ludzi, którzy mają konserwatywne poglądy. Jest to typowe myślenie stadne, ponieważ *fajnopolak* boi się odrzucenia przez grupę innych *fajnopolaków*.⁴⁷

'The **cool-o-Pole** makes funny jokes about Poles and, along with other **cool-o-Poles**, thinks it's good to laugh at people who have conservative views. This is typical herd thinking, because the **cool-o-Pole** is afraid of being rejected by the group of other **cool-o-Poles**.'

- (21) *Tacy ludzie uważają się za wyższych moralnie i intelektualnie, każdy dla fajnopolaczka jest głupi, poza innymi fajnopolakami i "autorytetami" moralnymi. Bardzo lubią pluć na Polskę i wyśmiewać się z Polaków, nie potrafią żyć bez pogardy*.⁴⁸

'Such people consider themselves morally and intellectually superior, everyone is stupid for a **cool-o-Polack**, except for other **cool-o-Poles** and moral "authorities". They like to spit on Poland and make fun of Poles, they cannot live without contempt.'

In many of the above-mentioned utterances, including the definition proposed by *The Language Observatory of the University of Warsaw* (see (14)), the use of the neologism in question with reference to a specific person or group could be interpreted as an expression of contempt towards them. It seems as though language users postulate that *fajnopolacy* feel superior, deem others as less

47 wykop.pl/wpis/65225413/1-kim-jest-fajnopolak-fajnopolak-to-najczesciej-os (last accessed: June 29, 2024).

48 wykop.pl/tag/fajnopolak (last accessed: June 29, 2024).

deserving, and treat them with contempt, in order to justify their own negative attitude with the argument that it is merely a fitting response to the contempt that *fajnpolacy* have shown.

5.2 Fajnpolak ‘cool-o-Pole’ as a Tool of Crude Othering

As stated in section 1.3, the examples presented in this paper prove the negativity of the term *fajnpolak* ‘cool-o-Pole’ and suggest that its meaning can be primarily stereotypical and mostly contextual. As a consequence, the vast majority of the definitional approaches created by the users of Internet forums are, in fact, semantic profiles contributing to the stereotype. According to observations made by van Veelen et al., presented in section 3.3, *fajnpolak* ‘cool-o-Pole’ can therefore be considered as an exponent of self-anchoring—nominalization that is desirable specifically for those who would not wish to be defined this way, those who do not perceive themselves as representing the negative stereotype implied by the neologism.

From the pragmatic perspective, in most of the collected contexts, the neologism is a tool used frequently within discursive communication practices related to the abstract categories mentioned in section 3.1. As noticed by Wójcicka and Czachur (2023, 31–32), lexical entities in the function of nominalization or polarization based on the “self-like”–“other” opposition are an important resource for establishing the collective identity of a group.

Based on the examples presented above and previous observations, some basic assumptions about stereotypical traits of a referent of *fajnpolak* (ascribed from the speaker’s perspective) can be made:

- 1) it is a person who treats tradition and ancestors’ legacy with contempt, perceiving them as worthless and preferring to replace them with modern achievements (section 5.1.1);
- 2) it is a person constantly unsatisfied with their social status and dominance scale over “others”, i.e., people representing the negative stereotype of a Pole embodied by the neologism *cebulak* ‘onioner’ (section 5.1.1);
- 3) it is a person who imitates those considered “cool”, mainly the residents of Western Europe and the United States of America, and their perceived traits, such as ease, wealth, and a relaxed attitude, rejecting both national and individual characteristics connected with Polishness (section 5.1.2);
- 4) it is a person who demonstrates superiority towards all members of their community categorized as not smart enough, less progressive, and not influential (section 5.1.3).

The collected examples reflect the experience-based and linguistic sequence proposed by Bartmiński (2007, 87) for unfolding a stereotype—an indication of the type of experience, cognitive model, evaluation, and the pattern of recep-

tion and interpretation. Othering can be treated, therefore, as a form of valuation of perspectives and a subjective reflection of reality. It is possible to list some major assumptions behind the stereotype of a *fajnpolak* ‘cool-o-Pole’, as derived from the collected contexts: (a) Poles ape other nations, (b) Poles act like a herd, (c) Poles tend to flaunt their prosperity. All of these negative stereotypes bring contempt upon people called *fajnpolacy* ‘cool-o-Poles’ and, in effect, cause them to be othered by means of this label and the underlying stereotypical features.

The main communication strategies used alongside the described neologism include: irony resulting from the semantic-structural contradiction indicated at the beginning of section 5.1, the suggestion of weaknesses as mentioned above (a–c), and the creation of a negative stereotype with a presupposed hierarchy of values of the out-group (components of “coolness”). What makes these strategies more likely to be classified as examples of crude othering is the inherent meaning reversal of “coolness”—there are no attested usages of this word that would imply pride derived from being called a *fajnpolak* ‘cool-o-Pole’. Even Piotr Stankiewicz, while commenting on his newly published book in 2019, admitted that he also considered himself a ‘cool-o-Pole’, which makes his criticism towards this attitude more honest and justified.

6 Concluding Remarks

All the presented neologisms are engaged in construing the ongoing discussion on Polish identity, which is by definition an intragroup one, but it also emerges as an intergroup one with two models of Polishness in competition. Neologisms connected to the notion of ‘*cebula*’ ‘onion’ seem to refer more strongly to the cultural aspect of Polishness. New entities structured around the notion of “being cool” tend to refer to the political and ideological aspects of our identity. Both of them influence our collective imagination of Polishness and testify to the tensions present in our collective identity.

The polarizing tendencies in Polish identity discourse and self-stereotype, leading up to defining someone as a *cebulak* ‘onioner’ or a *fajnpolak* ‘cool-o-Pole’, can be classified as affirmation and contrast procedures in the establishment of identity (see Bartmiński 2007, 22). They can also be associated with an apologetic and critical approach towards Polish cultural traditions (see Górny 2014).

The neologisms discussed in this chapter might be treated as linguistic stance-taking signals, i.e., indicators of the speakers’ take on Polishness. Through the mechanism of othering observed within a single national com-

munity, we see the social, political, and cultural values and attitudes that have been negotiated between members of the group. *Fajnpolak* 'cool-o-Pole' could potentially become a discursive keyword (the recent frequency of its usage does not allow for such a designation at present) referring to members of the national community too loosely connected to the stereotypical image of a Polish citizen created by the other side of the Polish identity discourse. A sharp division between "us" and "them", based on attitudes toward Polish and Western culture and values, is amplified due to the process of creating and distributing particular discursive keywords among members of the community.

The significantly higher array of the metaphoric extensions involving 'onions', their more complex origin, and the larger variety of language registers in which they appear are some of the differences between the two analyzed nouns. The mechanism of othering enabled by the strategies mentioned in section 4.2 is targeted at marginalization and preventing equal communication through conventional hyperboles, connotations, and negative or overgeneralized evaluations. These are motivated mostly by a stereotypically positive image of an average Western citizen who is "cool" and well-mannered.

Fajnpolak 'cool-o-Pole' is used as a nominalization predominantly for delegitimizing rather than marginalizing an out-group or its members. In most of the collected utterances, the neologism is a part of a broader discursive strategy of showing the pointlessness of somebody else's reasoning and attitude. Its pragmatic function should be classified as othering but applied less strictly than in the case of expressions derived from the noun *cebula* 'onion'. Inherent irony, which springs from the contradiction between the lexical meaning of the first component the whole compound, is an important tool for this strategy.

It should be stressed that the two groups of neologisms described in this chapter do not mirror each other, and their pragmatic and discursive relation is not symmetrical. Nevertheless, they introduce a distancing mechanism of othering into the discourse, and by the same token constitute a framework for Polish debate on identity. They function as labels (discursive tags or keywords) inducting context-dependent sets of previously entrenched features. The analyzed nouns are, therefore, legible linguistic exponents of stereotypization, which clarify the speaker's point of view. Both neologisms are commonly known and generate new sets of conceptual components of the Polish self-stereotype. Thus, a discourse-oriented lexicological study of word meaning, backed by the theory of othering, is a promising way to extract the most important semantic and pragmatic components of national identity and Polish self-stereotypes, as well as to track the dynamic changes within these abstract and linguistically constituted spaces.

Contributorship Statement

The authors have contributed equally to the chapter.

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PART 3

Naming for Othering as a Strategy of Stigmatization



Ethnic Names in Translation as a Measure of Their Stigmatizing Potential in the Target Language

A Parallel Corpus Study

Marek Łaziński

1 Introduction: Stigmatization in Language

Erving Goffman claims that stigma is a process of spoiling somebody's normal identity by the reaction of others (Goffman 1963). My understanding is that in this sense, stigma manifests itself in the societal inability to separate an attribute from a person so that their identity is reduced to a single feature.

A telling example of such a manifestation can be found in the way that Polish media discourse referred to two Black Members of the Polish Parliament in the second decade of this century. While it is true that they were the first two Black people to be elected to this Parliament, and therefore initially noteworthy, the press continuously attached the adjective *czarnoskóry* 'lit. black-skinned' to descriptions of them. This was particularly noticeable in the case of John Godson, whose political activities were more prominent, as it implied that his skin color was the main feature defining his identity rather than his political colors and voting record.

The adjective *czarnoskóry* is now probably the best non-denigratory way to describe a Black person in Polish, which is replacing in public discourse the controversial word *Murzyn* 'Moor/Black/Negro' (see section 2). However, the way it has been overused can be seen as an instance of stigmatization through linguistic usage, which leads to the following research questions: Can stigmatization be analyzed as a linguistic phenomenon associated with particular words? And if so, can a word's stigmatizing potential be measured?

A partial answer to the first question seems obvious: ethnic and racial slurs are linguistically stigmatizing (see Hom 2008; Croom 2014). Yet the stigmatizing potential is not limited to them. My claim is that even apparently non-derogatory terms referring to societally discrediting features, such as skin color, disability, non-heteronormative sexual orientation, and non-cis or non-binary gender, have subtler yet pervading stigmatizing potential. There are several ways this can manifest itself in language and its use. The best-known one is the tradition, now discarded, of using a single feature to refer to a person,

e.g., *a cripple*. To prevent this stigmatizing usage, it is recommended to avoid these terms and, if necessary, encode such a feature not as a noun that would characterize the person in their entirety but as a modifier attached to such words as *person* or *people*. Furthermore, there is a tendency to substitute potentially offensive adjectives with non-offensive ones. In the case of racial and ethnic attributes, the Polish adjective *czarnoskóry* 'lit. black-skinned' is recommended for describing a Black person if their specific country of origin is not known, while the adjective *czarny* 'lit. black', tends to be avoided. The quest for non-offensive language goes even further: instead of adjectival modifiers, periphrastic expressions are recommended (see Halmari 2011), an operation which further distances the person from the feature through the weakening of iconic proximity (Tabakowska 2013, Łaziński 2014).

It is not only the use of nouns that serves as a linguistic indicator that an attribute is stigmatizing. Another one is the attribute being highlighted more often than necessary. The wording referring to such an attribute may be non-offensive, as in the case of the Black Member of Polish Parliament. This overuse of a word referring to a potentially stigmatizing feature can be seen in two complementary perspectives. One is quantitative and involves the relative frequency of the terms in question. It would intuitively translate into the words being used markedly more often. Yet, while the absolute frequency of a token is easily measured within any linguistic corpus, the calculation of relative frequencies involves comparison with a reference corpus, and defining or even designing such a corpus could be problematic. Similarly, a relatively high frequency of words referring to, say, Black people, compared to other ethnicities, in a given corpus is not a valid indicator because the differences may be due to extralinguistic factors, such as the topicality of certain issues at a given time and in a given genre. For example, the frequencies of Polish words referring to Black people, both the offensive ones and the recommended non-offensive ones, soar every time the debate about the appropriate Polish terms for Black people is rekindled (Łaziński 2022, 355).

The other perspective is qualitative and involves deciding whether a reference to the potentially stigmatizing feature is necessary. Such judgments are subjective and call for highly insightful discourse analyses and can involve making educated guesses about authors' stakes and communicative intentions, as well as their take on identity politics (see Bernstein 2005). In the latter case, highlighting a specific feature is not indicative of its stigmatizing potential, just the opposite.

However, there is an instance where the two problematic issues can be avoided, and valid indicators, both qualitative and quantitative, can be found. Namely, when comparing translated texts to their originals, in a parallel corpus,

it is technically easy to find passages where a word describing some characteristic of an individual or a group has been added in translation, thus emphasizing this particular feature. I contend that in such instances, the word added realizes its potential for stigmatization, understood as spoiling the person's or group's identity by attracting attention to their single feature.

As already mentioned, stigma, as I understand it here, can be related to diverse features, not only skin color, race, or ethnicity. Yet, in this chapter, I will be focusing exclusively on racial or ethnic features that are potentially stigmatizing within Polish society and the words used to refer to them. In addition to references to being Black, I will consider two features: originating from different regions of Asia and being of Romani descent. I will investigate the appearance of Polish words referring to these features in translated texts, either as direct renderings of words present in the original or as words added in translated passages. As my findings will show, the tendency to append translated passages with direct reference to race or ethnicity is pronounced in the case of Black people and almost absent in the case of the remaining ethnicities. This difference is telling: it shows that the feature of being Black is foregrounded and constitutive, obliterating or backgrounding other identifying features of a person or a group of people, while being Asian or Roma is not. I interpret my findings as evidence for a stronger stigmatizing potential attached to words referring to Black people compared to other selected ethnicities.

The remainder of the chapter is organized as follows. In section 2, I will discuss instances of inserting a word identifying a protagonist as Black in a Polish 1971 translation of a story taken from Ray Bradbury's *Martial Chronicles*, specifically from the chapter "Way in the Middle of the Air", to illustrate my point that such insertions reveal the stigmatizing potential of Polish words referring to a Black person. As evidence that these expansions have not been necessary and have not been warranted by structural differences between English and Polish, I will compare each instance with a later Polish translation of the same work (1997) done by different translators, as well as with a Czech translation, taken from Intercorp, i.e., a multilingual parallel corpus (see below). In section 3, I will discuss quantitative results for similar phenomena in the Intercorp corpus concerning Black people, Asians, and Roma. The Intercorp data on the introduction of references to ethnicity or race unwarranted by their presence in the original texts will be presented along with background data on the frequencies of the same words in other Polish corpora, including one parallel corpus of Polish translations of English fiction (Paralela).

Note that although my data come from translated texts, it is my purpose neither to analyze the translations within any Translation Studies framework nor to dwell on the quality of translations and/or translation strategies and tech-

niques employed by particular translators. That is why I am not attributing translations to their authors within the main body of my text and give them only in references.

2 Stigmatization in Translation: The Case of the Polish Word *Murzyn* in “Way in the Middle of the Air”, a Chapter of *The Martian Chronicles*

The Martian Chronicles was originally a collection of short stories that Ray Bradbury wrote in the 1940s. The story “Way in the Middle of the Air” was written towards the end of the 1940s. It is a story about white Americans from a small Southern town suddenly facing the fact that Afro-Americans living in the same town are planning to emigrate to Mars, leaving them without a labor force and, in some instances, without having paid their debts. Within the story, the white characters use the term *niggers* to refer to Black people, while the narrator describes a Black protagonist as a *Negro* twice, uses the word *Negro* as a modifier twice, and describes his protagonist’s face and hands as *black*. It should be borne in mind that at the time *The Martian Chronicles* were written, the word *Negro* was not considered offensive (Smith 1992).

As already mentioned, the Polish word *Murzyn* ‘Black*’¹ appears in passages where, in the original, no reference is made to the protagonist’s skin color or race, as in (1):

- (1) *Teece grasped the man’s suspenders like two harp strings ...*
 (1’) *Teece napiął szelki Murzyna jak struny harfy ...* (Ray Bradbury: *Kroniki marsjańskie*, 1971)
 ‘Teece grasped the Black*’s suspenders like harp strings ...’

This phenomenon is not exclusive to this translation; it occurs in translations of other literary fiction from English, e.g., (2), and in translations from other languages: French in the case of (3) and Spanish in the case of (4):

- (2) *... his client was a skinny kid with the air of bewildered hopelessness ...*
 (2’) *Był to młody Murzyn o mocno wystraszonej i niepewnej minie ...* (Frederick Forsyth: *Mściciel*, 2004)

1 I avoid using the term *Negro* as an equivalent for Polish *Murzyn*, so as not to give offence, and I choose to gloss it as Black*, i.e., with an asterisk added.

'It was a **young Black*** with an uncertain and frightened look on his face ...'

- (3) *Le vieux vit arriver sur lui les quatre miliciens musclés.*
'The old man saw the four hefty policemen approach him.'
- (3') *Leciwy Murzyn patrzył tylko, jak czterech muskularnych policjantów zbliża się do niego.* (Louis-Ferdinand Céline: *Podróż do kresu nocy*, 2005).
'The elderly **Black*** simply watched the four hefty policemen approach him.'
- (4) *Había dos bakongos jóvenes bañándose ...*
'There were two young Bakongos bathing'
- (4') *W wodzie zobaczył dwóch młodych Murzynów Bakongo.* (Mario Vargas Llosa: *Marzenie Celta*, 2011).
'He saw two young **Bakongo Blacks*** bathing.'

Of course, there may be multiple reasons behind the translators' decision to add a word to the text. For instance, the information about skin color could have been encoded in a broader context in the original text, the translator might have tried to avoid repetition, and their (or their editors') linguistic and stylistic preferences and habits could have been at play. But if some words are added in translation regularly in hundreds or even thousands of instances (see below), these words are worth a linguist's attention.

In the first Polish translation of Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles* (*Kroniki marsjańskie*, 1971), the word *Murzyn* is used quite often to identify a specific character. In some places, such usage can be explained as a form of disambiguation of the anaphoric pronoun *he* in the original, as in (5). In fact, in Polish, there is no unambiguous way to refer to Belter (the Black protagonist) and not to Teece (the white racist shop owner) by a pronoun in this context. In addition, in the same passage, a similar technique (i.e., a noun in translated text as an equivalent of a pronoun in the original) is applied to the hat (represented by *it* in the original)

- (5) *Belter bowed respectfully, handing the money over, and when Teece would not touch it he set it down in the dust at Teece's feet.*
- (5') *Belter ukłonił mu się z szacunkiem podając pieniądze, lecz Teece nie tknął kapelusza i Murzyn położył go w kurzu u stóp swego wierzyciela.*
'Belter bowed respectfully, handing the money over, but Teece would not touch the hat, and the **Black*** set it down in the dust at his creditor's feet.'

In the next context (6), the word *Murzyn* has been added, probably to avoid the triple repetition of the expression *old man*, which occurs in the original.

- (6) ... *an old man stepped forward. "Mister?" Teece flashed him a quick look. "Well." "How much this man owe you, mister?" "None of your damn business!" The old man looked at Belter. "How much, son?" "Fifty dollars." The old man put out his black hands at the people around him ...*
- (6') ... *wystąpił jakiś stary człowiek. —Panie. Teece błysnął oczyma. —No —Ile on jest panu winien? —Nie twój zasmarkany interes! Murzyn spojrzał na Beltera. —Ile, synu? —Pięćdziesiąt dolarów. Stary wyciągnął czarne dłonie do otaczających go ludzi.*
- '... an old man stepped forward. "Mister?" Teece glanced at him. "Well." "How much does this man owe you, mister?" "None of your damn business!" **The Black*** looked at Belter. "How much, son?". "Fifty dollars." The old man put out his black hands at the people around him.'

But the question arises of why no other word with a more general meaning, such as *człowiek* 'man; human', *mężczyzna* 'man; male', has been chosen to avoid repetition. It seems that skin color is the main feature the translator uses to identify the Black protagonists.

As already mentioned, in the original, the word *Negro* is used only four times, while *nigger* is used six times in white racists' dialogues. Additionally, there is one instance of the word *darkie*, one instance of *black* (in reference to skin color), and one *pickanniny*. Generally, the narrator identifies characters by their surnames, sex, age, or a feature of their appearance. Meanwhile, in the Polish translation, there are 13 instances of the word *Murzyn*, one denominal adjective *murzyński*, three instances of the noun *czarnuch* ('nigger', derogatory), and one instance of *czarny* ('black-ADJ') in reference to black skin (specifically, the word *darkie* is rendered as *czarna dziwka* 'lit. black bitch'). By and large, all the instances of the word *Negro* and other expressions implying skin color identification that occur in the original have some sort of lexical counterparts referring to the person's skin color in the Polish version, while in five instances in the Polish target text, the word *Murzyn* was added to identify a protagonist.

Curiously, this practice of adding words referring to skin color in the target text seems specific to the Polish translation. In the Czech translation of the same novel (*Martánská kronika*, 1963), the words *černoch* 'Black*-N.M' and *černoška* 'Black*-N.F' appear only in passages where the character's skin color is mentioned by the English noun. Thus, the words *černoch* and *černoška* are renderings of the English expressions *Negro* or *blackie*, and the word *negr*, which is derogatory in Czech, corresponds to *nigger*. The only instance of substituting

a nominal that does not refer to skin color with one that does is found in the translation of (1), which in the Czech version features the derived possessive adjective *černochův* 'Black*s':

(1") *Teece uchopil černochovy šle jako dvě struny na harfě ...*

What is an exception in the Czech translation seems to be the rule in the Polish 1971 translation. Interestingly, the word *Murzyn* is a counterpart of both the English *Negro* and the English offensive noun *nigger*. The latter is rendered as the Polish noun *Murzyn* in the 1971 translation (7') and by the Polish slur *czarnuch* ('nigger', derogatory) in the 1997 one—as illustrated by (7"). The Czech translation uses the denigratory word *negr* 'nigger' (7'"):

- (7) "Did you hear about it?" "About what?" "**The niggers, the niggers!**" "What about 'em?" "Them leaving, pulling out, going away [...]."
- (7') *Słyszateś o tym? —O czym? —Murzyni. Murzyni! —Co z nimi? —Wynoszą się. Pakują. Wyjeżdżają.*
- (7") *Słyszeliście? —O czym? —Czarnuchy, czarnuchy! —Co z nimi? —Wyjeżdżają, wyprowadzają się, wynoszą [...].*
- (7'") *"Už jste o tom slyšeli" "O čem?" "O těch negrech přece, o negrech!" "Co je s nima?" "Odjíždějí, stěhují se, táhnou pryč [...]."*

Unlike examples (5)–(6), there are also cases where the word *Murzyn* is used not only to avoid repetition or to disambiguate anaphoric pronouns but to render a source-text noun that does not indicate skin color, as illustrated in (8) below:

- (8) *Seen a rich man give a poor man two hundred bucks to pay off some'un.*
- (8') *Widzieliśmy bogatego Murzyna, który dał biednemu dwieście dolarów, żeby mógł zwrócić komuś dług.*
- 'We saw a rich Black* give a poor one two hundred dollars so that he could pay off his debt.'

It is a comment on the situation described before, i.e., somebody offering money to pay off Belter's debt to Teece. However, although in the source text, the man is identified as black (see *black hands* in (6)), in the passage quoted as (8), his skin color is not mentioned, and only his wealth. In the Polish 1971 translation, the word *Murzyn* is added as an apparent equivalent of *człowiek* or *mężczyzna* 'a man'. However, *rich man* can be directly rendered into Polish as *bogacz*, as documented in the 1997 translation (8'') and the Czech translation

(8'''), which preserve only the information about richness:

(8'') *Widziałem bogacza, który oddał biedakowi dwieście dolarów, aby spłacić swój dług!*

(8''') *Viděl jsem jednoho bohatýho, jak dal dvacet pěttek chudákovi, aby nkomu zaplatil dluh.*

'I saw a rich man give a poor man two hundred dollars to pay off his debt.'

The tendency to overuse the word *Murzyn* is notable in the 1971 Polish translation of *Martian Chronicles*. In the 1997 translation, the addition of this word is avoided, even if it leads to a potential ambiguity that must be contextually resolved, as in (5'') below:

(5'') *Belter ukłonił się grzecznie, podając mu pieniądze, a kiedy Teece nie zareagował, położył je w pyłe u jego stóp.*

'Belter bowed respectfully, handing the money over, and since Teece would not react, he set it down in the dust at his feet.'

Though the 1997 Polish translation avoids adding the noun *Murzyn* when absent in a corresponding original passage, it faithfully renders stigmatizing elements present in the original, including racial slurs whenever there is an equivalent Polish slur. As mentioned in the Introduction, racial and ethnic slurs are inherently stigmatizing, and the reader of the translation does not know if the slur was present in the original. A straightforward example could be seen in (7'') when the plural form *czarnuchy* is used as the equivalent of *the niggers*. If a direct equivalent is absent in Polish, as is the case of *pickanniny*, the Polish disdainful derivative *Murzyniątko* 'Black* child' is used (9'):

(9) *Here and there [...] there had been voices singing, the honey laughter under the mimosa branches, the pickaninnies rushing in clear water laughter at the creek [...]*

(9') *Wtórował im słodki śmiech pod gałęziami mimozy i nawoływania Murzyniątek, pluszczących się w czystej wodzie strumienia.²*

'It was accompanied by the sweet laughter under the mimosa branches and small Black* children calling out as they were bathing in the clear water of the creek.'

2 In the 1971 Polish translation, the phrase *murzyńskie dzieci* 'Black* children-N.PL' is used in this context as an equivalent of *the pickaninnies*.

The derivative *Murzyniątko* is disdainful for several reasons. Firstly, the diminutive suffix *-ątko* is usually used for animal names in Polish, e.g., *kociątko* ‘cat-N.DIM; a kitten’, it also appears in the frozen expression, *Dzieciątko Jezus* ‘child-N.DIM Jesus; baby Jesus’. It generally does not combine with names of ethnic groups or nationalities: structures like **Polaczątko* ‘Pole-N.DIM; a small Pole’ or **Niemczątko* ‘German-N.DIM; a small German’ are attested in no Polish corpus nor dictionary. The only exceptions to be found in contemporary corpora and dictionaries are the words *Murzyniątko* ‘Negro-N.DIM; a small Black child’, *Żydziątko* ‘Jew-N.DIM; a small Jewish child’, and *Cyganiątko* ‘Gypsy-N.DIM; a small Gypsy child’, which refer to children of societally stigmatized ethnicities. In contemporary Polish, they all appear in literary text where the intended stylistic effect is either archaic or colloquial, e.g., (10)–(12).

- (10) *Żydziątko małe i mówi: “Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus”.* (*Olga Tokarczuk: Księgi Jakubowe*).
 ‘A small Jew-N.DIM.SG is saying, “Praised be Jesus Christ”’
- (11) *Ale mamusia nic sobie z tego nie robiła, tylko rozlokowała małe Cyganiątko po izbach.* (*Marta Mazuś: Król kebabów i inne zderzenia polsko-obce*).
 ‘But mummy didn’t care at all, and simply put the small Gypsies-N.DIM.PL in the chambers.’
- (12) [...] *biedne Murzyniątko zawsze działają na wyobraźnię.* (*Kazimierz Szymeczko: Tetras*)
 ‘Poor little Black* kids always have an effect on [people’s] imagination’

The qualitative analysis of the use of words that refer to Black people in the two translations of “Way in the Middle of the Air” has shown how appending a noun (mainly the word *Murzyn*) as a means of identifying a Black protagonist when there is no corresponding noun in the original passage foregrounds the stigmatizing feature of being Black. The mechanism consists of presenting it as the constitutive feature of their identity, thus spoiling their identity in Goffman’s sense and, by the same token, stigmatizing them. However, this does not prove that words referring to Black people have such stigmatizing potential in general. To show that that is the case, I will use a quantitative analysis of instances of appending information about race or ethnicity in texts translated into Polish, using a parallel corpus of translated texts aligned with their originals.

3 Quantitative Indicators of Stigmatization Potential in the Multilingual Corpus Intercorp

In section 2, I have demonstrated how a word denoting a skin color can be stigmatizing when used too often in a text as the primary or the only identification of a character. Now, I will analyze quantitatively how frequent this phenomenon is in a sample of texts translated into Polish. If we assume, as I do for this paper, that the frequency of spoiling a person's or a group's identity by foregrounding their racial or ethnic characteristics through an added word, when not warranted by the original, is indicative of the word's potential for stigmatization, such quantitative data can serve as an indicator of the stigmatization potential of specific words.

This section is structured as follows. In the next subsection, I will briefly present the corpora used (3.1), while in section 3.2, I will informally discuss strategies adopted for corpus queries. Section 3.3 presents data concerning words referring to Black people, section 3.4 is focused on words referring to Asian people, and section 3.5 gives data concerning words referring to Romani people. Within each subsection, I will start by presenting the relevant Polish vocabulary and the frequencies of each item in the corpora studied, and follow with quantitative analyses of their insertion in translated texts.

3.1 *Sources of Data: Multilingual Corpus of the Czech National Corpus Intercorp and Other Corpora*

The main corpus used in this research is Intercorp—a large parallel synchronic corpus within the Czech National Corpus (korpus.cz), covering 61 languages, including Polish and English. The English part of the last release of Intercorp 16 contains almost 370 million words, and the Polish part—more than 233 million words. The core part of Intercorp consists mostly of fiction from the 20th and 21st centuries, complemented by:

- (a) political commentaries published by Project Syndicate and VoxEurop (formerly PressEurop);
- (b) legal texts of the European Union from the Acquis Communautaire corpus;
- (c) proceedings of the European Parliament dated 2007–2011 from the Euro-parl corpus;
- (d) film subtitles from the Open Subtitles database;
- (e) translations of the Bible.

The core part has been aligned manually, while other texts have been aligned automatically, which might have led to a higher incidence of misaligned segments (Rosen 2023).

For the Polish words referring to race or ethnicity, frequency data in other Polish corpora will be given based on the following sources:

- (a) Narodowy Korpus Języka Polskiego ‘The National Corpus of Polish’ (nkjp.pl; hereafter: NKJP)—a basic, well-balanced, and representative reference corpus focusing on the 20th and 21st centuries through 2020. It contains 300 million tokens (Przepiórkowski et al. 2012).
- (b) Korpus Współczesnego Języka Polskiego ‘The Corpus of Contemporary Polish’ (kwjp.ipipan.waw.pl; hereafter: KWJP)—a well-balanced and representative reference corpus covering the decade 2010–2020. It contains 100 million tokens (Marciniak et al. 2023).
- (c) Monco.PL (monco.frazeo.pl)—a monitor corpus of Polish web and press texts, not balanced, huge (5 billion tokens), and up-to-date. The texts in Monco.PL are morphologically annotated but not disambiguated (Pęzik 2020).
- (d) Paralela (paralela.clarin-pl.eu)—a Polish–English parallel corpus with 262 million words in Polish texts (Pęzik 2016).

3.2 Query Strategies

For each racial or ethnic characteristic, I manually selected an appropriate set of Polish and English lexemes to search for in the relevant corpora. All these words evoke some aspect of a person’s appearance that is not conceptualized as typical within Polish society. The list contains words denoting skin color, such as *Murzyn* ‘Black*’ or *czarnoskóry* ‘lit. black-skinned; black-ADJ’; region or continent of origin, such as *Azjata* ‘Asian-N’, and names of national minorities present in many countries, such as *Roma/Gypsy*. The list is comprehensive and contains terms belonging to all possible registers and styles, including neutral words, offensive words, words used ironically, and straightforward slurs (specific lists will be presented in the relevant subsections below). This all-encompassing strategy is geared to the planned queries: since I want to match all passages containing Polish words referring to race or ethnicity with their English counterparts, I need to include all possible words referring, let’s say, to Black people in Polish, and to list all possible words that need to be absent in the English passage.

For Polish, the corpus query included masculine nouns, which are mostly used generically, as well as feminine words (if present). As for the spelling, the query generally comprised names written with both capitals and lowercase letters, according to the spelling conventions of a given language. However, language use tends to be unstable in the case of the English words *Black/black* and the Polish noun *Murzyn/murzyn* (this word was written with a lowercase letter according to spelling rules until 1936). That is why the corpus query was formulated to include both lower- and uppercase spelling.

Polish is not only a highly inflected language but one that presents a high degree of homonymy between word forms belonging to different lexemes (Saloni, Gruszczyński, and Woliński 2007). While both NKJP and KWJP are morphologically disambiguated, the Monco.pl and Paralela corpora are not, and in some instances, it was necessary to manually disambiguate some of the possible hits. Such instances are mentioned in the relevant subsections.

The search program KonText was used for the Intercorp search in this study. A sample query is shown in section 3.3.1 below.

3.3 Words Describing Black People

Table 5.1 contains a list of words for Black people used in Polish and their English counterparts, belonging to various registers and causing varying degrees of offense. These items were taken into consideration when queries were formulated:

Some words on the list, marked with an exclamation mark (!), are unequivocally offensive slurs, such as *czarnuch* ‘nigger’. Some of them, like *Murzyn*, are still the subject of a heated discussion, which I summarize below.

The Polish words *Murzyn* ‘Black*-N.M’ and its derivatives: *Murzynka* ‘Black*-N.F.’, *Murzynek* ‘Black* child’, and *murzyński* ‘Black*-ADJ’, which I will refer to collectively as the M-words, are considered offensive or discriminatory by most of those to whom they refer (Ohia-Nowak 2020). Strictly speaking, this group of words does not correspond to the English and French words with the root *negr-* directly related to the slavery of Africans. The Polish words are related to the root *maur-*, English *Moor*, and have remained unchanged for centuries. However, they have acquired negative connotations and been associated with negative stereotypes rooted in silly proverbs such as *100 lat za murzynami* ‘lit. 100 years behind the Blacks*; obsolete, backward’.

As stated earlier, the discussion about the word *Murzyn* is still ongoing in Poland. It includes historical, linguistic, and social arguments, but also attacks and hatred, especially on the part of its defenders for whom the continuous use of this word somehow epitomizes all traditional values. Many conservative speakers of Polish defend this word today, emphasizing that Poland has no colonial past, and therefore, this cannot be reflected in the Polish language and culture. This line of argumentation is invalid, as Polish does change under global influence, and the old words with the root *negr-* are disappearing not only from the languages of former colonial powers. After years of research on this word, I have also taken part in the discussion (Łaziński 2007a, b, 2014). My advice not to use the word in official contexts, published in 2020 on the website of the Council for the Polish Language, became the subject of press discussions and hate campaigns led by the defenders of the

TABLE 5.1 Potentially stigmatizing words for black people in Polish and their English counterparts

Polish words	English words
<i>Murzyn; Murzynka</i> 'Negro-N.F'	<i>Black; Negro!; Negress!</i>
<i>Afrykanin/Afrykańczyk; Afrykanka</i> 'African-N.F'	<i>African</i>
<i>Afroamerykanin; Afroamerykanka</i> 'Afroamerican-N.F'	<i>Afroamerican/Afro-American</i>
<i>czarnoskóry; czarnoskóra</i> 'a Black person-N.F'	<i>(people) of color; colored/coloured</i>
<i>czarnuch!</i> 'nigger'	<i>nigger!; nigga!</i>

tradition on social media (see Linde-Usiekiewicz and Łaziński 2022; Linde-Usiekiewicz and Michalak 2022; Falkowska 2022).

However, for this study, this discussion is immaterial. Our task is to use a corpus search to check to what extent the word *Murzyn* could be used to stigmatize, even when it was considered neutral.

Today's neutral substitutes for *Murzyn*, consistent with the spirit and rules of non-discriminatory language, are *Afrykanin* 'lit. African' and *czarnoskóry*, hitherto glossed as 'black-skinned' in adjectival usage, but also used as a noun, meaning 'a Black person'. The first one is often chosen by the community of Black people in Poland, who, in their vast majority, come from Africa or are direct descendants of Black Africans. The second, *czarnoskóry*, which gained traction as a noun around 2000, emphasizes appearance and skin color rather than origin or identity. The rare adjective *ciemnoskóry* 'lit. dark-skinned' refers to multiracial Poles, while the internationalism *Afroamerykanin* ('Afro-American') is used in the media when discussing North America (the USA in particular).

Changes in the evaluation of *Murzyn* and *czarnoskóry* are reflected in their frequencies. In NKJP—the corpus of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century—the former is used almost three times more often than the latter. Meanwhile, in KWJP—the corpus of the second decade of the 21st century—the latter word is attested more often than the former. Likewise, in Monco.PL *czarnoskóry* is also more frequent than *Murzyn* (see Table 5.2).

The adjective *czarny* 'black' is homonymous: it refers to the black color of any object, including people's skin or hair color, and has multiple metaphorical uses. Hence, it has been impossible to search automatically for the instances where it refers to Black people. That is why the word has not been included in this study, even though *Czarny* was considered offensive 30 years ago when *Murzyn* was still considered neutral. Its offensive character may be related to the fact that the word *czarny* 'black' is the derivational base of the most offen-

TABLE 5.2 Frequency of words for Black people in Polish corpora

Lexemes/corpora*	NKJP	KWJP	Monco 5000M	Paralela	Intercorp
<i>Murzyn</i>	2,747 (9.15)	581 (5.81)	18,026 (3.64)	1,567 (5.98)	815 (3.5)
<i>Murzynka</i>	519 D (1.73)	52 D (0.52)	1,085 (0.22)	186 (0.71)	123 (0.53)
<i>Afrykanin</i>	331 (1.1)	142 (1.42)	4,419 (0.88)	180 (0.7)	39 (0.17)
<i>Afrykańczyk</i>	200 (0.67)	89 (0.89)	3,952 (0.79)	66 (0.25)	27 (0.12)
<i>Afrykanka</i>	53 (0.8)	13 (0.13)	590 (0.12)	0	4 (0.02)
<i>czarnoskóry(a)</i>	984 (3.28)	609 (6.09)	20,548 (4.12)	1,339 (5.11)	140 (0.6)
<i>czarnuch</i>	171 (0.57)	89 (0.89)	1,598 (0.32)	2,321 (8.86)	1,144 (4.9)

*Absolute frequency and frequency per million words (in brackets)

sive Polish term for Black people: *czarnuch* ‘nigger-N.PEJ’, a derogative with a typical derogatory suffix *-uch*. (A structurally similar Czech word, *černoch*, is fully neutral.)

Some inflected forms of the noun *Murzynka* ‘Black*-N.F’ are homonymous with the diminutive *Murzynek* ‘baby Negro’, and therefore the figures are not reliable. The data have been disambiguated only for NKJP and KWJP (marked with *D* in Table 5.2). The majority of word forms for *czarnoskóry* and *czarnoskóra* are homonymous as well, and the feminine form appears as an attribute of the generic form *osoba* ‘person’ or in connection with other nouns, such as *czarnoskóra populacja* ‘lit. black-skinned population’. That is why the search for feminine forms of this word was not conducted.

The strikingly high number of occurrences of the most offensive word, *czarnuch*, in Paralela and Intercorp is caused by the fact that the word appears in translations of old books (e.g., Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s cabin*), and in movie subtitles with the word *nigger* in the original texts.

The data from Intercorp and Paralela concern all instances of the use of Polish words for Black people, both as equivalents of English words identifying a person as Black, and when added in translation without the corresponding English word being present in the translated passage. Since both Intercorp and Paralela include older translations, and the words *czarnoskóry* and *Afrykanin* are relatively new (see the differences in frequencies between NKJP and KWJP in Table 5.2), translators are not expected to add *czarnoskóry* and *Afrykanin* often when related words do not appear in the original.

3.3.1 Results of the Intercorp Search for Added M-words

To find Polish translations where a given word is used, despite the absence of any counterpart in the English text, the query must be performed in several steps. The first step was carried out within the Polish part of Intercorp and involved finding all instances of *Murzyn*, *Murzynka*, *Murzynek*, *Murzyni**ątko*, and *murzyński*. My query was formulated within the Advanced Search option,³ and involved wildcard characters such as: [lc="murzyn.*|murzyń.*"]—where *lc* means that the search for words should be case insensitive.

The next step was to add the aligned English texts and build a query for all potential English counterparts as follows: [lc="black.*| afr.*|colored|coloured|negr.*|nigg.*|nigr.*"].

As the third step, the option "Translations do not contain matching results" was chosen to exclude those English texts where there was no mention of the character being Black. The corpus interface is visible in Figure 5.1.

The Polish query [lc="murzyn.*|murzyń.*"] renders 2,843 results. In 861 contexts, i.e., 30%, the M-words in Polish translations do not have any skin color counterparts in the English texts (according to the query presented in Figure 5.1). 734 of these results come from subtitles, which are not properly aligned on a sentence level, and, therefore, do not create a reliable base for comparison.

126 contexts come from various literary works, including direct translations from English-speaking authors: Ray Bradbury, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, Aldous Huxley, John Irving, Vladimir Nabokov, and William Styron. Note that there were some search errors, so some English contexts actually did contain a word indicating skin color.

Yet, overall, the tendency to use the words *Murzyn* and its derivatives is not as striking in these corpus data as in the translation of *The Martian Chronicles*, discussed in section 2. Some English sentences do not contain skin color identification, but their broader context does. However, there are still Polish translations where the presence of M-words is not easily explained.

For instance, there is a female character in John Irving's *Hotel New Hampshire*—Ruthie, "a big black woman". The name *Ruthie* occurs 27 times in the original, and as many times in the Czech translation. In the Polish translation, however, there are only 13 occurrences of the name *Ruthie*, and in other contexts, the woman is referred to by a pronoun or, on 4 occasions, by the noun *Murzynka*, as illustrated in (13)–(15):

3 Simple (i.e., not advanced) search should also refer to lemmas, but the option with "Advanced search" usually yields more results.

Search in the corpus ?

InterCorp v6 - Polish ☆

Advanced query ☒ | Insert within | Keyboard | Recent queries

[lc="murzyn.*|murzyń.*"]

TIP In case of aligned corpora, it is faster to search only within texts included in all the searched languages. To find such texts, 'restrict search - refine selection' function can be used. [\(next tip\)](#)

☒ Specify parameters

☐ Aligned corpora

InterCorp v6 - English ⌵ ✕

Advanced query ☒ | Insert within | Keyboard | Recent queries

[lc="black.*|afr.*|colored|coloured|negr.*|nigg.*|nigr.*"]

TIP In case of aligned corpora, it is faster to search only within texts included in all the searched languages. To find such texts, 'restrict search - refine selection' function can be used. [\(next tip\)](#)

☐ Specify parameters

Query application: Translations do not contain matching results ▼ include non-aligned: ☐

Default attribute: word ▼

FIGURE 5.1 Search query in InterCorp

- (13) *Ruthie threw the leash in Susie's face and ran to the far side of the room.*
- (13') *Murzynka rzuciła smyczką w ślepią Susie i odbiegła w przeciwny kąt pokoju.*
 'The Black* woman threw the leash in Susie's eyes and ran to the opposite corner of the room.'
- (14) *Then Ruthie twisted her foot, sharply, in Susie's crotch and Susie the bear roared awake, she wheeled viciously on Ruthie, snapping at her.*
- (14') *Wtem ostro nią zakręciła między zadnimi łapami Susie, aż ta obudziła się, rycząc głośno, błyskawicznie obróciła się przodem do Murzynki i kłapnęła w jej stronę zębami.*

'Suddenly she twisted it [the foot] between Susie's hind legs, until she [Susie] woke up roaring, rapidly turned toward the Black* woman and snapped at her.'

(15) *Ruthie left her in a ball, shriveled up and whining—with an occasional, absolutely chilling spasm.*

(15') *Zanim Murzynka dała jej spokój, zrobiła z niej skurczoną, jęczącą kupkę nieszczęścia, co chwila wstrząsaną mrozącym krew w żyłach spazmem.*

'Before the Black* woman left her alone, she made her into a shriveled, whining ball of misery, shaken again and again by blood-chilling spasm.'

The translator tried to avoid repetition of the name *Ruthie*. But a question arises again, as in the case of *The Martian Chronicles*: why not use a pronoun or a noun with a general meaning, such as *kobieta* 'a woman', since it would identify *Ruthie* unambiguously, as Susie is a female bear and not a person. Interestingly, the word *Murzynka* is used only in the situation where a black woman is training a tamed she-bear. As a result, *Ruthie* is stripped of her individuality, her personhood is reduced to being Black, and the sequence of passages reinforces the association between Blackness and savagery.

The corpus study also reveals the figurative use of M-words in a derogatory way.⁴ This phenomenon was absent in *The Martian Chronicles*, given the setting and protagonists of the narrative. But, for instance, in William Styron's *Sophie's Choice*, the word *ghostwriter* is translated as *murzyn* (lowercase), a figurative sense attested in Polish language dictionaries.⁵ Similarly, the adjective *murzyński* 'Black*-ADJ' is used regularly in translations of Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls?* as the equivalent of the expression *pidgin Spanish*, which is rendered as *murzyńska hiszpańszczyzna* '*Black*-ADJ Spanish'. In John Updike's *Rabbit, Run*, the name *bongo drums* is rendered as *murzyńskie bębni* 'Black*-ADJ drums', though they originate from Cuba.

4 Not only idiomatic expressions, but also figurative senses of M-words are often brought up as arguments for their offensive character (Ohia 2013, Łaziński 2014).

5 But the Polish title of the Roman Polański's film *Ghost Writer* (2010) and the title of Robert Harris's novel on which it is based is *Autor widmo* 'lit. a phantom/ghost author', which was a linguistic innovation at that time, as the postpositioned modifier *widmo* previously referred to phantom ships.

3.3.2 M-words Compared to Their Synonyms: *czarnoskóry*, *czarnoskóra*, *Afrykanin*, *Afrykańczyk*, and *Afrykanka* in Intercorp

There are only 140 occurrences of *czarnoskóry* (*czarnoskóra*-ADJ.F) 'lit. black-skinned', 39 *Afrykanin*, 37 *Afrykańczyk*, and 4 *Afrykanka* 'African; African-N.F' in the Polish part of Intercorp. These expressions appear predominantly in the debates of the European Parliament and in the PressEurope columns. None of them appears in any text without corresponding information in the English original (except for wrongly paired subtitles).

This is not surprising because the new word *czarnoskóry(a)* has been replacing the M-word after a heated discussion, and, therefore, is being used more carefully. This word, and the neutral regional-based identification *Afrykanin(ka)* are not overused, nor are they added in translations.

3.3.3 Stigmatization Potential of M-words as Revealed by the Intercorp Search

The Intercorp statistics presented above confirm the tendency to add words defining a person as Black in Polish translations of foreign texts. The only Polish words used in this way are M-words, and mainly nouns, although alternative terms have been available, such as *czarnoskóry*, *Afrykanin*, *Afrykańczyk*, at least for the 21st-century translations (see Table 5.1). The choice of M-words as added indicators of a protagonist's race, and not any other word that would identify them as a Black person, provides evidence that the stigmatizing potential can be traced not only to the feature itself, but to words, and to M-words specifically.

Interestingly, M-words have been used to spoil protagonists' identities even at times when they were considered non-offensive descriptors of a person's ethnic identity. If, as I have claimed, adding a noun to describe a protagonist's race in translation when not present in the original passage is an indicator of its stigmatizing potential, then Polish M-words carried such a potential even when considered neutral.

While it has been argued, even by me (Łaziński 2007b), that historically Polish M-words were non-offensive, based on their use in Polish texts from the 19th and 20th centuries, their non-offensive character can be challenged based on translated texts. They are used as equivalents of both the word *Negro*, before the word had been deemed derogatory, and the slur *nigger*. Additionally, it is the word-formation basis for the animalistic derivative *Murzyni*.

The Intercorp analysis of Polish words used for Black people has revealed the highly stigmatizing potential of M-words. To verify if such potential is unique to M-words and specific to references to Black people, I will now turn to similar Intercorp research on words for people of Asian origin and words for Romani people.

3.4 Words for People of Asian Origin

Table 5.3 lists the potentially stigmatizing words for people of Asian origin in Polish and English.

TABLE 5.3 Selected words for people of Asian origin in Polish and English

Polish words	English words
<i>Azjata, Azjatka</i> ‘Asian’	<i>Asian</i>
<i>żółtek</i> ‘yellow one-N.M.PEJ’	<i>yellow</i>
<i>skośnooki, skośnooka</i> ‘slant-eyed’	<i>slant-eyed</i>
<i>ciapaty, ciapata</i> ‘Paki-N.PEJ’	<i>ting-tong</i>
	<i>oriental</i>
	<i>zip</i>

The word *Azjata* is used less commonly to refer to Asians than *Murzyn* or *czarnoskóry* to refer to Black people. When talking about people from Asia, a specific country of origin is usually chosen. The derogatory term *skośnooki* ‘slant-eyed’ emphasizes one feature of external appearance, and its use is generally discouraged (e.g., Bańko, Linde-Usiekniewicz, Łaziński 2021, 11), but contrary to M-words, it has not been subject to heated debates in Poland. *Żółtek* is rather scarce, used mostly in translation from English about WWII, cf. *japs* and *nips*, as well as the Korean and Vietnam wars. An additional problem for corpus analysis is a partial word-form homonymy between *żółtek* and *żółtko* ‘yolk’. That is why I decided to omit this word in the study. Likewise, a relatively new Polish ethnic slur, *ciapaty*, has not been analyzed here due to its limited frequency in the chosen corpus. The word comes from *chapati* ‘flatbread’ and refers to people originating from India, and, more generally, from South Asia, but is also used for people of Middle Eastern origin. Thus, it has extended its scope to all people of Asian descent except for people originating from East Asia. It emerged in the language of Polish immigrants in Great Britain in the 1990s. The variant *ciapak* with a colloquial suffix *-ak* has an even lower frequency.

Compared to data about Polish words for Black people, the terms for people of Asian descent are relatively less frequent in all Polish language corpora, and the predominant term is *Azjata*.

TABLE 5.4 Frequency of words for people of Asian origin in Polish corpora

Lexemes/corpora*	NKJP	KWJP	Monco	Paralela	Intercorp
<i>Azjata</i>	523 (1.74)	213 (2.13)	10,979 (2.20)	400 (1.53)	561 (2.41)
<i>Azjatka</i>	15 (0.05)	66 (0.66)	2,916 (0.58)	32 (0.12)	94 (0.4)
<i>skośnooki(a)</i>	202 (0.67)	74 (0.74)	699 (0.14)	56 (0.21)	117 (0.5)
<i>ciapaty(a)</i>	8 (0.03)	33 (0.33)	2,019 (0.4)	4 (0.015)	33 (0.14)

*Absolute frequency and frequency per million (in brackets)

3.4.1 InterCorp Search and Results

There are 664 occurrences of *Azjata*, 94 *Azjatka*, and 85 *skośnooki* in the Polish part of the InterCorp. Most of them are found in subtitles.

In contrast to words referring to Black people, there is no instance of information about a person’s ethnicity being added in the translation. Thus, the material studied provides no evidence for the stigmatizing potential of words referring to people of Asian origin. This may be because the InterCorp material featuring the Polish words in question comes from subtitles. By contrast, the InterCorp data on words for Black people come from fiction, and the added M-words appeared in narrative passages, not dialogues.

Three tendencies could be observed in the use of Polish words in subtitle translations. First of all, the Polish adjective *skośnooki*, ‘slant-eyed,’ quite often corresponds to the neutral English adjective *Asian* (written with upper- or lowercase) as illustrated in (16)–(18):

- (16) *It’s like being in some live sex show for Asian businessmen and frat boys.*
(Six Feet Under, “The Room”)
- (16’) *Jak na występie erotycznym dla skośnookich biznesmenów.*
‘As if an erotic show for slant-eyed businessmen.’
- (17) *You think Han’s an asian drug dealer?* (Two Broke Girls)
- (17’) *Mýślisz, że Han jest skośnookim dilerem?*
‘You think that Han is a slant-eyed drug dealer?’
- (18) *You know what I say about men who fuck asian women.* (Girls)
- (18’) *Wiesz co mówią o facetach pieprzących skośnookie.*
‘You know what they say about guys fucking slant-eyed women.’

This substitution may be because the Polish adjective *azjatycki* very rarely refers to people, more often to geography or other abstract relations. It is possi-

ble to say *azjatyccy studenci* 'Asian-ADJ.M.PL students' in the official register, but not *azjatycka dziewczyna* 'Asian-ADJ.F.SG girl' colloquially. In addition, while the noun *skośnooki* is offensive, the adjective could have been deemed colloquial only or chosen as an exponent for the negative attitude of the speaker, otherwise conveyed in the movie.

Interestingly, the reverse never happens: The Polish words *Azjata* or *Azjatka* never correspond to English expressions *slant-eyed*, *gook-eyed*, *zip-eyed*, or other expressions containing the "eye" component.

The other two tendencies seem contradictory. On the one hand, there is a tendency to avoid rendering the adjective *Asian* as *azjatycki*, and to use a more specific term as the equivalent, in particular, the adjective *chiński* 'Chinese'. Based on the Intercorp material alone, it is impossible to say if such a specification is valid. However, it may be chosen because, in Polish, the adjective *chiński* 'Chinese' or its derivatives are used to refer to other Asian cultures. For instance, in Polish, you can say *chińskie zupki* (lit. 'Chinese soups-N.DIM') about instant noodle soups which were invented in Japan, or *chiński kapelusz* (lit. 'Chinese hat') about an Asian conical hat. Rendering *Asian* as a word referring to China can be seen in the following two examples:

(19) *Is that appropriating Asian culture?* (Switched at Birth, "This Has to Do with Me")

(19') *Czy to w porządku dla chińskiej kultury?*
'Is it okay for the Chinese culture?'

(20) *Same reason I wouldn't use a Ouija board, or pick a fight with an Asian guy.*
(The Big Bang Theory, "The Intimacy Acceleration")

(20') *Tak samo nie wywołuję duchów i nie zadzieram z Chińczykami.*
'Just as I don't conjure up ghosts or pick a fight with Chinese guys.'

The last tendency is less frequent, and involves translating the English national identification *Chinese* as the more general Polish term *Azjata*, as in (21):

(21) *All Chinese look alike.* (Sons of Anarchy)

(21') *Powie, że się pomyliła, bo wszyscy Azjaci wyglądają jednakowo.*
'She'll say she got it wrong 'cause all Asians look alike.'

The Intercorp study of words referring to people of Asian origin has failed to reveal the tendency to add Polish words referring to this race in translation, which indicates that the words *Azjata*, *Azjatka*, and *azjatycki* do not carry the same stigmatizing potential as the M-words discussed in section 3.3. Translat-

ing passages that mention people's Asian origin and cultures into Polish constitutes a challenge because the adjective *azjatycki* does not collocate freely with words denoting people or cultural artifacts. Yet the strategies adopted in subtitling can be perceived as evocative of racial stigmas. The use of *skośnooki*, which is not without offensive potential, and lumping all things Asian under a term referring to China, can be interpreted as stigmatizing. Yet, no stigmatizing potential of the words *Azjata* or *Azjatka* has been revealed. However, both the generalization and specification present in translated subtitles require more research, as does the possibility of words identifying protagonists as Asians being added in the translation of literary fiction. The latter would have to be done, however, based on fiction works featuring Asian characters selected for this specific purpose.

3.5 *Words for Romani and Sinti (Gypsies)*

Table 5.5 contains words for Romani and Sinti people in Polish and English. The English words are included regardless of their register and evaluation.

The traditional Polish term *Cygan*, similar to words in other Slavic languages and German, has an unclear etymology and had been used in a neutral way as a basic term for hundreds of years despite negative connotations in some phraseology. A new neutral group name used as part of the more inclusive language in newspapers and documents is *Rom* 'Roma' (or 'Sinti', but there are almost no Sinti in Poland). However, a significant part of the Roma community prefers to be called *Cyganie* (Nowicka and Witkowski 2018) (this is not the case with Polish Black people and the word *Murzyn*, see Ohia-Nowak 2020). Similar to the M-words analysis, a corpus search showing whether either *Rom* or *Cygan* and possibly their derivatives are added in translation may show the stigmatizing potential of either or both.

The frequencies of the words *Cygan*, *Rom*, and their feminine counterparts *Cyganka* and *Romka* are presented in Table 5.6.

In both NKJP and KWJP corpora, the noun *Rom* had to be disambiguated manually (the numbers are marked with a D). The data from Monco.PL and Paralela may be confounded by homonymy to the abbreviation *ROM* 'Read-Only Memory' and word form homonymy between the noun *Rom* and the proper name *Roma*. Similarly, *Romka* in the Nominative is homonymous with the Genitive of the name *Romek* (short for *Roman* or *Romuald*).

What is noteworthy is the unusually large number of the feminine *Cyganka* 'Gypsy-N.F' compared to the masculine noun *Cygan* (also used in the generic function). The proportion of feminine *Cyganka* to masculine *Cygan* is 1:4 in NKJP and KWJP, and 1:3 in Monco. This is a much larger proportion than in the case of the previously studied nouns. The proportion of feminine *Murzynka* to

TABLE 5.5 Selected words for Romani and Sinti people in Polish and English

Polish words	English words
<i>Cygan, Cyganka</i> 'Gypsy-N.F'	<i>Gypsy</i>
<i>Rom, Romka</i> 'Roma-N.F'	<i>Roma, Romani</i>
	<i>gypo</i>
	<i>Bohemian</i>
	<i>Sinti</i>

TABLE 5.6 Frequency of words for Romani people in Polish corpora

Noun/corpus*	NKJP	KWJP	Monco	Paralela	Intercorp
<i>Cygan</i>	2,105 (7.02)	616 (6.16)	4,883 (0.98)	598 (2.28)	1,673 (7.18)
<i>Cyganka</i>	524 (1.75)	127 (1.27)	1,513 (0.3)	106 (0.4)	317 (1.36)
<i>Rom</i>	1,150 (3.83) D	303 (3.03) D	40,690 (0.3)	654 (2.5)	2,886 (12.39)
<i>Romka</i>	12 (0.04) D	16 (0.16) D	30 (0.006) D	2 (0.008) D	7 (0.03) D

*Absolute frequency and frequency per million (in brackets)

masculine *Murzyn* is 1:5 in NKJP, 1:11 in KWJP, and 1:17 in Monco. Romani women may be mentioned more often in Polish corpora because of references to the traditional figure of a Gypsy fortune-teller and the importance of having one's fortune told competently.

3.5.1 Intercorp Search and Results

There are 249 occurrences of *Cygan*, and 101 *Cyganka* in the Polish part of Intercorp. It is difficult to count the words *Rom* and *Romka* due to homonymy (see Table 5.6). According to a provisional search, which was manually disambiguated, there are 78 occurrences of *Rom* and 5 of the feminine *Romka*. None of these words occur without the corresponding national identification in the original English text.

However, the word *Cyganka* is retained in the Polish translation of Jostein Gaarder's *Sophie's World*, while both English and Czech translations talk about a fortune-teller's tent/wagon as the translation equivalent for the Norwegian *sigøynertelt*:

- (22) *Hvorfor skulle vi så oppsøke **sigøynertelt** eller akademiske bakgårder for å oppleve noe "spennende" eller "grensesprengende"?*
- (22') *Dlaczego więc mielibyśmy odwiedzać **namiot Cyganki** albo przez tylne drzwi zaglądać do świątyni wiedzy, aby przeżyć coś ekscytującego czy "przekraczającego granice"?*
- (22'') *Why should we enter **the fortune-teller's tent** or the backyards of academe in search of something exciting or transcendental?*
- (22''') *Copak musíme vyhledávat **maringotku s věštkyní** nebo zadní dvorky akademií, abychom zažili něco úžasného, co překračuje hranice všednosti?*

The Polish word *Cygan* and the English word *Gypsy*, as well as the Polish *Rom* and English *Roma* are used in official texts (i.e., in the debates of the European Parliament). A coordinate structure *Cyganie i Romowie* ('Gypsies and Roma') also appears in Polish texts, as in the example (23) from *Acquis communautaire*:

- (23) [...] *wzywa Państwa Członkowskie i kraje kandydujące do wzmocnienia prawodawstwa krajowego oraz środków administracyjnych, które kategorycznie i wyraźnie przeciwdziałają dyskryminacji **Cyganów i Romów** i zakazują dyskryminacji rasowej oraz związanej z nią nietolerancji [...].*
(ACQUIS)
- (23') [...] *calls upon Member States and candidate countries to strengthen national legislation and administrative measures that expressly and specifically counter anti-gypsyism/romaphobia and prohibit racial discrimination and related intolerance [...].*
- (24) *Ten punkt porządku obrad poświęcony jest przeciwdziałaniu wykluczeniu i dyskryminacji **Cyganów**. (Europar.)*
- (24') *This item on the agenda is action against the exclusion and discrimination of **the Gipsy**.*

Even in subtitles, one can even find many cases where the Polish word *Rom* corresponds to an English noun even more colloquial than *Gypsy*:

- (25) *I've got a problem with **Gypos** up at the Hunslet site.*
- (25') *Mam problem z **Romami** na budowie Hunslet. (Red Riding: The Year of Our Lord)*

As with words referring to people of Asian descent, there was no instance of adding a word referring to Romani people in texts translated from English. A traditional word referring to the fortune-teller was retained in the Polish trans-

lation of a Norwegian novel, while in parallel translations into English and Czech, a word meaning fortune-teller was substituted. In contrast to words referring to people of Asian descent, where the awkwardness of using the Polish adjective *azjatycki* to refer to people might have given rise to using a colloquial and possibly offensive adjective meaning 'slant-eyed' in subtitles, in the Roma-related material, an offensive term was rendered as the non-offensive word *Roma*, even though the speaker sounds exasperated with his Romani workers.

These observations point to the fact that Polish speakers may be wary of using the term *Cygan*, even if present in the original, unless the translation is an official one. However, the data are so scarce here that it is impossible to draw any valid conclusions.

4 Conclusions

This chapter has parted from the premise that it might be possible to find objective indicators of stigma (following Goffman's 1963 definition) attached to particular Polish words referring to ethnicities and race. I have assumed that since stigma spoils a person's identity, the stigmatizing potential of a given word can be evaluated based on the excessive use of the word when talking about people bearing a particular attribute. To identify intersubjectively the potential excess, I have compared the use of Polish words referring to Black people, people of Asian descent, and Romani people in Polish translations of English texts included in Intercorp—a parallel corpus of texts aligned with their translations to other languages. I looked for instances where words referring to race or ethnicity had been added in Polish translations or were given as translation equivalents of other ways of referring to a given individual or a group. Using an ethnic or quasi-ethnic word where unjustified (absent in the original passage) brings the racial or ethnic attribute of a person to the fore, thus spoiling, in the Goffmanian sense, their identity. The introduction of ethnic and quasi-ethnic words is not warranted by the necessity to adapt the original texts to the requirements of Polish, as shown by comparing relevant passages in two different translations.

My research revealed that this often happens in the case of Black people, and the most frequent Polish words added are the M-words, i.e., the word *Murzyn* 'Black*' and its derivatives. The strongest stigmatizing potential is revealed when an M-word is substituted not for a common noun, but for the proper name of a protagonist.

No instances of similar changes introduced by translators have been found in references to people of Asian descent or Romani people. However, the par-

allel texts featuring mentions of Black people, people of Asian descent, and Romani people represented in Intercorp were not quantitatively matched for genre. In many instances, the M-words were added in the narrative passages, when the narrator identified a particular protagonist, and not in dialogues. Parallel texts featuring mentions of people of Asian descent were mainly movie subtitles. In order to see if words for people of Asian descent are not used by translators of fiction in the same way as M-words, a manually compiled corpus of English literary texts featuring such characters, aligned with their Polish translations, should be examined. The texts featuring words *Rom*, *Roma*, *Romani* did not come from fiction, either written or cinematic, but from corpora of European Union legal texts and European Parliament debates. It appears that exhaustive and conclusive research into the introduction of words referring to Romani characters may not be possible based on translated fiction from English, so other-language texts may have to be selected.

The comparison between English language movie dialogues and their Polish subtitles revealed a marked reluctance to use the Polish word *Azjata* 'Asian' and, even more so, its derived adjective *azjatycki*. The English adjective *Asian*, of neutral register, tended to be substituted by the colloquial and possibly offensive *skośnooki* 'slant-eyed' when referring to people, and *chiński* 'Chinese-ADJ' or *Chińczyk* 'Chinese-N.M' in other instances. It has been impossible to verify if this substitution was legitimate, i.e., the denotated individuals and artifacts were, in fact, Chinese.

My preliminary findings, both qualitative and quantitative, concerning the additions of words referring to race or ethnicity in translated texts, seem to confirm the strong stigmatizing potential of Polish M-words. A similar phenomenon has not been identified for words referring to people of Asian descent or to Romani people. This is not to say that words like *skośnooki* 'slant-eyed' do not carry a stigmatizing potential—but different research techniques need to be devised to identify it intersubjectively.

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Teachers (on Strike) as “the Others” in Polish Media Discourse

Contempt Speech against Teachers in Media Articles and Accompanying Comments (Results of a Pilot Study)

Agnieszka Mikołajczuk

1 Introduction

1.1 *Motives and Aims of the Research*

A Polish teacher, Joanna Szymula, published the following declaration in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, one of Poland’s most popular center-left liberal newspapers, three years ago:

There have been various governments in Poland, and we have had numerous clashes with them, but we have never encountered such contempt for educators [...]. That’s enough! We, the teaching community, do not appreciate being insulted. [...] teachers are leaving schools, you can say they substitute cold reason for ideals. What next? [...] ridiculing teachers and humiliating them may have the opposite effect. [...] What will you do without teachers? And so, as yet another tragic school year draws to an end in this country, we are saying: good relations are stronger than the contemptuous sneers of ministers of education and of this government.

SZYMULA 2022; translation mine

This lack of respect for teachers, including the government’s derisive comments about educators, is confirmed in a presentation detailing the results of a project entitled *Młodzi nauczyciele odchodzą ze szkoły* ‘Teacher Drop Out: Young teachers quit school’ by Joanna Dobkowska, Anna Zielińska, and Małgorzata Żytko (Dobkowska, Zielińska, and Żytko 2022). One of the authors, Małgorzata Żytko, states in another paper:

The challenge that teachers face on a daily basis is to function in a context of high social expectations and demands, while at the same time, the social prestige of the profession is in decline, and its value is being depreciated.

ŻYTKO 2023, 41, translation mine

Many socioeconomic and political factors have contributed to this difficult situation: a structural reform of the Polish education system, initiated by the right-wing government in 2017; the failure of one of the largest teachers' strikes in free Poland, organized in April 2019; the Covid-19 pandemic and months of online teaching; the incorporation of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian refugee students into Polish schools after Russia's invasion of Ukraine from 2022 onwards with little appropriate support for teachers; high inflation without sufficient salary increases. This has resulted in overcrowded schools, an overwhelming core curriculum, student and teacher burnout, and dissatisfied parents—and has complicated the matter of Polish education in the last few years (see, e.g., Sobestjańska, Sopińska, and Stefańska 2022).¹

Given this dire context, there is an urgent need for interdisciplinary studies to analyze the various aspects of the situation, discover mechanisms that hinder more constructive relations in educational settings, and promote change for the better (see point 8 in Żytko 2023, 51). Thus, in addition to specialists in education, sociology, psychology, and economics, linguists can make important contributions to such studies, as language is an important tool for shaping thoughts and emotions at both individual and community levels, through interpreting reality and perpetrating specific social values (see Bartmiński 2009, 23 and 36).

Language is frequently used to create both positive and negative representations of various groups of people in our minds (see, e.g., Alorainy et al. 2019, 3; Tokarski 1993; Bartmiński 2009). The process termed *othering* plays an important role in this.

The goal of my study, therefore, is to analyze selected texts about teachers (on strike), all published in the Polish media and accessible online, in order to answer the following questions: “Which words and conceptual domains are being employed to foster a negative view of teachers?” and “What kind of “us” stands in opposition to teachers and why?”

1.2 *Key Notions Framing the Research*

1.2.1 Othering

The concept of ‘othering’ appears to be an appropriate and convenient tool for this research. It has previously been used by other researchers who have studied racist discourse, abusive language, discriminatory beliefs, and hate speech in general (see Alorainy et al. 2019, 3; Adamczak-Krzysztofowicz, Szczepaniak-

1 It should be noted that the 2024 thirty percent salary increase given to teachers by the new, center-left government does not solve all the problems.

Kozak, and Jaszczyk 2016). From a socio-psychological perspective, I shall define the term *othering* as dividing people “into Us and Them, in-group and out-group, “the people” (i.e., our kind) and the Others” (Sapolsky 2018, 387). According to Lajos Brons, the in-group and out-group construction relies on ascribing specific characteristics to their respective members and assuming the superiority of the in-group:

Othering is a simultaneous construction of the self or in-group and the other or out-group in mutual and unequal opposition through identification of some desirable characteristic that the self / in-group has and the other / out-group lacks and / or some undesirable characteristic that the other / out-group has and the self / in-group lacks. Othering thus sets up a superior self / in-group in contrast to an inferior other / out-group, but this superiority / inferiority is nearly always left implicit.

BRONS 2015, 70

From a linguistic point of view, othering consists of “[...] the use of language to express divisive opinions between the in-group (‘us’) and the out-group (‘them’)” (Alorainy et al. 2019, 2; Miceli and Castelfranchi 2018, 9–10), which is precisely what my analysis is focused on.

1.2.2 Contempt and Disgust: Insights from Psychology and Sociology
The superior/inferior dichotomy posited by Brons may be understood as a stance of contempt. According to Paul Ekman (Ekman 2003), contempt is a complex emotion involving disdain and disregard for other people (or their behaviors) from whom one feels superior (often morally). Disgust is a simpler and ontogenetically earlier emotion that is close to contempt. Disgust prototypically stems from entering into contact with something considered by the experiencer as repulsive or unclean, and results in the desire to distance oneself from said thing. It has several variants, including social disgust towards individuals due to, e.g., strangeness, illness, misfortune, or moral decay; this seems to be the closest to contempt. In Maria Miceli and Cristiano Castelfranchi’s work (Miceli and Castelfranchi 2018), both social disgust and contempt are divided into basic and moral variants. Contempt and disgust also have some common expressions and neurological localizations. Neither contempt nor disgust occurs in the emotional life of babies and young children, especially before the age of four or even eight (see Ekman 2003).

Moreover, disgust and contempt equally play an important role in hate speech, as claimed by Michał Bilewicz and his co-authors (Bilewicz et al. 2017; Winiewski et al. 2017; see also Jędrzejczyk 2017). According to them:

[...] disgust seems to be the most elementary and specific basic-emotional antecedent of contempt. [...] we suggest that many instances of “hate-speech” are in fact instances of “contempt-speech”—being based on disgust-driven contempt rather than hate.

BILEWICZ ET AL. 2017, 1

What is especially important from a sociological point of view is that the effects of “contempt speech” are devastating for society:

[...] among both adults and youth feelings of hatred and contempt toward a particular minority group are correlated with using hate speech against them. [...]. Interestingly, the feeling of contempt seems to be crucial. Contempt is an emotion connected with disregarding and seeing other people as *small*, worthless and incompetent. Feeling contempt toward another person or social group leads to an atrophy of feelings of compassion, guilt or shame, and instead triggers anger and disgust. Presumably, it is the emotional reactions close to contempt (anger and disgust instead of compassion), culturally connected with particular social groups, that lead to using hate speech.

WINIEWSKI ET AL. 2017, 143–144

Disgust and disregard for entire groups of human beings, especially minorities, can be classified as negative emotions and even deemed reprehensible. However, for those who feel these emotions, contempt in particular, they are positive, justified, and solidify the in-group who entertain them. As a result, they can be understood as instances of othering in the sense defined by Brons (2015) above.

1.3 *Methodological Framework and Sources of Data*

The research applies selected methods of cognitive linguistics, and particularly such basic concepts as: linguistic worldview, cognitive domain, frame, conceptual metaphor, and conceptual blending. There is a considerable degree of overlap between several of these concepts. Nevertheless, they provide different lenses through which linguistic and extralinguistic evidence can be analyzed to construct a comprehensive picture of how the teachers on strike are being othered in the studied material.

The concept of ‘linguistic worldview’ is the most comprehensive one and corresponds to “a language-entrenched interpretation of reality, which can be expressed in the form of judgments about the world, people, things or events” (Bartmiński 2009, 23; see also: Tokarski 1993; Grzegorzczkova 2008; Głaz, Dana-her, and Łozowski 2013).

The concepts of ‘cognitive domain’ and ‘frame’ are connected insofar as *the cognitive domain* is defined as any configuration of knowledge necessary to understand linguistic expressions and texts (see Taylor 2007, 241). The interrelation between cognitive domains and frames can be explicated as follows:

Certain concepts are intimately related because they are associated in experience. Cognitive domains are cognitive entities that operate as a frame to sets of interrelated concepts. In Langacker’s words (1987: 147), a cognitive domain is ‘a context for the characterisation of a semantic unit’.

BLASCO 2015, 73

Though the term *frame* does appear in the definition of *cognitive domain* above, in my research, I chose to understand it along the lines set by Charles Fillmore, i.e., as a more complex domain, a strictly ordered configuration of knowledge, serving as a background for understanding conceptually connected words (see Fillmore 1985, 223–224; Taylor 2007, 241). In my material, for example, the frame of VIOLENCE with its subframes WAR or TERRORISM is invoked in a number of passages representing teachers as terrorists who make children their hostages (see, for instance, examples (2) and (11) below).

Conceptual metaphor is understood as a cognitive tool that allows a speaker to see one thing in terms of another thing; its linguistic exponents are (more or less) metaphorical expressions (see Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Kövecses et al. 2015; Hart 2024, 312), for example, such nouns as *wrogowie* ‘enemies’ or *terrorysty* ‘terrorists’ used in texts to describe teachers.

The notion of ‘conceptual blending’ is a more complex and comprehensive phenomenon than metaphor, and it is understood in this paper after Fauconnier and Turner as:

[...] a basic mental operation that leads to new meaning, global insight, and conceptual compressions useful for memory and manipulation of otherwise diffuse ranges of meaning. It plays a fundamental role in the construction of meaning in everyday life, in the arts and sciences, and especially in the social and behavioral sciences. The essence of the operation is to construct a partial match between two input mental spaces, to project selectively from those inputs a novel ‘blended’ mental space, which then dynamically develops emergent structure. Mental spaces are small conceptual packets constructed as we think and talk, for purposes of local understanding and action—they are very partial assemblies containing elements, structured by frames and cognitive models.

FAUCONNIER AND TURNER 2003, 57–58

Jerzy Bartmiński claims that “a language-entrenched interpretation of reality [...] is a portrait without claims to fidelity, not a photograph of real object” (Bartmiński 2009, 23). Blends, frames, and conceptual metaphors are engaged in creating and upholding such portrayals.

In my study of the ways the striking teachers are portrayed, I will be drawing a distinction between two interwoven approaches. The first is literally the study of “naming for othering”, i.e., of the use of specific words, such as *belfer*, which is a contemptuous word for ‘teacher’, *terrorysta* ‘terrorist’, or *nieuki pospolite* ‘common dunces’. The second involves “framing and blending for othering”, and within this approach, I will be studying conceptual frames evoked by various lexemes serving as access points to these frames within discourse (see Hart 2024, 314). It is these frames, and not just words, that create an overall mental view of the subject (i.e., teachers) in the readers’ minds. Thus, the previously mentioned phrasing *brać dzieci na zakładników* ‘to take children hostage’ invokes the frame of VIOLENCE and a more specific subframe: TERRORISM. In addition, invoking such a frame triggers the blending process and the resulting compression of teachers and terrorists. This is defined above as a conceptual compression, which is “useful for memory and manipulation of [...] meaning” (Fauconnier and Turner 2003, 57). Within this blend, teachers, though not named terrorists, become ones in the readers’ minds.

The data used for this study consisted of 35 articles and 1,463 comments added to them (for a detailed list, see the section *Selected sources* at the end of the chapter). All the texts were published in 2019—most of them during one of the largest teachers’ strikes in Poland since 1989. It was organized by the biggest Polish Teachers’ Union (*Związek Nauczycielstwa Polskiego*—hence its Polish acronym: *ZNP*), led by Sławomir Broniarz. The strike took place from April 8 to April 27, 2019, during and just before the most important exams for students graduating from primary, secondary, and high school in Poland.

The articles that I have analyzed all include the word *nauczyciel(e)* ‘teacher(s)’, and were published online in the electronic versions of:

- a) popular newspapers, both the liberal *Gazeta Wyborcza* (wyborcza.pl) and conservative *Gazeta Polska Codziennie* (gpcodziennie.pl);
- b) weekly magazines, both the liberal *Newsweek Polska* (newsweek.pl) and conservative *Sieci* (sieci.pl);
- c) the most popular Polish news websites: *WP wiadomości* (wiadomosci.wp.pl), and the right-wing website *niezależna* (niezalezna.pl).

According to Iwona Loewe, in articles published by media institutions in one-way communication, “[t]he objective of the publisher is to direct social attention and model the views of their audience” (Loewe 2014, 16; translation mine).

The same can be said about commentators who publish their posts online with the aim of both expressing their thoughts and influencing public opinion.

Words and phrases relating to teachers appear in these texts as elements of the authors' narration, construed from their own points of view, or someone else's statements expressed in indirect and direct speech, as well as comments published by readers of the main texts.²

My analysis will focus on two selected issues, which will be presented in the next part of the paper. First, in section 2.1, I will discuss the cognitive domains that are activated in the analyzed media discourse about teachers through the use of specific lexical expressions. These provide access points to the complex frame-structures employed by authors—literally, metaphorically, and metonymically—to conceptually construct a negative view of teachers. Then, I shall focus on identifying the groups that are juxtaposed with teachers and shown as opposed to them in the analyzed texts (section 2.2).

2 Results of the Analysis

2.1 *Domains in Frames (and Their Linguistic Expressions) Used to Talk about Teachers (on Strike) in the Media Discourse*

The analysis has allowed me to identify multiple conceptual domains that are used by authors to characterize teachers, especially during their strike (see Figure 6.1). Teachers and their leader, Sławomir Broniarz, are described as *wrogowie* 'enemies' of society and/or the government, as *komuchy* 'commies' or even fascists, or at least as political mongers, but not as simple trade unionists. They are referred to as people who take part in a politically motivated strike—*w strajku politycznym* 'lit. in a political strike', as well as *terroryści* 'terrorists' and *bandyci* 'bandits' *którzy strajkują wbrew zasadom etyki* 'who, against all rules of ethics, go on strike' and who represent *patologię do kwadratu* 'pathology squared'. All these categories are close to each other. They share a common basis in that they are used for the purpose of positioning teachers against others by describing a lack of ethics visible in negatively assessed political goals and ideologies, as well as violent behavior or abnormal social functioning. As mentioned earlier, according to psychologists, these perceived characteristics are often the reasons behind social disgust and contempt.

² However, only some of the selected publishers allow their readers to comment on their articles (*Gazeta Wyborcza*, *wp wiadomości*), while the others do not provide them with

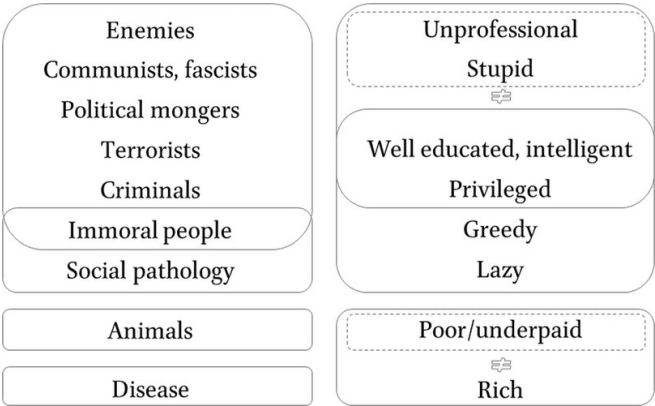


FIGURE 6.1 Cognitive domains used for othering teachers (on strike)

There are also many contexts where the authors question the teachers’ knowledge and competencies, naming them, e.g., *nieuki pospolite* ‘common dunces’ or *pseudo nauczyciele* ‘pseudo teachers’. On the other hand, a number of texts emphasize that teachers had received education at a university level but frame this fact in a negative way, e.g., naming them *wykształtciuchy*, a term initially coined to refer with contempt to ‘people with formal education who nevertheless do not conform to the ideals of members of the intelligentsia’.

Many apparent privileges attributed to the profession, like a light workload (a misconception resulting from equating the number of teaching hours with the number of working hours) and presumed two-month-long paid leaves, were contrasted with the salary demands of (striking) teachers. This led to their being described as *kasta* or *szlachta nauczycielska* ‘teaching caste/nobility’, *cwaniaki* ‘con men’, *lenie* ‘lazy people’, *darmozjady* ‘freeloaders’, and *nieroby belfry zachłanne tylko na kasę* ‘do-nothing schoolmarms, only greedy for money’. Teachers’ low salaries can be a pretext to treat them with pity mixed with contempt and irony (*biedota nauczycielska* ‘teachers, the poor buggers’) and to contrast such stereotypes with the real, in the mind of an author, but hidden “facts” about teachers’ alleged richness, e.g., *wypasieni nauczyciele* ‘fancy teachers’. The last example structurally and metaphorically connects the category of TEACHERS with the category of ANIMALS, as it contains a form of the verb *wypaść* ‘to pasture (about cows, etc.)’. Moreover, such offensive words as *paszożyty* ‘para-

— this option. Thus, comments are not evenly distributed among all the titles mentioned above.

sites' and *padalce* 'slow worms' are also found in the analyzed commentaries and are used to dehumanize teachers (on strike). The word *pasożyt* 'parasite' is particularly interesting because it evokes two domains: feeding on the body of the society and causing disease (Musolff 2014).

It is also interesting that the cognitive domains evoked for the purpose of othering teachers can be contradictory; in particular, they are shown as rich and poor at the same time, and also as both educated and stupid.

It should be emphasized, however, that the listed concepts are not always depicted by one specific noun identifying teachers directly, e.g., as terrorists (*terrorystów*), but also by other words that foreground selected elements of a given frame (e.g., *wziąć zakładników* 'to take hostages' or *alarmy bombowe* 'bomb alarms'). We can see this in (1) and (2) activating the frame TERRORISM, and in (3) and (4), where the concept of (LACK OF) KNOWLEDGE AND PROFESSIONALISM was brought to the fore:

- (1) *Dla minie strajk w oświacie [...] to nic innego jak terroryzm. [...] wymuszać na innych swoje zdanie kosztem najmłodszych i bezbronnych. Tak działają terroryści!* [...] (dr inż., April 4, 2019, comment on Jastrzębski 2019)
'For me, a strike in education is nothing other than **terrorism**. [...] to force others to adopt your opinion at the expense of the youngest and defenseless. This is how **terrorists** work!'
- (2) [...] *zakładnikami są dzieci. Wstyd mi za nauczycieli, że wykorzystują najmłodszych do tego, żeby dotrzeć do celu!!!* [...] (ewa, April 8, 2019, comment on Jastrzębski 2019)
'[...] **children are the hostages**. I'm ashamed for the teachers who would **use the youngest** to reach their goals!!!'
- (3) *Pogonić tych pseudo nauczycieli* [...]. (wikazy, April 8, 2019, comment on Jastrzębski 2019)
'Out with these **pseudo teachers**'
- (4) *No niestety poziom nauczania mizerny a apetyty na kasę spore* [...]. (psychiatra, April 8, 2019, comment on Jastrzębski 2019)
'Unfortunately, **teaching standards are low**, but the appetite for cash is rather large'

Two frames: TERRORISM and EDUCATION, the latter including the concept of (LACK OF) KNOWLEDGE AND PROFESSIONALISM, were connected in a multimodal text, originally published on Twitter during the second day of the



FIGURE 6.2 *BinBroniarz Laden* megablend. Original source: LECHITA SŁOWIANIN ... @LOwianin on Twitter, April 9, 2019, 6:03 p.m. Reproduced for research and education purposes under Directive (EU) 2019/790 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on copyright and related rights in the Digital Single Market.

strike by an opponent, and then quoted and discussed in various media, e.g., in *Gazeta Wyborcza*.³ The full multimodal text, depicted in Figure 6.2 and quoted in example (5), can be analyzed as an instance of a megablend (as defined by Evans 2007, 133–134).

- (5) *Związek Nieuków Pospolitych BINBRONIARZ LADEN*
 ‘The Common Dunces’ Union BinBroniarz Laden’

3 The multimodal text is shown on Figure 6.2. Original source: LECHITA SŁOWIANIN ... @LOwianin in response to @KrzysztofBLUES and @Broniarz, April 9, 2019, 6:03 p.m. Twitter (also quoted and discussed in Mierzyńska 2019).

Both linguistic and visual elements are used here to activate the frame of **TERRORISM** and map it onto the frame of **EDUCATION**, and more specifically **TEACHERS' PROTEST**, represented metonymically by their leader, Sławomir Broniarz, who heads the biggest and the oldest Polish teachers' union *ZNP* (*Związek Nauczycielstwa Polskiego*, 'Polish Teachers' Union').

A visual representation of Sławomir Broniarz (an elderly-looking man with a thinning mustache) is compressed here with a portrait of the most famous terrorist—Osama Bin Laden, the leader of the most recognizable Islamic terrorist organization, Al-Qaeda (a man with a long beard, in a traditional Arab outfit: keffiyeh and thobe).⁴ Similarly, the names of these leaders have been integrated here into one hybrid name: *BinBroniarz Laden*. Thus, the hybrid portrait of the leader of the Polish teachers' strike and his hybrid new "name" are visual and linguistic anchors showing the effects of the mental integration of two different concepts taken from the frames of **TERRORISM** and **EDUCATION**. They allow readers to think about the representative of Polish teachers on strike, and metonymically of the teachers themselves, as if they were cruel terrorists who deserve only punishment, rejection, and contempt.

The inscription that reads *Związek Nieuków Pospolitych* 'The Common Dunces' Union' is a play on the abbreviation of the trade union's name. The red color of the abbreviation *ZNP* is not only the most perceptually salient one, making the abbreviation easily noticeable to the reader, but it can also activate symbolic references in the readers' minds, such as communism and danger. This could activate the historical background of *ZNP*, which is seen, especially by right-wing politicians and commentators, as an organization sympathizing with left-wing parties and their voters, and is therefore evaluated negatively by its opponents. The noun *nieuk*, which means (according to *wsjp*) 'somebody who knows very little because they didn't learn or don't want to learn' (used with contempt, in plural form in the analyzed text) replaces the noun *nauczycielstwo* 'teachers-N.COLL' in the proper name of the union. What links both nouns is the fact that they belong to the same word-formation family with the word-root: *-uk/-ucz-* 'to learn / to teach', present also in the verbs: *uczyć się* 'to learn' and *uczyć (kogoś)* 'to teach (somebody)'. However, *nieuk* also includes negation, introduced by the negative prefix (*nie-* 'not') and is used here to emphasize the lack of knowledge of those who should be well educated to be

4 Even though the teaching profession is most often performed by women in Poland, it is represented here metonymically by a man. Due to this, the metaphorical mapping between striking teachers and terrorists is easier, as a stereotypical terrorist is usually man, not a woman.

able to teach others, according to The Teachers' Charter (*Karta Nauczyciela*).⁵ Thus, disanalogy plays an important role in this remaking from ‘teachers’ to ‘not-learning dunces’.

The adjective *pospólity* (in one of its meanings: ‘common’ or ‘not distinguished by anything positive from objects of the same kind’) is used in (5) in postposition as an adjective characterizing the noun *nieuki* ‘dunces’. It evokes the frame of TERMINOLOGY, which includes generic names of non-human species (e.g., plants and animals: *bluszcz pospólity* ‘common ivy’, *mewa pospolita* ‘common gull’, etc.) and negative phenomena depicted in medicine (e.g., diseases: *trądzik pospólity* ‘acne vulgaris’, *toczeń pospólity* ‘lupus vulgaris’) as well as in law (e.g., *przestępstwo pospolite* ‘common crime’) as its exponents. Thus, the whole expression *Związek Nieuków Pospolitych* ‘The Common Dunces’ Union’ allows its author to depreciate teachers (on strike) represented by their biggest trade union and its leader, Sławomir Broniarz. In addition to the frames TERRORISM and EDUCATION (with such concepts as AL-QAEDA, RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM, and TERROR on the one hand, and THE POLISH TEACHERS UNION, TEACHERS’ CHARTER, and SCHOOL on the other hand), CRIME, as well as ANIMALS, PLANTS, and even DISEASE, are directly and indirectly engaged in a complex blend created by the multimodal text shown in the example discussed above.

There are two pillars of teachers’ profession: their mission to serve the good of the child with care and concern, and their knowledge and intellectual competence. Both of these fundamentals are questioned in the presented examples. Associations with terrorism (and communism) undermine teachers’ concern for children (and question the purity of their intentions). Describing teachers directly as *nieuki pospolite* ‘common dunces’ denies their intellectual competence. This undermines the positive image of the teacher at a very fundamental level. Such negative evaluation, strongly emotional and full of contempt, could be interpreted by audiences as an expression of the authors’ intellectual and moral superiority. Thus, this could be devastating for all the participants of the educational system, deeply affecting not only teachers but also students and their parents, authorities, and uninvolved witnesses, in effect—the whole community.

Many elements of the frame of TERRORISM, which is evoked in the multimodal text discussed above, are also represented in various linguistic examples taken from the dataset for this analysis.

5 *Karta Nauczyciela* ‘The Teachers’ Charter’ is the most important document defining the duties and rights of teachers in Poland. It was passed in 1982, during the Communist era, and it is still in effect, as teachers’ trade unions defend its provisions, including by going on strike.

The frame: **TERRORISM**

- (6) *strajk w oświacie to nic innego jak **terroryzm*** (dr inż., April 8, 2019, comment on Jastrzębski 2019)
 ‘a strike in education is nothing but **terrorism**’

I PARTICIPANTS:

TERRORISTS, their LEADER, and ORGANIZATION

- (7) *z **terrorystami** się nie dyskutuje* (Góral, April 8, 2019, comment on Jastrzębski 2019)
 ‘you don’t negotiate with **terrorists**’
- (8) *Używa hashtagu **#eduterrorizm** dla określenia wszystkich tych działań protestujących nauczycieli, które uważa za niewłaściwe.* (Mierzyńska 2019)
 ‘[(s)he] uses the hashtag **#eduterrorism** to point to all the actions of protesting teachers that (s)he considers to be inappropriate’
- (9) *ZGT—**Zorganizowana Grupa Terrorystyczna** a nie ZNP* (Mierzyńska 2019)
 ‘the Organized **Terroristic** Group, not ZNP [not the Polish Teachers Union]’
- (10) *Na TT można znaleźć także wpisy porównujące Sławomira Broniarza do **ben Ladena**, a ZNP do **terrorystycznej Al-Kaidy**.* (Mierzyńska 2019)
 ‘On TT [= Twitter] you can also find posts comparing Sławomir Broniarz to **ben Laden**, and ZNP to **terroristic Al Qaeda**’

HOSTAGES and/or VICTIMS

- (11) *Dzieci przestały być **zakładnikami*** (Redakcja 2019b)
 ‘Children were no longer **hostages**’
- (12) *nauczyciele, którzy **ranili** dzieci, jak tylko mogli* (Łuczuk 2019)
 ‘teachers who **hurt** children whenever they could’

GOVERNMENT

- (13) [*Strajk nauczycieli*] *to jest postawa niewiarygodnie nieuczciwa, wymierzona w całe polskie PAŃSTWO i demokratycznie wybrane władze. To PUCZ NAUCZYCIELSKI!* (Suchecka 2019)

'The teachers' strike is an incredibly dishonest stance, aimed against the entire Polish state and its democratically elected authorities. It's a TEACHERS' COUP!'

II GOALS: destabilization of the political situation

- (14) [*Kurator*] *uznała strajk nauczycieli za element/część planu destabilizacji państwa* (Pitoń 2019)

'The school superintendent considered the teachers' strike to be a part of a plan to destabilize the state'

III VALUES & MODE OF ACTION: against the law, unethical, and radical

- (15) *To NIE jest strajk 'szkolny', bo NIE strajkują UCZNIOWIE, LECZ wbrew zasadom etyki nauczyciel. NAUCZYCIELE I WYCHOWAWCY, PRZECIWKO dobru UCZNIÓW!!! I to jest postawa niewiarygodnie nieuczciwa [...]* (Suchecka 2019)

'This is NOT a 'school' strike because these are NOT the STUDENTS who are on strike, BUT rather the teacher who has gone on strike against all principles of ethics. TEACHERS AND EDUCATORS, AGAINST the well-being of STUDENTS!!! And this is an incredibly dishonest stance [...]'

- (16) *radikalna forma protestu nauczycieli* (Redakcja 2019b)
'a radical form of teachers' protest'

IV ACTIVITY: negotiations and aggression (see HOSTAGES; WEAPONS)

- (17) [*S*] *tawianie zaporowych żądań i twarde oczekiwanie na ich realizację bez ustąpienia choćby o milimetr to nie kompromis, to ultimatum, choć może lepiej pasowałoby tu słowo szantaż* (Łuczuk 2019)

'Making exorbitant demands and firmly expecting their fulfillment without conceding even a millimeter is not a compromise; it is an ultimatum, or perhaps the word *blackmail* would be more appropriate here'

V WEAPONS: bombs, guns, and ammunition [+ WAR]

- (18) *teorie spiskowe, że za alarmami [bombowymi] stoją nauczyciele związani ze Związkiem Nauczycielstwa Polskiego* (Suchecka, Zubik, and Siałkowski 2019)

‘Conspiracy theories stating that the [bomb] threats are orchestrated by teachers associated with the Polish Teachers’ Union’

- (19) *[Blokady matur to] ostatnia broń, jaką mieli strajkujący nauczyciele i prezes ZNP Sławomir Broniarz. Wczoraj została im ona wytrącona z rąk.* (bk. 2019)

‘[High school graduation blockades were] the last weapon the striking teachers and the leader of The Polish Teachers’ Union had. Yesterday, it was knocked out of their hands’

VI EMOTIONS: fear and terror

- (20) *Jak dodał, “grożenie strajkami w czasie egzaminów może się bardzo negatywnie odbić na postrzeganiu wizerunku nauczyciela”.* (Redakcja 2019a)

‘As he added, “threats of strikes during exams can have a very negative impact on the perception of the teacher’s image”’

VII EVALUATION: negative (see example (8)).

As can be seen in the examples listed above, various elements of the TERRORISM frame are amply exploited in the analyzed discourse. Some of them allow the writer to access the frame directly. Others access it indirectly, which confirms the possibility of camouflaged expressions of contempt.

2.2 Categories of People (and Other Entities) Opposed to Teachers (on Strike)

In the last section of this text, I will focus on the categories of people (and some non-human entities) that authors and commentators of the analyzed texts place in opposition to the category of (striking) teachers (see Figure 6.3).

There are at least four different conceptualizations underlying such oppositions. In most instances, some elements of sophisticated othering (as posited by Brons 2015, 70–72; discussed in more detail by Linde-Usiekniewicz, this volume) are present, and the implicit assumption of striking teachers’ inferiority is included, either explicitly or implicitly, to be inferred by the audience.

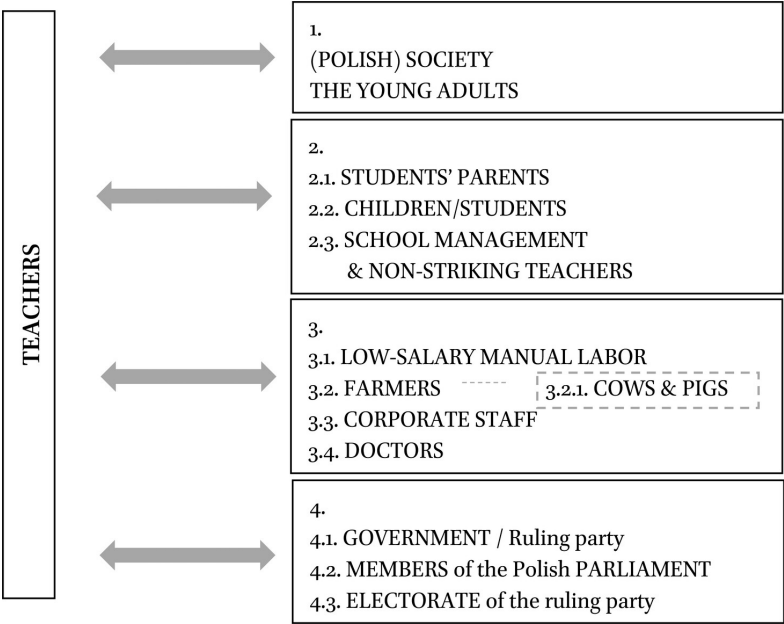


FIGURE 6.3 Different groups opposed to (striking) teachers

Firstly, teachers are shown as if they were opposing the (Polish) community in general, as in (21):

(21) [...] *wy nauczyciele macie więcej do stracenia niż wam się wydaje. [...] Broniarz was wcześniej czy później opuści a społeczeństwo się od was odwróci. [...] Nie można dziś wygrać wszystkiego. Ale można prowadzić permanentną wojnę na wyniszczenie państwa, społeczeństwa i każdego z nas z osobna.* (NIEPROSZONY, April 8, 2019, comment on Jastrzębski 2019)
'[...] you teachers have much more to lose than you think. [...] Broniarz will leave you sooner or later and **society will turn away from you.** [...] You cannot win everything today. But you can wage a **permanent war of attrition of the state, society, and each of us individually**'

The process of distancing society (or a political/ethnic group) from those who are perceived as undesirable or unnecessary can be seen in, e.g., (22):

(22) *Wszystkich strajkujących wywalić na zbity pysk, tyle zarabiają za 4 godziny dziennie, najmniej godzin w Europie i mają czelność by mówić o niskich zarobkach. Większość ludzi młodych po studiach zarabia jeszcze mniej. ale*

nie mogą strajkować, bo nie są grupą nacisku. Utracili szacunek większości Polaków. (gepard, April 8, 2019, comment on Jastrzębski 2019)

'Throw all the strikers out on their ass, they earn so much working 4 hours a day, the lightest workload in Europe, and they have the nerve to talk about low wages. Most young people who have graduated from university earn even less, but they can't go on strike because they are not a pressure group. [Teachers] have lost the respect of most Poles.'

The loss of respect for teachers on strike attributed by the commentator to most Poles explains their recommendation to lay these teachers off, which would be equal to their degradation and marginalization.

Secondly, people who should constitute a community at school are also divided into teachers (on strike) on the one hand, and students and their parents on the other. The divide is illustrated by (23):

- (23) [...] *ciągłe nawiązywanie [przez strajkujących nauczycieli—A.M.] do wątku dotacji na świnie i krowy ukazało, ile w nich złej woli i agresywnej retoryki. Jako rodzic dzieci w wieku szkolnym czuję się przez nauczycieli zdradzona, doszło do zerwania przymierza rodzicielsko-nauczycielskiego zorganizowanego wokół dobra dziecka oraz misji szkoły i wychowania.* [...] (Łosiewicz 2019b)

'[...] constant reference [by striking teachers—A.M.] to the topic of subsidies for pigs and cows has shown how much bad will and aggressive rhetoric there is in them. As a parent of school-age children, I feel betrayed by teachers, the parent–teacher alliance organized around the welfare of the child and the mission of the school and education was broken!'

Teachers on strike are also presented as an opposition to non-striking teachers, portrayed as ideal professionals taking care of children under any circumstances:

- (24) *Ratujmy prawdziwych nauczycieli.*

Ratujmy ich. Nauczyciele, którzy mimo że przez ostatnie dni byli wyzywani i znieważani w swoich szkołach przez pseudo pedagogów, pozostali tam gdzie ich miejsce czyli przy dzieciach, dziś przechodzą dantejskie sceny. Są opluwani, wyrzucani z okupowanych przez kawo-ciasteczkowiczów pokoi nauczycielskich. Strajkująca patologia przechodzi samą siebie. Ratujmy tych prawdziwych, wspaniałych belfrów, bo naprawdę na to zasługują nie tylko oni ale przede wszystkim nasze dzieci! (Ratujmy prawdziwych nauczycieli, April 8, 2019, comment on Jastrzębski 2019)

‘Let’s save **real teachers**.

Let’s save them. **Teachers who stayed where their place is, namely with the children**, although they were insulted and called names last days in their schools by **pseudo-teachers**, experience Dantean scenes nowadays. They are spat at, kicked out of the staff room **occupied by coffee-and-cookiers**. **The striking pathology outdoes itself**. Let’s save the **real, wonderful schoolmasters**, because they really deserve it—and not only them, but first of all our kids!’

Under such circumstances as described in (23) and (24), it is not possible to build a small, local community of people supporting each other in pursuit of a common goal. Lack of trust could be a major factor strengthening such divisions, but there is also space for contempt, envy, or pity.

Moreover, there are economic issues that allow some of the authors to compare teachers to people who they say earn as little or even less but work much harder (like salespeople and cleaning crews (25), or even farmers, who had been promised by the government to receive subsidies for their cows and pigs (26)—unlike teachers who were denied decent pay raises). They also compare teachers to those who earn more than them but, in the authors’ opinions, also work much more intensively (like corporate staff or doctors) and do not get any special treatment (27)–(29).

(25) *Nygusy pracują 18h w tygodniu z miesiące płatnych wakacji dodatki 13stki itp. i mało im??? a matka pracująca z 3 dzieci za najniższą musi sobie radzić i pracować od 8–18 to ile godzin w tygodniu ...? NYGUSY CWANIAKI NACIĄGACZE !!!!!* (EMI, April 9, 2019, comment on Jastrzębski 2019)

‘Skivers work [only] 18 hours a week, with 2 months of paid holidays benefits, the 13th salary etc. and still not enough for them??? and **a working mother with 3 children** has to get by on the lowest salary and work from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. so how many hours a week ...? SKIVERS SMARTIES FRAUDS!!!!’

(26) *Nauczyciele nie ustąpią. Zapowiedź 500 zł na każdą krowę to była dla nich potwarz. Nikt [partii rządzącej] tego nie daruje! STRAJK!!!* (emsi2020, April 8, 2019, comment on Kondzińska 2019)

‘Teachers will not back down. **The announcement [by the government] of PLN 500 for each cow was a slander for them**. No one will forgive this [to the ruling party]. STRIKE!!!’⁶

6 Although this comment was clearly created by a supporter of the strike, it also mirrors a point

- (27) *Nauczyciele myślą, że skąd dostaną podwyżki. To ludzie którzy pracują w firmach muszą im zapłacić. To oni ich utrzymują.* (Mo, April 8, 2019, comment on Jastrzębski 2019)
 'Where do the teachers expect to get their raises from? It's **the people who work in the companies** who have to pay them. They are the ones who **sustain them**.'
- (28) *niech idą do korpo pracować jak im mało [...].* (rada, April 8, 2019, comment on Jastrzębski 2019)
 'let them go to **work at commercial companies**, if they don't have enough [...]'
- (29) *Jako pracownik służby zdrowia również domagam się 13-nastki, 18h tygodniowo, 3 miesięcy wolnego i rok płatnego urlopu regeneracyjnego. Przede wszystkim dlatego, że **pracujemy dużo dłużej w narażeniu na własne zdrowie** [...].* (wd, April 9, 2019, comment on Jastrzębski 2019)
 'As a **health care worker**, I also demand the 13th salary, 18 hours [of work] per week, 3 months paid leaves and a year of paid recovery leave. Especially because **we work much longer, risking our own health** [...].'

Finally, teachers are opposed to the government and the ruling party, as well as its supporters and members of the parliament, which was dominated by this party and its coalition partners. The ruling party had no interest in giving in to the strikers' demands because teachers were not their electorate, and in addition, the strike negatively affected societal support for the main opposition party:

- (30) *Dziś, gdzieś czytałem, że dzień strajku to około 1% spadku poparcia dla [partii opozycyjnych]. [Partia rządząca] wie, że każdy wynik powyżej 35% poparcia daje [...] władze. **Nauczyciele to nie ich elektorat więc ma go gdzieś** [...].* (MaxTrue, April 9, 2019, comment on Kondzińska 2019)
 'I read somewhere today that each day of strike means approximately a 1% drop in support for [opposition parties]. [The ruling party] knows that any result above 35% of support gives [it] power. **Teachers are not their [i.e., the ruling party's] electorate**, so they don't care.'

of view of the ruling party. In the commentator's opinion, by giving farmers 500 PLN for each cow and denying adequate raises to teachers, the government shows its appreciation for farmers and lack of respect for teachers.

3 Conclusions

All the categories of typical motives for social disgust and contempt mentioned above can be found in the analyzed media discourse concerning teachers. They comprise moral corruption—attributed to violent behavior or greediness imputed to teachers; misfortune—connected especially with low financial status; strangeness and inferiority—which may be associated with privileges and a lack of professionalism (see Figure 6.4).

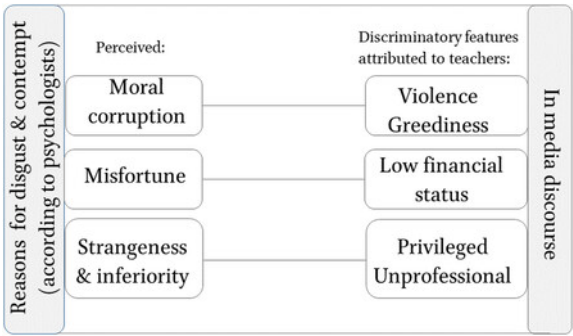


FIGURE 6.4 Motives for social disgust and contempt

According to Robert Sapolsky:

Floating between pity and disgust is a desire to exclude and demean. [...] And between envy and disgust are our most hostile urges to attack.

SAPOLSKY 2017, 8

Thus, when teachers are presented as too privileged and morally unworthy, it can increase the likelihood of attacks against them, and when they are conceptualized in the media discourse as very poor and morally inferior, it may lead to acts of exclusion and demeaning. All of this is declared by many Polish teachers as their own experience (see Kwiatkowska 2019a; Nauczycielka z Łodzi 2019; Żytko 2023; Dobkowska, Zielińska, and Żytko 2022; Szymula 2022).

In light of the presented pilot study, there are questions worth answering next:

- 1) How has the attitude towards teachers described as “others” been changing between 2019 and 2025? Which methods of othering used by opponents of the teachers’ strike in 2019 have become a permanent part of a repertoire of tools used in public discourse to lower the prestige of teachers’ profession? This issue requires an overview from a diachronic perspective.

- 2) Are there any differences between various press titles or text genres, or between discourses focused on different groups (occupational, ethnic, racial, etc.)? This requires cross-textual comparative research.

Until the answers are found, it is worth following Robert Sapolsky's advice:

Distrust essentialism. [...] Focus on shared goals. Practise perspective taking. Individuate, individuate, individuate.

SAPOLSKY 2017, 12

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Linguistic Strategies of Ethnic Othering and Exclusion on the Polish Social Networking Service Wykop.pl

Anna Kołos and Agnieszka Karlińska

1 Introduction

The exponential growth of user-generated content on social networking platforms has been accompanied by a concerning rise in negative communication phenomena, particularly hate speech. This trend calls for a comprehensive linguistic analysis of harmful and offensive content to uncover the structures and patterns employed in spreading hostility and contempt online. While the need for such research is motivated by various factors—such as facilitating online moderation through automated detection and reducing human moderators' exposure to harmful content—a major challenge lies in obtaining a corpus of authentic data that accurately represents the real-world manifestation of this phenomenon.

Existing harmful content detection datasets consist of publicly available data that have been flagged as potentially offensive by external annotators. The data collection process often relies on social media content, such as Twitter, obtained through APIs using pre-selected users, keywords, or hashtags. This can result in a limited and potentially biased dataset that lacks genuine representativeness and may reflect user distribution biases due to an overrepresentation of data from certain users or topics. In this context, BAN-PL stands out as the first publicly available Polish-language corpus containing actual offensive content that was originally removed from the web during the moderation process (Kołos et al. 2024). The dataset comprises posts and comments from Wykop.pl, one of Poland's largest social networking sites. The platform was established in December 2005 and has evolved into a major user-generated content hub, ranking among Poland's most popular social networking services. With approximately 3 million active users generating around 30,000 new posts and comments daily (see Wirtualne Media 2023), Wykop.pl provides a rich source of diverse content spanning topics from sports and economics to politics and Internet phenomena. The site's user base, predominantly male and aged 18–45—with a significant portion of users aged 15–24 (Wirtualne

Media 2014)—is continuously monitored by trained community moderators. The moderation process, which allows users to flag any piece of content within an internal taxonomy of 21 ban reasons,¹ ensures that the BAN-PL corpus represents real-world instances of offensive language that were deemed sufficiently harmful to warrant removal. Consequently, the BAN-PL corpus offers unprecedented access to authentic data for linguistic analysis of hate speech and offensive content in Polish online discourse.

Wykop.pl offers a unique case study for analyzing online hate speech due to its relatively homogeneous community structure. In contrast to more globally diverse platforms like X or Facebook, Wykop.pl has cultivated a distinctive sociolect and semiotic sign system among its users (Sowiński 2018). The platform's unique communicative patterns provide valuable insights into how hate speech and discriminatory rhetoric evolve and propagate within a more insular online environment.

Automatic detection of offensive language is a rapidly evolving field aimed, among other goals, at enhancing online moderation. This field uses various terms, including *cyberbullying*, *toxicity*, *abusive* or *offensive language*, *insults*, *threats*, *hate speech*, and others, reflecting a high degree of “conceptual indeterminacy and fuzziness” (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2022, 214). Therefore, it is crucial to establish a proper framework for categorizing offensive language. Building on proposals for such a taxonomy (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2022, 217), we describe the BAN-PL corpus within the broad definition of *offensive language*, which encompasses taboo, abuse, insults, harassment, and hate speech. This approach allows us to differentiate between the corpus of offensive social media content and the specific subcategory of hate speech (see below, section 2.1).

In this chapter, we will examine the linguistic patterns and grammatical structures used by Wykop.pl users in their online communication. Our main focus will be on linguistic practices related to hate rhetoric, especially those involving racism and xenophobia. Using methods from corpus and computational linguistics, we aim to reconstruct the strategies of othering and exclusion prevalent on the platform. Specifically, we will analyze how ethnic groups are described at both lexical and grammatical levels, providing a comprehensive view of linguistic discrimination. This study contributes to the broader discussion on the formation of ethnicity-based prejudice and the manifestation of hate speech in digital spaces. Through a detailed dissection of linguistic mech-

1 For a detailed description of the moderation policy, see: www.wykop.pl/standardy-moderacji (last accessed: July 25, 2024).

anisms, we seek to offer valuable insights into the nuanced ways in which discriminatory ideologies are constructed, reinforced, and perpetuated through language in online communities.

2 Material and Methods

2.1 Data

The process of acquiring harmful content involved two steps. First, from the 21 ban reasons mentioned earlier, categories related to inciting hatred and personal attacks were selected as the most suitable for investigating offensiveness on social media. This step resulted in the collection of 148,386 samples. Second, a broader category of inappropriate content that violated the platform's regulations was taken into account. Due to inconsistencies in how users assigned ban reasons, this category covered a wide range of violations with varying degrees of offensiveness. To maintain data consistency, we performed a classification using the harmful samples from the first step ($n=148,386$) and an equal random sample of neutral content as training data. As a result, 197,445 samples were classified as offensive and consistent with the dataset obtained in the first step. The final harmful class comprised 345,831 posts and comments. To ensure balance in the dataset, a random selection of neutral samples was made to match the number of harmful content pieces.

As part of an ongoing project involving the offensive content class of BAN-PL, which includes personal attacks, offensive language, profanities, hate speech, and cyberbullying, we are creating a subcorpus specifically dedicated to the phenomenon of hate speech. We have adopted the UN description, which defines hate speech as:

any kind of communication [...] that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, color, descent, gender or other identity factor.

<https://www.un.org/en/hate-speech/understanding-hate-speech/what-is-hate-speech>; last accessed: July 25, 2024

The project will involve the annotation of at least 20,000 posts and comments using a 2+1 system (i.e., two annotators evaluate a sample following strict guidelines, and a superannotator resolves any disagreements). Preliminary analysis has shown that about 11–12% of offensive/harmful content meets the criteria for hate speech, which means that the minimum target size for the

corpus is estimated to be about 2,200 text samples labeled as hate speech. For the purposes of the research described in the article, we used a sample of 263 pieces of content labeled as hate speech.

2.2 *Lexical Analysis*

The analysis of lexical features was conducted in two stages. First, we applied keyword analysis using two approaches: keyness analysis to identify statistically significant lexical differences between corpora, and keyword extraction employing KeyBERT and TermoPL. In the keyness analysis, we used Log Likelihood (LL) and Log Ratio (LR) to compare harmful content (main corpus) and neutral content (reference corpus) from the BAN-PL dataset. Words with an LL of 6.63 or higher ($p < 0.01$) and an LR of 1 or higher were included, resulting in 12,717 keywords distinguishing harmful content from neutral content. KeyBERT (Grootendorst 2000) uses the BERT transformer model to create vector representations of n-grams, comparing them to the entire document's vector. We used the RoBERTa large model (Dadas, Perelkiewicz, and Poświata 2020) to analyze the “hatred” and “incitement to hatred” groups within BAN-PL, extracting 63,383 keywords. TermoPL (Marciniak, Mykowiecka, and Rychlik 2016) extracts terminology by identifying and scoring recurring noun phrases. It uses the C-value significance measure based on phrase occurrences, lengths, and contexts. We analyzed the “hatred” and “incitement to hatred” groups within BAN-PL, extracting 1,651 noun words and phrases as hate speech term candidates.

The list of keywords provides information only about language patterns—to answer specific research questions, the identified features must be interpreted (Baker 2004). Therefore, in the second stage, we conducted a qualitative analysis of these patterns, focusing on the functions of specific words or groups of words in the text. After a thorough review of the emerging keywords, we focused on lexemes indicating ethnic contempt, including neologisms and neutral vocabulary that can be used to incite ethnic hatred.

For this purpose, we employed two corpus linguistics methods: collocation analysis and concordance analysis. Collocations are “fixed, recurring patterns of words appearing in proximity to each other” (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2005, 39). They can form the basis for semantic analysis (Sinclair 1991) or convey implicit meaning (Hunston 2002). Concordance analysis lists all occurrences of selected lexical units in a corpus along with their contexts (Baker 2006), which allows for the reconstruction of semantic prosody and semantic preference, the tendencies of words to co-occur with others of specific—positive or negative—connotations or meanings (Grabowski 2015). In this respect, our research follows the same basic assumptions as the study by Zawisławska and Chojnacka-Kuraś (this volume).

To determine the significance of the number of co-occurrences of a given word pair, we used the M_{13} measure, which assigns relatively high weight to the frequency of the collocational relationship (Brezina, McEnery, and Wat-tam 2015) and maintains a balance between including and excluding lower-frequency relationships (Daille 1995). We included words within a range of three words to the right and left of the base word with $M_{13} \geq 9$. In the concordance analysis, we considered the context of 500 characters to the right and left of the given word or phrase.

2.3 *Grammatical Analysis*

Stylometric analysis using StyloMetrix (Okulska et al. 2023) enabled us to extract grammatical elements related to strategies of ethnic othering and exclusion. StyloMetrix is a tool for creating text representations where each metric in the vector quantifies a specific linguistic feature in the text. Regardless of its length, each document is represented by a vector containing a user-defined number of features. These features translate to normalized statistics of morphosyntactic relations in the text sample (feature values range from 0 to 1 relative to the total number of words in the sample) and serve as measures of given linguistic phenomena. StyloMetrix supports five languages: Polish (the primary language), English, Ukrainian, Russian, and German. For Polish, a comprehensive set of 172 metrics has been developed. In our analysis, we included 160 metrics encompassing various linguistic aspects: grammatical forms, punctuation, syntax, inflection, graphical representation, lexical attributes (focusing on named entities, vocabulary diversity, word length, and the prevalence of specific word types, while also incorporating dictionary-based measures to detect vulgarisms, common errors, prefixes, and fixed adverbial phrases for a comprehensive evaluation of linguistic features), and descriptive characteristics (identifying complex linguistic patterns, such as the use of adjectives and adverbs, adverb-adjective combinations, complex apostrophes, i.e., figures of speech, extended nominal phrases, and distinctive use of nouns and pronouns in the vocative case).²

We conducted comparative analyses of harmful content versus neutral content to extract the specificity of hate speech grammar against generally offensive and harmful content. Additionally, we analyzed content labeled by annotators as hate speech and offensive content not labeled as hate speech. We performed these analyses using Welch's t-test. To check for the normality of

2 For the full list of metrics for Polish, see https://github.com/ZILiAT-NASK/StyloMetrix/blob/main/resources/metrics_list_pl.md (last accessed: July 26, 2024).

variable distributions, we applied the Shapiro-Wilk test. We used Cohen's *d* statistic to assess the effect size. In presenting the results, we included the arithmetic mean (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*). We also provided the *t* statistic, *p*-value, and *d* statistic. The accepted level of statistical significance was $p < 0.05$.

All calculations were performed using Python 3.12 and R 4.3 programming environments available under open licenses. The contrastive keyword analysis, collocation analysis, and concordance analysis were conducted using AntConc 4.2.0 (Anthony 2023) and #LancsBox v. 5.x (Brezina, Weill-Tessier, and McEnery 2020).

3 Linguistic Analysis

3.1 *Referential Strategies*

The most fundamental strategy in communication concerned with the Other is a referential or nomination strategy, representing social actors and involving an in-group and out-group dichotomy (Wodak and Riesigl 2015, 585; Hart 2010, 49). In 1944, Abraham Roback published *A Dictionary of International Slurs* and introduced the novel term *ethnophaulism*, referring to “foreign disparaging allusions” (see Nuessel 2008, 29). Nouns and noun phrases for out-groups have also been typically referred to using various terms, such as “nounal epithets”, nicknames, or “ethnic slurs” (Allen 1983, 10–13). The term *ethnophaulism* is also adopted by Falkowska (this volume).

In the analysis of keywords for “offensive” social media content, several ethnophaulisms are identifiable. The three main ethnic groups targeted are Black people, individuals of Arabic or Middle Eastern descent, and Jews. However, it is important to stress that some common slurs transcend linguocultural boundaries. For instance, the slur *ciapaty* (explained in detail below) and its derivatives are used to refer to individuals of Middle Eastern, Arabic, and South Asian descent, including nationals of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. The following passages will elaborate in further detail on the ethnophaulisms prevalent in our corpus that are related to these three ethnic groups. The traditional noun describing Black people in Polish was *Murzyn*. For decades, it was considered a neutral, non-derogatory term likely derived from the Latin *Maurus*, yet in the 21st century, it has come to be perceived as pejorative and discriminatory due to historical misconceptions and common racist idioms (Łaziński 2007, 2014; Ohia-Nowak 2020). Its use is now discouraged, and the newer, neutral terms *czarnoskóry*, ‘black-skinned’ or *czarny* ‘black’ (sometimes capitalized as *Czarny* when used as a noun) are recommended, although there is a con-

siderable body of users of Polish who cling to and defend the now offensive term (Łaziński 2023, 353–357 and the literature cited therein; see also Łaziński, this volume). Along with slurs like *nigger* and *czarnuch*, the lexeme *Murzyn* (commonly uncapitalized) ranks as a top keyword in offensive content when referencing Black people.

Other ethnophaulisms referring to Black people identified in the corpus are unambiguously derogatory.

Based on metonymy, the word-formation of certain ethnophaulisms is concerned with a single salient, foregrounded quality most commonly associated with othering, namely skin color. In this category, lexemes such as *czarnuch* ‘nigger-N.PEJ’, *smoluch* ‘lit. tarry-N.PEJ’, or *asfalt* ‘asphalt-N.PEJ’ are particularly distinctive. The first two employ the derisive human agent augmentative suffix *-uch* and allude to dark pigmentation of the skin by evoking the black color (*czarny*), or more specifically, the color typical of tar (*smoła*). The final term lacks a suffix indicating human animacy (*asfalt*, lit. ‘asphalt, bitumen’).

Historically, the lexeme *bambo* has become an eponym for Black people, taken from the name of a character in a well-known but controversial children’s poem written in the interwar period by Julian Tuwim (Piekot 2016, 69–85; Balogun and Ohia Nowak 2024, 274–276). Additionally, the lexeme *bambus*, which denotes the Asian plant ‘bamboo’, has, due to its phonetic resemblance to *bambo*, also been appropriated as an ethnic slur. This derogatory usage is recorded in dictionaries of the Polish language, reflecting its pejorative connotations.

Moreover, the Polish corpus records derogatory names that have their origin in other languages, primarily English. Lexemes like *nigger*, along with its variant *nigga* are examples of recent non-adapted anglicisms whose popularity is most likely associated with a resistance to anglophone language ethics, widely identified as “political correctness”. *Dindu nuffin* and its back-formation *dindu* are adapted lexemes from alt-right racist anglophone social media discourse, prevalent in specific subreddits or services like 4chan. It is a mock approximation of the African American Vernacular English phrase ‘I didn’t do nothing’, which emerged following police shootings of Black men in the United States, with the objective of subverting their victim status by presenting them as delinquent.³ Interestingly, the term *dindu nuffin* has occasionally been morphologically adapted to follow Polish nominal inflectional paradigms. Within the corpus, this is done in two ways: either by using the inflectional ending *-owie*

3 See the entry “Dindu Nuffin” in *Global Extremist Symbols Database*: <https://globalextrémism.org/global-extremist-symbols-database/> (last accessed: July 26, 2024).

(*dindunuffinowie*), typical for the plural forms of masculine personal nouns (and characteristic of a number of demonyms and ethnonyms), or by adding the ending *-i/-y* (*dindunuffiny*), which is used to form depreciative forms of masculine personal nouns (Saloni 1988). In the latter case, the mere use of a depreciative form signals a negative evaluation of the referent. However, the form *dindunuffinowie*, by mimicking the structure of neutral ethnonyms, carries a sarcastic tone due to the inherently pejorative nature of the borrowed term.

Lastly, another ethnophaulism identified as a keyword within the corpus of harmful social media content is *makebe*, an eponym purportedly referring to the actual name of a Black individual described by the Polish influencer and YouTuber known as Testoviron. While derivatives of *dindu nuffin* serve to criminalize Black individuals, *makebe* and its variants have emerged to sexualize Black men. The eponym is typically utilized at the intersection of racist and misogynistic discourse, evoking a sense of threat by suggesting that an attractive Black man fulfills sexual fantasies that White women supposedly harbor—fantasies that the average White man is presumed unable to satisfy. Therefore, this image, while inherently racist, is closely associated with the incel community, which promotes a harmful vision of female sexuality. The eponym has also been adapted to Polish grammatical paradigms in various forms: *makebiak* (with the suffix *-ak*, typically used in nomina attributiva; see also Linde-Usiekniewicz, this volume, for an analysis of the morphologically similar noun *styszak*), *makebianie*, a plural form analogous to *dindunuffinowie*, as well as occasional forms like *makebiątko*, which uses the diminutive expressive suffix *-ątko* (also discussed by Łaziński, this volume). This suffix generally occurs in animate nouns denoting young animals (e.g., *źrebiątko* ‘colt’) and, less frequently, young humans (e.g., *dzieciątko* ‘baby’). The latter derivative, *makebiątko*, is used to denote a child born to a Black man and a White woman. While morphologically, it is possible to apply this suffix to nearly all ethnonyms or xenonyms, *Wielki słownik języka polskiego* (WSJP) lists only one such entry, namely *Cyganiątko* (‘a gypsy child’), yet older dictionaries also include the lexeme *Murzyniątko* (‘a Black child’).

Another set of ethnophaulisms pertains to individuals of Middle Eastern and South Asian descent, encompassing five primary lexemes in various forms. The most egregious example among these is the compound *kozojebca*, which features the noun *koza* ‘a goat’ and a nomen agentis derivative of the verb *jebać* ‘to fuck’, an extreme profanity in Polish. Also prevalent is the back-formation variant *kozojeb*.

The most commonly used slur in this context is *ciapaty*, which abounds in creative, occasional derivatives. One possible English equivalent might be

'Paki'; however, it is vital to stress that the actual ethnicity of people targeted with this Polish slur is often indeterminate, and it may refer to nearly any skin tone darker than Caucasian or any Muslim identity, including Turkic ethnic groups. Despite this, the lexeme itself is derived from a term for an unleavened flatbread originating from the Indian subcontinent and prevalent in South Asia (*ćapati* or *chapati*). It most likely originated as a label for people from India, Pakistan, or Bangladesh (Majdańska-Wachowicz 2013, 115). Additionally, it is frequently used to generically denote groups of migrants without even providing the context of migration. A variety of derivatives includes such lexemes as *ciapak* 'Paki-N.SG' and *ciapacki* 'Paki-ADJ', while occasionally also including curious-sounding compounds that express derogatory sentiments along with a degree of infantilization through foreign diminutive suffixes, such as *-ito* (modeled on the Spanish word-formation system) or *-itto*, resulting in exoticized terms such as *ciaparito* or *ciaparitto*.

Within this category, the noun *islamista* 'Islamist' is commonly used to express prejudice against Muslims, a usage that likely emerged in recent decades amidst global debates on terrorism. Originally a neutral term meaning 'a proponent of Islamist fundamentalism', it should not be generalized to refer to any group of Muslims outside of this specific political context.

A borrowing from English, the lexeme *muslim*, pronounced according to Polish phonetic norms, has in recent years emerged to replace the neutral term *muzułmanin* 'Muslim' in derogatory contexts. Interestingly, the better-known and more typical slur *Arabus*, built with the emotionally charged suffix *-us*, is not listed in the keywords for offensive content on Wykop.pl. Within the corpus, it is frequently coupled with a derisive diminutive derivative *muslimek* 'Muslim-N.DIM.PEJ', and often appears in the plural depreciative inflectional form *muslimy*.

Another highly degrading slur is the compound adjective *szmatogłowy* 'lit. rag-headed', an equivalent to the English 'towel-head' or a 'rag-head'. It is typically used in Polish in the plural form and becomes substantivized (*szmatogłowi*-N.M.PL).

As for the Jews, the lexemes *Żyd* and the diminutive insulting form *Żydek* are the most prevalent. Another derogatory term, *pejsaty*, serves both as an adjective and a noun, metonymically referring to 'payot' (sidelocks) with the adjectival suffix *-aty* employed to denote a quality feature, in this case, an appearance-related one. While these are all the keywords related to Jews, it's worth mentioning other occasionally-used terms within the corpus, such as *Żymianie*, which is likely to have originated from the desire to fool search engines designed to find all mentions of Jews. This concept exploits the fact that there is already a correct and neutral Polish word *Rzymianie* 'inhabitants of Rome; Romans', and that

in Polish, the letter *ż* and the digraph *rz* are pronounced the same. Other terms include the compound nominal forms *beznamiętkowiec* and *beznamiętek*, literally translating as 'foreskinless-N.M.SG'. The latter example reflects an extreme form of fetishization, wherein a stereotypically perceived physical trait is used as a label for an ethnic or religious group.

The previously discussed ethnophaulisms constitute the primary method for naming out-group ethnic and ethnoreligious identities. However, our initial corpus analysis has prompted further investigation into a group of non-ethnonymic lexemes crucial to referential strategies commonly employed to generically describe groups of foreigners. The findings from this phase of our study distinctly point to practices of othering, as evidenced by thematic and cognitive patterns that underlie strategies such as animalization and primitivization. Among the lexemes within this group, *brudas* 'lit. dirty one; a slob, a messy person' and *dzikus* 'a savage' are the most frequently employed. However, when denoting masses of people, instead of using the regular plural form of these nouns indicating human agency, there is a strong preference for collective nouns used only in the singular form, such as *dzicz* 'horde of savages'. Additionally, the prevalence of collective nouns with the suffix *-stwo/-ctwo* is noteworthy. New coinages are built upon the derivational pattern of *robactwo* 'vermin' derived from *robak* 'lit. worm'. The suffix has been increasingly visible in offensive language as a vehicle for contempt, as exemplified by a neologism such as *brudactwo* 'horde of slob', a collective noun for those referred to as *brudas* 'slob'. The discussed lexemes clearly evoke a sense of the primitivism, inferiority, and cultural distance of the out-group through associations with savagery, wildness, and filth.

Another group consists of straightforwardly defamatory animalistic lexemes. Keyword analysis has shown that the most significant one is *bydło* 'cattle', which, although it has a plural form in the dictionary, is customarily used in the singular form in everyday language, as if it were an uncountable noun, and is used as a derogatory term for groups of people. In addition to a repertoire of well-known animalistic lexemes such as *zwierzę* 'animal, beast', *małpa* 'monkey, ape', *pies* 'dog', and *świnia* 'swine, pig-N.SG', the previously mentioned lexeme *robactwo* 'vermin' strongly contributes to the tendency to develop derogatory collective nouns, which—as is customary—lack a plural form.

3.2 *Communication Practices for Othering*

While referential strategies are indispensable for labeling people and groups, communication practices extend further by establishing patterns for the imagery that govern hate-concerned discourse. Building on previous work by Theo van Leeuwen (1996), a renowned expert in Critical Discourse Analy-

sis, Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak elaborated on racism-related discourse strategies, understood as “a more or less accurate and more or less intentional plan of practices adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic aim” (Reisigl and Wodak 2001, 73). These strategies include five categories: nomination (referential), predication, argumentation, perspec-tivation, and mitigation/intensification. Based on their work, numerous hate speech researchers have adopted, albeit with some modifications, a comprehensive categorization of communication practices, which include, among others, dehumanization, animalization, primitivization, somatization, criminalization, infantilization, religionization, sexualization, and physiognomization (Dossou et al. 2016, 35; Adamczak-Krysztofowicz and Szczepaniak-Kozak 2017; Jaszczyk-Grzyb 2020).

In terms of animalization, common nominal phrases consist of ethnophau-lism-related adjectives coupled with animalistic lexemes, as seen in phrases like *muslimskie psy* ‘Muslim dogs’ in example (1),⁴ and *ciapate świnię* ‘Paki swines’ in (2). Interestingly, the example (3) below demonstrates that harmful animal-related imagery does not necessarily involve the pejorative nomi-nation of people themselves; for instance, Black people might be referred to as *czarnoskórzy* ‘black-skinned’ in a socially acceptable manner, yet they are compared to zoo animals in a derogatory context. Another excerpt (4) demon-strates a comparison where the subject group is clearly depicted as ape-like. This denigrating message is further intensified by an additional level of contrast that portrays chimpanzees as calmer than the targeted human group. While apes are most commonly compared to Black people, a practice rooted in 19th-century racist discourse, this contemptuous metaphor is also applied to non-Black groups deemed inferior, as illustrated in (5). Notably, labeling Chechens as apes is inherently insulting, yet the modifier *biały* ‘white’ is added, suggest-ing that apes are typically perceived as “black”. This characteristic appears to be perpetuated without any logical motivation other than the compulsion to employ a highly conventional and recognizable pattern of ethnic insult within the practice of animalization.

- (1) *Jak jakakobwiek kobieta jest w stanie lecieć na muslimskie psy?!*
 ‘How can any woman have the hots for these Muslime-ADJ.DEPR dogs?!’

4 We have chosen to quote the samples from the subcorpus verbatim, including all profanities, misspellings, and errors, to accurately reflect the linguistic nature of the analyzed material. In the English translations, we have preserved the conveyed message while correcting any misspellings. Square brackets are used for necessary clarifications.

- (2) *Strzelać do tych ciapatych świń zanim świnie zaczną strzelać do nas ...*
 'Shoot at these Paki swines before the swines start shooting at us ...'
- (3) *akurat wypuszczenie czarnoskórych z zoo w przeciwieństwie do lobotomii było złym pomysłem*
 'Letting Black people out of the zoo was a bad idea as opposed to a lobotomy'
- (4) *Zamknąć w zoo jak na małpy przystało. Tylko w osobnej klatce, żeby nie miały złego wpływu na spokojne szympansy.*
 'Cage [them=Black people] up in a zoo as befits the apes. In a separate cage though, so they wouldn't have a bad influence on the quiet chimpanzees.'
- (5) *Czeczeniu to takie białe małpy. Najlepiej proponuję także nie podniecać się Czeczenami walczącymi po stronie ukraińskiej, bo też niejeden z nich to może być "niezłe ziółko".*
 'Chechens are like white apes. So better don't get excited by Chechens fighting for Ukraine, because many of them may be nasty pieces of work.'

Whereas animalization is premised upon the fundamental axiology of humans versus non-humans, another commonly employed communication practice involves images of primitivism rooted in a culturally ingrained dichotomy between civilization and savagery. The out-groups are thereby othered through striking phrases that denote economic backwardness, lack of access to the benefits of civilization, and a lifestyle perceived by the speakers as primitive. The top keyword among lexemes evoking this sentiment within the corpus of offensive content is *lepianka* 'mud hut'. This term can metaphorically denote any form of poor housing, indicating a very low economic status, although it is not very frequent in contemporary Polish language usage.⁵ A notable collocation within the corpus is *lepianka z gówna* 'a mud hut made of shit', where the use of profanity intensifies the contempt for an assumed primitive lifestyle. Examples of the usage of this lexeme and its collocations reveal a common tendency to blend various detrimental communication strategies. This is evident in the fre-

5 In the National Corpus of Polish (НКJP), the lexeme *lepianka* 'mud hut' is listed only 9 times in the balanced subcorpus (300M segments), while slightly similar lexemes *chatupa* 'hovel' and *chata* 'hut', also indicating very modest old housing, appear 339 and 447 times respectively in the same subcorpus. See: www.nkjp.pl.

quent use of primitivistic imagery to justify historical slavery and depict Black people as beneficiaries rather than victims (patronization in example 6). It also equates perceived backwardness with attributing criminal tendencies to the targeted group (criminalization in example 7) and intertwines primitivism with animalization (example 8).

- (6) *Nie wiem co wy macie do Hitlera. Z nim jest jak z niewolnictwem. Murzyni powinni dziękować z całych sił za niewolnictwo. Dalej siedzieli by w lepiankach z gówna.*
'I don't know what you have against Hitler. It's just as in the case of slavery. Negroes should be eternally grateful for slavery. If not for that, they would still be living in mud huts made of shit.'
- (7) *Mi to wygląda jakby cała społeczność wylazła z lepianek tylko żeby gwałcić, palić i niszczyć.*
'It looks to me as if the whole community crawled out of the mud huts just to rape, burn, and destroy.'
- (8) *To nie kwestia wiary, a pochodzenia. Przybyła masa zwierząt z Afryki, dla których coś więcej niż lepianka z gówna, w jakiej się wychowali, to za wiele.*
'It is not a question of faith, but of origin. A mass of animals have arrived from Africa for whom anything more than the mud house made of shit, like the one they grew up in, is too good.'

Unlike animalization and primitivization, religionization as a communication practice is not universally applicable to any group of "othered" foreigners, as it requires specific symbols or practices that can evoke contempt for particular religions. Within the corpus, two main religious belief systems are highly targeted: Judaism and Islam. The repertoire of lexemes pertaining to this area of imagery is rather limited, reflecting societal ignorance of these religions. This includes terms related to Islamic law and social order, such as *szariat* 'sharia', as well as appearance-related lexemes like Islamic face coverings for women, most prominently *hidżab* 'hijab', or traditional Jewish head coverings for men like *jarmulka* 'kippah, yarmulke'. Suffice it to say that the complexity of these terms within their respective cultural contexts is entirely overlooked, and instead, they serve the purpose of stigmatization, being commonly connotated as symbols of otherness. The religion itself, especially Islam, is perceived as a general threat to the West, as seen in example (9). Religious symbols are often used for periphrastic descriptions of out-groups, replacing straightforward religious nomination, as illustrated by example (10). However, they tend to be coupled

with animalistic associations and, less frequently, with elements of physiognomization, thereby connoting Jews with hooked noses (see 11).

- (9) *IMO wszystkie kraje rządzone przez szmatogłowych, niezależnie od tego czy to Iran, Arabia Saudyjska czy cokolwiek innego, powinny być regularnie orane przez Okcydent sankcjami i bombami tak długo, aż nie dojdzie do ich sekularyzacji i porzucenia islamu.*

'IMO [= In my opinion] all the countries ruled by the rag heads, no matter if it's Iran, Saudi Arabia or anything else, should be regularly tormented by the Occident by means of sanctions and bombs until they are secularized and abandon Islam.'

- (10) *Zabijanie muzułmanów jest mało sensowne, bo szybko się mnożą, a i prawdziwi wrogowie zamiast hidżabów noszą raczej jarmutki i garnitury.*

'There's no point in killing Muslims, because they reproduce rapidly, and the real enemies do not wear hijabs, but rather kippahs and suits.'

- (11) *Współczuję Syrii mieć za sąsiadów nazistowskie świny z garbatymi nosami w jarmutkach*

'I feel sorry for Syria having Nazi pigs with hooked noses in yarmulkes as neighbors.'

3.3 *Grammar of Hate Speech*

To capture the detailed stylistic markers of hate speech, we conducted a comparative stylometric analysis first of the harmful and neutral subcorpora from BAN-PL, and then of the hate speech subcorpus and samples from the harmful class that were not labeled as hate speech. The vast majority of features included in the analysis (154 out of 160) significantly differentiated harmful content from neutral content. When considering a minimum effect size measure ($d > 0.2$, indicating at least a small effect), this number decreased to 20.

Harmful content contained a significantly higher share of apostrophes containing a verb⁶ (0.011 compared to 0.001), nouns overall (0.28 to 0.23), nouns

6 In the StyloMetrix set of descriptive features, several apostrophe constructions are included. Here, apostrophe is understood as a figure of speech referring to a direct form of address, typically involving the second-person singular or plural. Separate metrics capture more complex apostrophes, which may contain nominal phrases, verbs, or adjectives. When applied to literary texts, these metrics reflect the use of literary devices that involve directly addressing a person or entity. However, in the case of offensive social media content, such apostrophe constructions are predominantly characterized by hostile attacks. Each metric calculates the

in the nominative case (0.15 to 0.11), nouns in the vocative case (0.01 to 0.00), masculine singular nouns (0.13 to 0.09), singular nouns of all genders (0.23 to 0.18), second person singular pronouns (0.01 to 0.00), personal pronouns in general (0.026 to 0.015), verbs in the second person singular of the indicative (0.02 to 0.01), verbs in the imperative mood (0.02 to 0.01), and words in sentences with a noun in the vocative case⁷ (0.09 to 0.01). However, it had a smaller proportion of adpositions (0.08 in harmful compared to 0.15 in neutral) and a smaller number of words in declarative sentences (0.37 to 0.53). The subcorpora also differed significantly in terms of lexical features. In the harmful content subcorpus, there was a significantly higher incidence of content words (0.58 to 0.51), content word lemma types (0.56 to 0.47), and content word types (0.24 to 0.21). The type-token ratio (i.e., the ratio of the number of unique words to the total number of tokens) for lemmatized tokens was also higher. This indicates a greater linguistic diversity in offensive statements. It is not surprising that there was a much higher proportion of vulgarisms in the harmful samples (0.04 to 0.00). Detailed data are presented in Table 7.1. Not all differences are straightforward to interpret, as the harmful subcorpus contains diverse and heterogeneous content, including material that could be classified as hate speech, personal attacks, or simply offensive language. However, the fundamental features distinguishing harmful content from neutral content are the use of the vocative case and second-person singular (and, to a lesser extent, plural), the use of verbs in the imperative mood, and a high concentration of vulgarisms.

The comparison of the hate speech subcorpus with the subcorpus of offensive content that is not hate speech allowed the identification of 71 discriminative features, of which 59 had at least a small or moderate effect size measure. As in the previous comparison, there were significantly more nouns in general in the target corpus (0.28 in the hate speech subcorpus compared to 0.25 in the non-hate speech subcorpus). There was also a higher proportion of nouns in the genitive (0.07 to 0.04), dative (0.01 to 0.00), accusative (0.05 to 0.04), and locative cases (0.02 to 0.01), as well as plural nouns (0.09 to 0.04), nouns in the masculine personal gender (plural) (0.03 to 0.01), and nouns in the non-masculine personal gender (plural) (0.06 to 0.03). Conversely, there

proportion of tokens that adhere to specific linguistic rules by dividing their total count by the number of all tokens in the analyzed sample.

7 The metric dedicated to “words in sentences with a noun in the vocative case” identifies sentences that feature a noun in the vocative case. The number of tokens in the identified sentences is counted. This number is divided by the total number of tokens in a given sample.

TABLE 7.1 Normalized metrics of grammatical or lexical feature occurrence in the harmful and neutral subcorpora from BAN-PL

Category	Metric	Harmful content		Neutral content		p	d
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Grammatical Forms	Adpositions	0.08	0.07	0.15	0.08	0.00	1.02
Grammatical Forms	Nouns	0.28	0.12	0.23	0.09	0.00	-0.49
Grammatical Forms	Personal pronouns	0.03	0.04	0.01	0.03	0.00	-0.31
Inflection	Nouns in the nominative case	0.15	0.12	0.11	0.08	0.00	-0.42
Inflection	Nouns in the vocative case	0.01	0.04	0.00	0.01	0.00	-0.36
Inflection	Masculine singular nouns	0.13	0.11	0.09	0.07	0.00	-0.42
Inflection	Singular nouns	0.23	0.12	0.18	0.09	0.00	-0.42
Inflection	Second person singular pronouns	0.01	0.03	0.00	0.01	0.00	-0.32
Inflection	Verbs in second person singular	0.02	0.05	0.01	0.03	0.00	-0.32
Inflection	Verbs in imperative mood	0.02	0.04	0.00	0.02	0.00	-0.35
Syntactic	Words in declarative sentences	0.37	0.43	0.53	0.43	0.00	0.37
Syntactic	Words in sentences with a noun in the vocative case	0.09	0.25	0.01	0.10	0.00	-0.39
Descriptive	Apostrophe (figure of speech) containing a verb	0.01	0.05	0.00	0.01	0.00	-0.28
Lexical	Incidence of content words	0.58	0.12	0.51	0.11	0.00	-0.60
Lexical	Content words lemma types	0.56	0.13	0.47	0.11	0.00	-0.67
Lexical	Content words types	0.57	0.13	0.49	0.11	0.00	-0.64
Lexical	Two-syllables words	0.24	0.12	0.21	0.10	0.00	-0.27
Lexical	Type-token ratio for lemmatized tokens	0.73	0.12	0.68	0.11	0.00	-0.42
Lexical	Vulgarisms	0.04	0.07	0.00	0.01	0.00	-0.70
Graphical	Hashtags	0.02	0.05	0.00	0.01	0.00	-0.48

were fewer nouns in the vocative case (0.00 to 0.01), singular nouns (0.19 to 0.22), and masculine singular nouns (0.09 to 0.12). Distinctive features of hate speech included a higher proportion of adjectives (0.08 to 0.06), adpositions (0.09 to 0.07), and conjunctions (0.07 to 0.06). There were significantly more demonstratives (0.03 to 0.02), pronouns in the genitive case (0.02 to 0.01), and third-person plural pronouns (0.01 to 0.00) in hate speech, while there were fewer personal pronouns in general (0.02 to 0.03), second-person singular pronouns (0.00 to 0.01), and third-person singular pronouns (0.00 to 0.00). For verbs, the hate speech subcorpus had a higher proportion of first-person plural forms (0.00 to 0.00) and third-person singular forms (0.03 to 0.01), as well as more quasi-verbs⁸ (0.01 to 0.01). However, there was a lower

8 The metric for capturing quasi-verbs is based on the spaCy tagset, which indicates the mor-

proportion of verbs in the second-person singular (0.01 to 0.03) and verbs in the imperative mood (0.01 to 0.02). This suggests that hate speech relies less on second-person address and contains fewer attacks on specific individuals or groups. Therefore, it is generally not directed at the person(s) who are the object of the hate. Instead, it focuses on the categories of “them” (signaled by the third-person plural) and “us” (first-person plural). The use of quasi-verbs introduces impersonality, while the higher proportion of plural nouns indicates that the targets of hate speech are not necessarily individual persons but entire groups.

Among other morphological features, the hate speech subcorpus had a higher proportion of adjectives in the positive degree (0.07 to 0.05). Syntactically, the hate speech subcorpus had a higher proportion of inverted epithets (0.02 to 0.01), object–verb–subject word order (0.07 to 0.04), and modifiers (0.22 to 0.14), and a higher number of words in declarative sentences (0.45 to 0.35). It had a lower proportion of words in nominal phrases (0.70 to 0.79), words in interrogative sentences (0.06 to 0.11), and words in sentences with a noun in the vocative case (0.03 to 0.15). Hate speech statements contained significantly more adjectival descriptions of qualities (0.02 to 0.01) than generally offensive statements, but fewer descriptive apostrophes with an adjective (0.00 to 0.01) and apostrophes containing a verb (0.00 to 0.01). It can be observed that hate speech tends to be less interactive: there are fewer questions and direct addresses to the second-person, while declarative sentences predominate. These sentences often have a persuasive character, constructing supposedly common-sense assertions that reduce the perceived level of subjectivity (Okulska and Kołos 2023).

In terms of lexical features, it is not surprising that the hate speech subcorpus had a higher proportion of ethnonyms and demonyms (0.02 to 0.00) and named entities (0.05 to 0.02), including place and geographical names (0.01 to 0.00). Less obvious is the higher percentage of organization names (0.01 to 0.00) and feminine proper nouns (0.01 to 0.00), which is related to the fact that a number of toponyms utilized in the hate speech subcorpus are feminine (e.g., *Ameryka*-N.SG.F ‘America’, *Afryka*-N.SG.F ‘Africa’). Interestingly, there were fewer proper nouns overall (0.05 to 0.06) and masculine proper nouns (0.03 to 0.04). This is again linked to the fact that the hate speech subcorpus predominantly refers to groups of people rather than specific individuals. In offensive content that did not contain hate speech, there were significantly

phological verb type as ‘quasi’. In this group, a number of predicatives and defective verbs with incomplete conjugation are identified.

more mentions of names and surnames. An exception is Hitler, who was relatively frequently mentioned in statements with anti-Semitic content. Hate speech statements were more lexically diverse, as evidenced by high type-token ratios for lemmatized (0.80 to 0.71) and non-lemmatized tokens (0.82 to 0.72), as well as content word lemma types (0.61 to 0.53) and word types (0.62 to 0.55). There were also more function words (0.22 to 0.18) and even stopwords (0.33 to 0.28). The lexical variation may be motivated by a lower degree of standardized patterns of assaults compared to those involving the second person. The lower proportion of punctuation (0.13 to 0.23) is related to the lower presence of emoticons (0.00 to 0.01) and hashtags (0.00 to 0.01). The detailed data are presented in Table 7.2.

TABLE 7.2 Normalized metrics of grammatical or lexical feature occurrence in the hate speech and general offensive subcorpora from BAN-PL

Category	Metric	Hate speech		Non-hate speech		p	d
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Grammatical Forms	Adjectives	0.08	0.07	0.06	0.06	0.00	0.42
Grammatical Forms	Adpositions	0.09	0.06	0.07	0.07	0.01	0.24
Grammatical Forms	Conjunctions	0.07	0.05	0.06	0.05	0.02	0.21
Grammatical Forms	Nouns	0.28	0.10	0.25	0.10	0.00	0.31
Grammatical Forms	Demonstrative pronouns	0.03	0.04	0.02	0.03	0.00	0.25
Grammatical Forms	Personal pronouns	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.00	-0.28
Inflection	Adjectives in positive degree	0.07	0.07	0.05	0.06	0.00	0.40
Inflection	Nouns in the genitive case	0.07	0.07	0.04	0.05	0.00	0.44
Inflection	Nouns in the dative case	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.35
Inflection	Nouns in the accusative case	0.05	0.06	0.04	0.05	0.00	0.29
Inflection	Nouns in the locative case	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.01	0.23
Inflection	Nouns in the vocative case	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.04	0.00	-0.45
Inflection	Nouns in masculine personal gender (plural)	0.03	0.05	0.01	0.03	0.00	0.57
Inflection	Masculine singular nouns	0.09	0.09	0.12	0.09	0.00	-0.30
Inflection	Nouns in non-masculine personal gender (plural)	0.06	0.06	0.03	0.04	0.00	0.56
Inflection	Plural nouns	0.09	0.07	0.04	0.05	0.00	0.85
Inflection	Singular nouns	0.19	0.11	0.22	0.11	0.01	-0.22
Inflection	Pronouns in the genitive case	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.25
Inflection	Second person singular pronouns	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.00	-0.54
Inflection	Third person plural pronouns	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.39
Inflection	Third person singular pronouns	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.02	0.00	-0.26
Inflection	Verbs in first person plural	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.24
Inflection	Verbs in second person singular	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.05	0.00	-0.73
Inflection	Verbs in third person singular	0.03	0.04	0.01	0.03	0.00	0.63

TABLE 7.2 Normalized metrics of grammatical or lexical feature occurrence in hate speech (*cont.*)

Category	Metric	Hate speech		Non-hate speech		p	d
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Inflection	Verbs in imperative mood	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.00	-0.38
Inflection	Quasi-verbs	0.01	0.03	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.25
Syntactic	Inverted epithet	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.22
Syntactic	ovs word order	0.07	0.16	0.04	0.10	0.01	0.22
Syntactic	Words within modifiers	0.22	0.17	0.14	0.13	0.00	0.55
Syntactic	Words in nominal phrases	0.70	0.22	0.79	0.25	0.00	-0.34
Syntactic	Words in declarative sentences	0.45	0.45	0.35	0.43	0.01	0.22
Syntactic	Words in interrogative sentences	0.06	0.19	0.11	0.27	0.00	-0.25
Syntactic	Words in sentences with a noun in the vocative case	0.03	0.13	0.15	0.33	0.00	-0.49
Descriptive	Adjectival description of qualities	0.02	0.05	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.21
Descriptive	Apostrophe (figure of speech) with an adjective	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.03	0.01	-0.22
Descriptive	Apostrophe (figure of speech) containing a verb	0.00	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.01	-0.21
Lexical	Incidence of content words	0.64	0.12	0.56	0.11	0.00	0.68
Lexical	Content words lemma types	0.61	0.13	0.53	0.12	0.00	0.59
Lexical	Content words types	0.62	0.12	0.55	0.11	0.00	0.64
Lexical	Ethonyms and demonyms	0.02	0.04	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.53
Lexical	Incidence of function words	0.22	0.09	0.18	0.10	0.00	0.36
Lexical	Function words lemma types	0.19	0.08	0.16	0.09	0.00	0.34
Lexical	Function words types	0.19	0.08	0.16	0.10	0.00	0.35
Lexical	Proper nouns	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.08	0.02	-0.21
Lexical	Named entities	0.05	0.07	0.02	0.04	0.00	0.58
Lexical	Feminine proper nouns	0.01	0.03	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.26
Lexical	Masculine proper nouns	0.03	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.01	-0.24
Lexical	Organization names	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.28
Lexical	Place and geographical names	0.01	0.03	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.44
Lexical	Incidence of stop words	0.33	0.12	0.28	0.13	0.00	0.43
Lexical	One-syllable words	0.33	0.12	0.28	0.12	0.00	0.36
Lexical	Two-syllables words	0.27	0.11	0.23	0.12	0.00	0.34
Lexical	Words formed of 4 or more syllables	0.08	0.07	0.06	0.07	0.00	0.30
Lexical	Type-token ratio for non-lemmatized tokens	0.82	0.12	0.72	0.12	0.00	0.83
Lexical	Type-token ratio for lemmatized tokens	0.80	0.13	0.71	0.12	0.00	0.77
Punctuation	Total punctuation	0.13	0.11	0.23	0.12	0.00	-0.92
Graphical	Emoticons	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.01	-0.22
Graphical	Hashtags	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.05	0.01	-0.21
Graphical	Capital letters	0.02	0.04	0.06	0.09	0.00	-0.58

Although each of the aforementioned metrics deserves separate discussion, we will present in more detail a few selected grammatical features of hate speech, which—alongside the purely lexical features discussed earlier—play an important role in practices of othering and constitute a significant element of the linguistic strategies of ethnic othering and exclusion.

A very characteristic feature of hate speech is the presence of demonstratives (a category that in our corpus encompasses demonstrative adjectives and pronouns). While the regular function of the demonstrative pronoun is either deictic or anaphoric, its grammatical necessity is only motivated in some of the hate speech samples, as in examples (12) and (13), where it is clear that the sentences would not be fully coherent without the pronoun.

- (12) *spierd ... do Afganistanu jak tak kochasz to bydło, zarzuć szmatę na łeb i żyj w lepiance*
 'get the f*** out to Afghanistan since you love that-DEM cattle so much, put a rag on your head and go live in a mud hut'
- (13) *Nie są protesty. To są zamieszki. Czas wyprowadzić wojsko na ulicę ogłosić stan wojenny i zacząć strzelać do tych zwierząt*
 'These are not protests. It's a riot. It's time to bring the army out on the street declare martial law and start shooting these-DEM animals'

In various samples, however, the demonstrative ('this', 'that'), although grammatically non-obligatory, expresses at least a distance, if not a strong aversion, to the phenomena or people it designates. It can be combined with the noun (most typically in the nominative, accusative, and dative cases) and frequently, though not necessarily, coupled with an adjective. In such constructions, the lexical unit *ten cały* ('this whole', 'all this'), when followed by a noun, is prevalent and often adds an expressive emphasis to the basic message conveyed, as illustrated in examples (14) and (15).

- (14) *Zebrać to całe ścierwo i won na Bliski Wschód. Będą czuć się jak w domu.*
 'Gather up all this carrion and away with them to the Middle East. They'll feel right at home.'
- (15) *A więc to jest ten cały LGBT ch*j igrek zet? Wtrącić to do lochu natychmiast.*
 'So this is the whole LGBT d*ck A B C? Throw that in the dungeon, immediately.'

Without the demonstrative pronoun, the referenced sentences would still be grammatically correct. In constructions where the pronoun ('this') co-occurs

with an adjective and then a noun, the pronoun serves to intensify and emphasize. This apparent deixis further prompts the localization of the designated phenomena or people in the out-group.

Additionally, the demonstrative pronoun in hate speech content can serve a substitutive role, where a group of people is designated with a neuter singular pronoun (*to* 'that-DEM.SG.N'), used for non-animate referents, thus depriving them of any humanity. This constitutes the highest degree of dehumanization by means of grammar, as seen in example (16), where the use of the pronoun is inconsistent with the animacy of the referent, while a phrase like "and those who escape should be shot down" would be expected as grammatically appropriate.

- (16) *Jeden ciul Islam należy zdelegalizować i wszystkie Kraje gdzie jest główną religią zbombardować przy użyciu bomb atomowych. A to, co ucieknie odstrzelić, by nie stwarzało zagrożenia po tym, jak ubogaci kulturowo LGBTQWERTY.*

'Same shit, Islam should be banned and all the countries where it's a major religion should be attacked with atomic bombs. And whatever escapes (lit. that-DEM.SG.N which escapes) should be shot down so it won't pose threats after culturally enriching LGBTQWERTY movement.'

Another interesting set of observations can be derived from the use of the non-masculine personal gender within the corpus (see Ohia 2013, 95–96). In traditional grammatical descriptions, Polish masculine nouns in the singular are divided into three categories: personal (e.g., *mężczyzna* 'a man'), animate (e.g., *pies* 'a dog'), and inanimate (e.g., *długopis* 'a pen'). However, in the plural, masculine personal nouns form a distinct paradigm, while the remaining masculine animate and inanimate nouns, along with feminine nouns, are grouped into one collective non-masculine personal gender category. In terms of referential strategies involving groups of foreigners, it is noteworthy that only neutral ethnonyms (e.g., *Ukraińcy* 'Ukrainians', *Chińczycy* 'the Chinese', etc.) fall into the paradigm of the masculine personal gender in the plural. However, according to Saloni (1988), all masculine personal nouns can potentially have a depreciative form that follows the non-masculine personal gender paradigm in their plural paradigm. In hateful utterances, nouns that would require the masculine personal gender are rare; their pejorative counterparts, bearing the suffixes *-uch*, *-ak*, etc., are typically inflected in the plural according to the non-masculine personal paradigm, as are nouns referring to animals in their literal sense. It is noteworthy that such denigrating transformations are found in nominal phrases and not in verb forms. This can be observed in example (17), where

Muslims are initially described as 'worms with rifles' in a non-personal form. However, in the next sentence, the verb form is marked as masculine personal, and the personal pronoun *ich* 'them' appears, in concordance with the implicit masculine personal referent of the verb *myśleli* 'they thought'. This shift seems necessary as consistently using the non-masculine personal gender throughout the entire discourse would obscure the fact that the referents are indeed humans rather than animals.

- (17) *Głupie robaki z karabinami. Myśleli że Allah ich nakarmi ... Przecież to stado szarańczy powinno zostać zrównane z ziemią aby nieporzypomjnąć innym jak głupi może być człowiek ...*

'Stupid worms with rifles. They thought Allah would feed them ... They are just a plague of locusts which should be razed to the ground not to remind others how stupid a man can be ...'

In addition, the use of the non-masculine personal gender can be rhetorically contrasted with the proper masculine gender to enhance the flawed axiology underlying othering. In example (18), terms like 'black scum', 'monkeys', and 'Chinks' are juxtaposed with the lexeme 'white man' in a manner that clearly valorizes the latter. Simultaneously, the use of pronouns in the same example refers inconsistently to the paradigm of the masculine personal gender, as seen before. It is worth noting that the neutral ethnonym *Chińczycy* 'the Chinese' can be easily replaced with its depreciative form *Chińczyki*, by substituting the plural ending with a non-masculine one to evoke a sense of contempt.

- (18) *czarne ścierwa jeszcze zatęsknią za zbieraniem bawełny gdyby nie biały człowiek dawno by zdechli z głodu albo sami siebie wymordowali Czas zabrać przemysł z Chin założyć matpom chomonto i wyp*** ich do afryki niech tam smrodzą swoje środowisko zanim Chinczyki własny przemysł tam przeniosą [...]*

'Black scum will soon long for picking cotton; if not for the white man, they would have long starved to death or killed each other. It's time to take the industry out of China, put harnesses on the monkeys, and kick them back to Africa to pollute their own environment before the Chinks move their own industry there.'

In example (19), derogatory terms include *dzicz* 'a horde of savages', *czarnuchy* 'niggers-N.PL.PEJ', and *brudasy* 'slob-N.PL'. However, a group of Black people who have already been integrated into society, have found employment, and

are educated is seen in a positive light, which is reflected in the neutral nomination using the masculine personal gender.

- (19) *Nie chciałbym też żeby dzicz pokroju amerykańskiej przeniosła się na naszą ziemię i żeby przeszczepiać ich amerykańskie problemy do nas [...] bo nie mamy z tym nic wspólnego a jedynie zintegrowani pracujący często wykształceni czarnoskórzy których mamy na miejscu nie czarnuchy beda przez to cierpieć a brudasy ze squotów odtrąbia kolejne zwycięstwo i pojda robić gnoj gdzieś indziej*

'I wouldn't want the horde of savages, similar to that in America, to move to our land and transplant their American problems here [...] because it is none of our business and only the integrated, often educated Black people we have here will suffer, not the niggers, and the squatter filth will trumpet another victory and go on to cause trouble somewhere else.'

For further verification of these observations, we conducted a frequency analysis of plural nouns in the non-masculine personal gender paradigm within the hate speech subcorpus. The top three most frequent lexemes are *czarnuchy* 'niggers', *zwierzęta* 'animals', and *lata* 'years', with only the latter being neutral and not hate-related. Other frequent nouns include *dzieci* 'children', *kraje* 'countries', *małpy* 'apes', *psy* 'dogs', *dzikusy* 'savages', *brudasy* 'wogs', *osoby* 'persons', and *świnie* 'swine', demonstrating a high prevalence of denigrating and emotionally charged non-masculine personal nouns.

Lastly, the dichotomy of "us" versus "them", fundamental in terms of linguistic othering and exclusion, is operationalized through the contrastive use of first- and third-person plural verbs, as well as pronouns. Interestingly, the first-person plural is employed significantly less frequently than the third-person plural, indicating a primary focus on elaborating the qualities and actions of out-groups while omitting self-affirmation statements. Nevertheless, the hate speech subcorpus exhibits a notably higher frequency of both the third- and first-person plural compared to the generally offensive content.

The following example can be considered instructive for observing the relationship between "us" and "them", as these forms are used alternately to emphasize the dichotomy between the in-group and the out-group:

- (20) *Murzynom daliśmy rękę dając akcje afirmacyjne i przeróżne kampanie. Oni tam [nam] tą rękę ucieli. My musimy uciąć głowy murzynom i żydom którzy sterują zamieszkami i światowym lewactwem [...]*

'We've reached out and lent a hand to Negroes by providing affirmative action and various campaigns. They cut our helping hand off. We must cut off the heads of the Negroes and the Jews who control the riots and the global leftism [...].'

In other cases, however, third-person plural verbs and pronouns do not necessarily need to be contrasted with first-person plural expressions for the negative sentiment towards them to be clear, as seen in the examples below:

- (21) *Hitler pozbył się Żymian, to ich miejsce zajęły ciapaki. Teraz pełnią tu te same role co Żymianie przed wojną; handel, lewe interesy, mafia, narkotyki.*
 'Hitler got rid of the Romans [= Jews], it was the Pakis who took their place. Now they play the same roles here as the Romans [= Jews] before the war; trafficking, left-behind deals, the mafia, drugs.'
- (22) *Już dawno powinno się zatapiać te ich tratwy zamiast ich wylawiać*
 'It is long overdue to sink these rafts of theirs instead of fishing them out.'

Practices of othering are thus fully realized without the first-person plural. In the last example cited, in addition to the use of pronouns, it is also worth noting the presence of the defective verb *powinno się*, which literally translates to 'one should', and conveys a high level of impersonality in the Polish language by concealing the agency of the speaker (Linde-Usiekniewicz 2020, 668–669). Such impersonal constructions are typically used to refer to norms and regulations. This shows how imperatives can enhance the persuasiveness of a statement by avoiding a personal perspective. The occurrence of such forms is another grammatical feature that significantly differentiates hate speech content from generally offensive content.

4 Conclusions

This study has provided a comprehensive analysis of the linguistic strategies employed in ethnic othering and exclusion on the Polish social networking site Wykop.pl. Through an examination of the BAN-PL corpus, we have uncovered a range of lexical and grammatical features that characterize hate speech directed at ethnic and religious groups. The analysis revealed a complex interplay of communication practices for othering, including animalization, primitivization, and religionization, often realized through the creative use of ethnophaulisms, derogatory compounds, and metaphorical language.

These linguistic practices serve to create and reinforce a stark “us” versus “them” dichotomy, emphasizing perceived cultural, religious, and ethnic differences.

The grammatical analysis further illuminated the subtle ways in which language structures contribute to othering practices. The prevalent use of demonstrative pronouns, non-masculine personal nouns, and specific verbal forms all play crucial roles in denigrating targeted groups. These findings not only contribute to our understanding of hate speech as a linguistic phenomenon but also provide valuable insights for developing more effective detection and moderation strategies.

As online platforms continue to grapple with the challenge of the automated identification and mitigation of hate speech, this research underscores the importance of considering both lexical and grammatical features in developing comprehensive approaches. Future research should expand on these findings by replicating the analysis on the full hate speech subcorpus once it becomes available. This comprehensive analysis would provide a more robust and representative picture of hate speech patterns on Wykop.pl. Additionally, exploring how these linguistic strategies evolve over time and across different online communities could offer further insights. Comparative studies examining hate speech patterns in other languages and cultural contexts could also enrich our understanding of this global phenomenon. Finally, by shedding light on the linguistic mechanisms of othering and exclusion, this study contributes to broader efforts to promote more inclusive and respectful online discourse.

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The authors have contributed equally to the chapter.

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Troubled Neighborhood: Ethnophaulisms Referring to Ukrainian People in Contemporary Polish

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1 Introduction

As is often the case with neighboring countries, Poland and Ukraine have had a long history of turbulent relations. The emergence of the Polish state is traditionally and symbolically linked to the baptism of Mieszko I in 966. Soon after this, fights over the Kievan Rus' and the Cherven Gords broke out, culminating in Bolesław the Brave (the then duke of Poland) seizing Kiev in 1018 and installing his son-in-law Sviatopolk as ruler, albeit for a short time. After the decline of Kievan Rus' in the 13th century, a large portion of its territory eventually came to be controlled by the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This subsequently became a part of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth created in 1569, with its land reaching far into the south-eastern parts of today's Ukraine. The year 1648 saw the outbreak of the Khmelnytsky uprising: Zaporozhian Cossacks, who resented the wealthy Polish gentry's domination, fought for autonomy, better economic and social standing, and religious freedom. In the aftermath of the uprising and the ensuing wars between Poland and Russia, large portions of the territories of modern-day Ukraine were lost to the Tsardom of Russia. After the partitions of Poland in the late 18th century, these territories were ruled by the Russian Empire and the Habsburg monarchy. Poland gained its independence after WWI in 1918 and reclaimed control over modern-day Western Ukraine (Eastern Galicia, Volhynia), while other parts fell under the control of the Bolsheviks and became one of the Soviet republics. While these basic historical facts are generally remembered by the Poles, events especially relevant for Polish collective memory came in the interwar period and during WWII. In the 1920s and 1930s, ethnic tensions greatly deepened. A faction of the far-right Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) led by Stepan Bandera gained momentum with multiple attacks on Polish officials. Finally, the years 1943–1944 witnessed the organized massacres and extermination of the Polish minority in Volhynia and Galicia carried out by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (Українська повстанська армія/Ukrayins'ka Povstans'ka Armiia, hence the acronym: UPA) with tens of thousands of people brutally killed. It was followed

by retaliation on the Polish side, in particular during the so-called Operation Vistula (1947–1950), i.e., forced resettlement of Ukrainians and Lemkos from their homeland to the territories in the west that became part of Poland after WWII. Polish–Ukrainian relations have been severely burdened by these events. As Polish linguistic data collected for this analysis demonstrate, they are still vivid: stereotypes underpinning referential expressions often display negative representations of Ukrainians by evoking the gloomiest moments in the history of the neighboring nations.

Today, the question of the language used by the Polish people as a vehicle for various representations of Ukrainians is even more pressing, given the fact that economic factors and the ongoing war have forced many Ukrainian people to settle in Poland. As of March 2023, Poland hosted nearly one million Ukrainian citizens under temporary protection, over 60 % of whom were women,¹ and 1.4 million Ukrainians overall had a valid residence permit, which made them the largest group of foreign nationals in Poland.² Considering the circumstances, monitoring linguistic data may provide us with some cues as to the quality of current relations between the representatives of the two nations.

This chapter traces lexical items used to refer to Ukrainian people in selected Polish texts (see section 2 for data). Since studies presented in this volume are subsumed under the notion of *othering*, I concentrate on expressions that may be considered linguistic embodiments of this notion (see section 3 for the framework of this analysis). In this way, my paper adds to the already extensive linguistic literature concerning the ways Ukrainian people have been represented, e.g., in the Polish press (Rozbicka 2006, Baran 2016, Bielecka-Prus 2020, Borkowska 2020, Skibińska 2023, Tkachenko 2022, Zawadzka-Paluckta 2023), in literature (Sosnowska 1995), and in social media (Liber-Kwiecińska 2023, Mroczek 2023), or how they are viewed by specific social groups, like students (Bartmiński 1995, Fylypec 2020). Sociopolitical studies on this topic also abound; among the most recent, see Lubicz Miszewski 2018, Tyma 2019, Sadura and Sierakowski 2022, Scovil 2023, and Tymieńska et al. 2023. In my analysis, I treat language (more specifically, how it is being used) as a diagnostic tool that can help uncover social representations (albeit with a certain degree of caution, as discussed in section 2). In a broader view, language is both a source of

1 Statistics Poland, *Residents of Ukraine under temporary protection* (report); <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/ludnosc/migracje-zagraniczne-ludnosci/> (last accessed: August 10, 2024).

2 Office for Foreigners, *Citizens of Ukraine in Poland—current migration data*; <https://www.gov.pl/web/udsc/obywatele-ukrainy-w-polsce--aktualne-dane-migracyjne2> (last accessed: August 15, 2024).

knowledge about and a vehicle for collective memory, defined by Czachur as “images from the past activated in the process of social communication in order to fulfill the cultural and political needs of the present” (Czachur 2018, 11; translation mine). This definition seems particularly fitting since the chapter aspires to demonstrate how linguistic expressions (some of them newly coined) help to evoke “images from the past” in a way that matches a specific ideological approach of some of the Poles in the present.

2 Data

The analysis is based on linguistic material from the monitor corpus of web-based Polish: Monco PL (monco.frazeo.pl; Pęzik 2020). It comprises texts from nationwide and local online news services published mainly after 2010 and is updated regularly (as of June 2024, it contained over 8 billion segments). The corpus search engine gives access to both the texts published on news websites and to the user-generated content that accompanies them (i.e., posts and comments that might or might not be moderated, depending on the portal's policy). For this study, I ran a corpus search for a pre-selected set of lexical items used in the years 2010–2024. The criteria for inclusion are detailed in section 4. In the cited excerpts, the original spelling has been preserved, and the source is indicated in the same way as in Monco PL concordances, i.e., the web portal is given instead of a full direct link, and the date of publication is preserved. Usually, the ethnophaulisms are part of comments posted by the readers and do not come from journalists or blog entry authors. This distinction is important, as it is generally the audience and not the web portals themselves that propagate hateful content.

The selected dataset has a considerable advantage: It is easily accessible, and the linguistic material is undoubtedly up-to-date. However, legitimate reservations could be raised concerning its representativeness. First of all, it must be borne in mind that Monco PL offers access only to Internet discourse, i.e., online press articles, (un)moderated posts, and comments. No data representing spoken language are included in this corpus, and given the difficulties of compiling spoken language corpora, this should come as no surprise. Moreover, as is well known, Internet discourse (especially user-generated content) is especially prone to hate speech (as demonstrated by Kołos and Karlińska in this volume). Even more concerning is the possibility that parts of user-generated comments realize the strategy of hybrid warfare, in this case, aimed at fueling the anti-Ukrainian stereotypes in Poland, e.g., by spreading fake news or popularizing anti-Ukrainian hashtags.

With that in mind, we need to treat the linguistic material with caution to avoid overgeneralizations about its validity and the extent to which it mirrors actual social representations. This is especially important in the light of the grassroots movement in Poland for the support of Ukrainian refugees since 2022. Additionally, as stated by Sadura and Sierakowski (2022, 34–35), focus group interviews rarely featured Polish–Ukrainian historical resentments and the interviewees would not dwell on them. However, Tymińska et al. (2023, 45–46) observed that these topics are overrepresented on social media. They attributed this fact both to the deliberate activity of propaganda and to the sense of anonymity on the Internet, which lowers the users' inhibitions. If this is a valid observation, the medium of communication and the linguistic data therein may affect the outcomes of the analysis. However, even with these limitations, the present study does shed some light on the lexical means of creating and upholding the “us” vs. “them” dichotomy.

3 Vocabulary in the Service of Othering

The present study falls within the scope of lexical semantics. It focuses on how linguistic expressions are used to construct and uphold the representations of “others” by selectively foregrounding certain negative characteristics ascribed to the out-group members. In my analysis, I follow the basic premises of the definition of *othering* put forward by Brons:

Othering is the simultaneous construction of the self or in-group and the other or out-group in mutual and unequal opposition through identification of some desirable characteristic that the self/in-group has and the other/out-group lacks and/or some undesirable characteristic that the other/out-group has and the self/in-group lacks. Othering thus sets up a superior self/in-group in contrast to an inferior other/out-group, but this superiority/inferiority is nearly always left implicit.

BRONS 2015, 70

My research material serves mainly to reconstruct the set of negative characteristics that are ascribed to Ukrainian people in texts written in Polish (this issue is covered in detail in section 5) and falls under the social “us-versus-them” othering dimension distinguished by Brons. However, I cannot fully agree with Brons's assumption that the “superiority/inferiority is nearly always left implicit”. On the contrary: coining lexical labels specifically to uphold negative representations of a person/group seems to be a fully explicit and overt

way of singling “them” out as inferior. Moreover, I believe that most of my material illustrates what Brons called *sophisticated othering*: modeling Ukrainians as “others” from the Polish perspective is based on specific reasoning about them, e.g., as people holding grudges, harboring hatred towards Poles, and exhibiting far-right nationalist views.

4 Ethnophaulisms Referring to Ukrainian People: An Overview

In this study, I opted for the term *ethnophaulisms* to refer to the lexical expressions under investigation. It was coined by psychologist Abraham Aaron Roback (1944), who employed the Greek words *éthnos* ‘nation, ethnic group’ and *phaûlos* ‘bad, worthless ...’ to create an umbrella term for negatively loaded words used as ethnic slurs. As such, ethnophaulisms combine two aspects important for my analysis: they refer to a specific ethnic group, and they are vehicles of negative (“undesirable”, as Brons puts it) characteristics.

The first stage of my research consisted of excerpting lexical expressions used to refer to Ukrainians from the current linguistic and sociological literature, and scanning the Monco PL corpus for their attestations, along with possible spelling and morphological variants.

Subsequently, since this analysis is focused on “naming”, I excluded from my preliminary list pejorative or derogatory expressions which do not specifically “name” Ukrainians but may be used to refer to multiple groups. These include such labels (used metaphorically to refer to people) as *psy* ‘dogs’, *bydło* ‘cattle’, *świnie* ‘pigs, swine’, or the broad terms *naziści* ‘Nazi-N.PL’, and *fascyści* ‘fascists’. Upon consideration, I also chose to exclude the word *nachodźca* (usually *nachodźcy*-N.PL): a portmanteau of the Polish nouns *najeżdźca* ‘invader’ and *uchodźca* ‘refugee’. In its current usage, this noun often refers to people migrating from Africa or the Middle East, especially in the context of the Poland–Belarus border crisis that started in 2021. By extension, it may also refer to Ukrainians, but not as a specific ethnophaulism. I also disregarded the form *Ukraińce*-N.M.PERS.PEJ used as a derogatory label instead of *Ukraińcy*-N.M.PERS, since—following Saloni (1988)—I assume the two words are variants of the same lexeme and not separate lexical items. The former, as posited by Saloni, is inherently pejorative (depreciative), while the latter is neutral (non-depreciative), and this variation is typical for Polish masculine personal nouns in the plural in the nominative case. Further instances of depreciative–non-depreciative pairings will be presented in this section.

The final list of expressions under investigation, together with the number of occurrences in the Monco PL corpus, is presented in Table 8.1 below. The

TABLE 8.1 Ethnophaulisms attested in the Monco PL corpus

Ethnophaulism	Number of occurrences in Monco PL as of June 2024
<i>BANDEROWIEC</i>	13,278
<i>CHOCHOŁ/CHACHOŁ</i>	245
<i>REZUN</i>	779
<i>SZOSZON</i>	58 ³
<i>UKR</i>	1,172
<i>UKROP</i>	143 ⁴
<i>UKROPOLINIAK</i>	4
<i>UPADLINIEC</i>	95
<i>UPAINIEC</i>	209

formal and semantic specificity of each of these words will be briefly covered in sections 4.1 through 4.8 in alphabetical order. Subsequently, section 5 presents a set of negative characteristics ascribed to Ukrainians by these names.

4.1 **Banderowiec ‘Banderite, Supporter of Stepan Bandera’**

The most common noun in the Monco PL corpus is by far *banderowiec*-N.M. PERS, derived from the proper name *Bandera*, i.e., the name of the well-known leader of the far-right Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists OUN-B, with the suffix *-owiec*. The Polish suffix itself is not negatively loaded. Among denominal derivatives representing the same type, there are obvious examples of negatively evaluated names, but their axiological value seems to be triggered rather by the historically-entrenched associations evoked by the derivational basis (e.g., *hitlerowiec* ‘supporter of Adolf Hitler’, *gestapowiec* ‘Gestapo officer’, *stalinowiec* ‘supporter of Joseph Stalin’). Although from the Ukrainian perspective Bandera may be perceived as a person vital for the independence movement, in Poland his name is commonly associated with acts of terror against Polish people, especially in the 1920s, and massacres of civilians in Volhynia and Galicia in the 1940s. The noun *banderowiec* most often refers to historical events (in collocations like e.g., *zbrodnie banderowców* ‘Banderites’ crimes’; *zamordowany przez banderowców* ‘murdered by the Banderites’). Apart from this sense, the

3 After disambiguation. For details, see section 4.4.
4 After disambiguation. For details, see section 4.6.

noun metonymically refers to contemporary citizens of Ukraine, regardless of their actual sociopolitical views, with an observable tendency to use the masculine personal noun more often in reference to men and to use the plural form. Its feminine counterpart *banderówka* (or the more pejorative *banderówna*.N.F.AUGM) is attested in Monco PL 69 times.

4.2 Chochoł/Chachoł ‘Wheat Sheaf’

The word *chochoł*, especially the variant *chachoł*, is an example of a slur used in Russian for Ukrainians (especially Ukrainian-speaking people) and, in this sense, is a loanshift (a more detailed description of the history of the word is provided by Czarnecka et. al 2023). The word, as used in Russian, seems to be a result of intertwining metonymy and metaphor. The metaphor consists of the visual association between a wheat sheaf and the topknot typical of Cossacs, while the metonymy PART FOR WHOLE is responsible for transferring the characteristic feature of a salient group of residents onto the whole ethnic group. Some of the corpus occurrences represent the material supposition:

- (1) *Słowo “chochoł” (wymawiane jako “chachoł”, a w liczbie mnogiej jako “chachły”) jest negatywnym określeniem, którego Rosjanie używają wobec Ukraińców. (Monco PL: onet.pl, 1/6/2022)*
 ‘The word *chochoł* (pronounced as *chachoł*, and *chachły* in the plural) is a negative expression that the Russians use with reference to Ukrainians.’

The word has also appeared in Polish texts and was recorded in the latest dictionary of contemporary Polish (under the heading *chochoł*) as a derisive name for Ukrainians.⁵ There are several occurrences of a formally similar noun *chachlak*.N.M and the feminine *chachlaczka* in the corpus.

4.3 Rezun ‘Murderer, Slayer’

The noun *rezun* was recorded in *Uniwersalny słownik języka polskiego* with the following meaning “an individual who commits robberies, murders; a murderer, a killer (translation mine)” The dictionary also traced its etymology back

5 *Wielki słownik języka polskiego PAN*: <https://wsjp.pl/haslo/podglad/34377/chochol/3922388/ukrajiniec> (last access: August 20, 2024). Apart from this derogatory meaning pertaining specifically to Ukrainians, the noun *chochoł* may also be used to express the speaker's contempt or disdain towards other people, in particular, to point to their simple-mindedness or stupidity (see the electronic dictionary of slang: <https://www.miejski.pl/slowo-Chochol%C5%82>). This meaning was already attested in 19th-century Polish and recorded by *Słownik wileński* (Rejter 2009, 243), where *chachoł* was defined as ‘simple, peasant, simpleton’, and was part of a set phrase *głupi jak chachoł matorossyjski* ‘as stupid as a Little-Russian wheat sheaf’.

to the Ukrainian *пізун/rizun* ‘a butcher’ (from the Proto-Slavic verb **rězati* ‘to cut’). Although the dictionary entry contains a note that the word is used in historical contexts, it seems to be quite active in Monco PL materials, with as many as 779 occurrences. The data show that the noun indeed refers primarily to the massacres in Volhynia and Galicia, as instantiated by the collocation *upowskich rezunów* ‘slayers from UPA’, which refers directly to the situation in the 1940s:

- (2) *Moja rodzina pochodzi z Kresów i to co oni przeżyli i czego doznali z rąk upowskich rezunów oraz ukraińskich sąsiadów—nie czuję się w obowiązku nikogo przeproszać.* (Monco PL: *news.google.com*, 28/6/2013)

‘My family come from the Eastern Borderlands, and with what they went through and what they suffered from the slayers from UPA, and from their Ukrainian neighbors—I don’t feel obligated to apologize to anybody.’

However, the semantic scope of the noun extends over to modern-day Ukrainians, and this is done in particular by foregrounding their family ties with the people directly responsible for the ethnic massacres. To this end, they are described as *potomkowie/pomiot rezunów* ‘offspring/spawn of the slayers’ or *wnuk/córka/syn rezuna* ‘grandchild/daughter/son of a slayer’, while their ancestors are described as *dziadek/dziad/przodek rezun* ‘the slayer grandfather/forefather/ancestor’.

As typical of Polish masculine personal nouns, *rezun* has the potential to produce two alternative plural forms in the nominative case: the neutral form *rezuni* and the depreciative form *rezuny*. The latter, by its very morphological form, signals a negative evaluation on the part of the speaker. In this way, the evaluation is strengthened by combining lexical and morphological exponents. It should come as no surprise that the depreciative form of the nominative case significantly prevails in the corpus, with 102 occurrences of *rezuny* against 29 instances of *rezuni*.

In addition to the masculine personal noun, the data attest to the feminine form *rezunka*, as well as the derivative *rezunofil* ‘an admirer of slayers’.

4.4 Szoszon ‘Shoshon’

Monco PL dataset had to be disambiguated, since the noun *Szoszon* is homonymous with the Polish name of a Native American tribe, the Shoshone; in this sense, the noun is consequently capitalized according to Polish spelling rules.

This is an onomatopoeic name, derived from the Ukrainian interrogative pronoun *uо/уо* (*sho/shcho* ‘what’) by reduplication. Consequently, its internal structure signals the meaning ‘one who repeatedly says *sho*’. According to

Fyłypiec, who analyzed how students referred to Ukrainians, this noun is used significantly more often in the area of Lublin and Rzeszów (Fyłypiec 2020, 106). This is not surprising, since both Polish towns are close to the Ukrainian border, and Polish–Ukrainian contacts have naturally been more intensive in this area. Interestingly, the onomatopoeic provenance of this noun sets it apart from other ethnophaulisms that I study, since we can assume the name could only originally be coined by people who had direct, personal contacts with Ukrainians, and thus were able to pick up the characteristic word from their speech. Other nouns seem to rely to a greater extent on associations and beliefs entrenched in collective memory as historical grudges.

Apart from spelling variants (the noun can be capitalized or not, with lowercase spelling being an additional signal of depreciation), the noun has alternative plural forms *szoszoni* (neutral, 25 occurrences in the disambiguated material) and *szoszony* (depreciative, 5 occurrences); the former being more frequent.

The noun has constituted a basis for further derivatives, e.g., *szoszoński* (*akcent*) ‘Shoshonian accent’, *Szoszonstan* ‘Shoshonland’, and *szoszoneria* ‘a group of Shoshons-N.COLL’.

4.5 Ukr ‘Ukr’

Ukr is the second most frequent noun in my material. We may postulate a possible influence of Russian, with the formally similar name *укр/ukr*. However, if we were to look at this noun as created independently from Russian, we could analyze it either as derived from the name of the state (*Ukraina* ‘Ukraine’) or from the neutral name of its inhabitants (*Ukraińcy* ‘Ukrainians-N.M.PL’) through back-formation preserving only the initial segment *Ukr-*. As is the case with other ethnophaulisms, the masculine noun is used predominantly in the depreciative plural form *ukry*, and rarely does the neutral plural form *ukrowie* appear (6 occurrences).

Contrary to other names under scrutiny, like *rezun*, *szoszon*, or *banderowiec*, the form of this noun does not bring forth any immediate information about specific features associated with Ukrainian people.

4.6 Ukrop

Ukrop is an interesting case of a noun that depicts multiple naming perspectives.

Originally, it was an ethnic slur that has been used by the Russians for Ukrainians, particularly since 2013, as stated by Radčenko and Arxipova (2018, 203). They also hypothesize that it may have originated from the less popular derogatory compound *укponampuom/ukropatriot* ‘Ukrainian patriot’ through

clipping. It exploits both the formal similarity of the first segment to the neutral Russian ethnic name for Ukrainians and the fact that the noun *укроп*/*ukrop* means ‘dill’. Hence, the dehumanizing metaphorical expressions referring to killing Ukrainian soldiers like *кочу́ть укроп*/*kosit’ ukrop* ‘chop the dill’ or *рубю́ть укроп* (*в каньцмы*)/*rubit’ ukrop* (*v kapustu*) ‘lit. cut the dill (into the cabbage); add chopped dill into the cabbage’ (Radčenko and Arxipova 2018, 204). Example (3) below follows the meaning attested in Russian.

The ethnophaulism has quickly been re-appropriated and re-evaluated by the Ukrainians, who incorporated it into, e.g., names of political organizations, military organizations, and musical bands. In Ukrainian perception, the noun splits up into two parts, the latter of which (*-op*) alludes to the Ukrainian noun *onip*/*opir* ‘resistance’.

The interplays of Russian and Ukrainian make it difficult to provide an obvious English equivalent for this word. Moreover, onomasiological tensions result in a part of Monco PL data exhibiting metalinguistic contexts:

- (3) *określenie “ukrop” wymyśliły ruskie oficery polityczne, celem odczłowieczenia grupy, którą zamierzają napaść, okraść, zabić. (Monco PL: wykop.pl, 8/10/2021)*

‘the expression *ukrop* was invented by Russian political officers, with the aim of dehumanizing the group that they intended to invade, rob, and kill.’

- (4) *Skoro tak, to postanowiliśmy zmienić znaczenie tego słowa i pokazać, że można być dumnym z bycia Ukropem (po rosyjsku to o prostu koper ...). Teraz dla wielu moich rodaków Ukrop oznacza Ukraiński Opór, bo nie dajemy zgody na to, co się obecnie wyprawia za sprawą naszego sąsiada, Rosji. (Monco PL: interia.pl; about Ukrainian band “Haydamaky” and their album “Ukrop”)*

‘As it is, we decided to change the meaning of the word and to demonstrate that one can be proud of being an *Ukrop* (in Russian, it’s just plain dill). Currently, for many of my fellow citizens, *Ukrop* means Ukrainian Resistance, because we do not consent to what’s going on because of our neighbor, Russia.’

However, the noun is also used as an ethnophaulism in the Polish texts which I focus on. Counting the exact number of occurrences in Monco PL required manual disambiguation, during which I excluded the occurrences of the homonymous Polish noun *ukrop* ‘boiling water; heat’, as well as those utterances that displayed the Ukrainian perspective (like (4) above). After the dis-

ambiguation and screening, 143 occurrences were left in my material. Additionally, individual attestations of the feminine *ukropka* and the derogatory diminutive *ukropek*-N.M.DIM were found but disregarded due to low frequency.

4.7 Ukropoliniak ‘Supporter of the Eradication of Poland and Creating Ukropolin’

This noun is a derivative from the derogatory name of the country, i.e., *Ukropolin*, which, in turn, may be formally either a compound (*Ukr*- ‘Ukraine’ + infix *-o-* + *-Polin* ‘the Hebrew/Yiddish name of Poland’) or a blend (*Ukraina* ‘Ukraine’ + *Polin* ‘Poland’) (Mroczek 2023, 22).

The term *Ukropolin*⁶ is rooted in New World Order (NWO) conspiracy theories⁷ that postulate the existence of secret power elites who want to overturn the current political order. Their identity is usually discursively underspecified, but in some texts, they are associated with Jewish people, which would motivate the use of the Hebrew or Yiddish word *Polin*. Within the NWO mindset, refugees from Ukraine are portrayed as invaders whose goal is to take control over Poland, which will cease to exist as such after it has been “ukrainized”. In far-right narratives, the process of planned eradication of certain nations is sometimes dubbed *the Great Replacement*. Apparently, in this process, Ukrainians are seen as instrumental in the realization of the plan of the “secret power elites”, Jews among them.

Although the noun *ukropoliniak* ‘supporter of the eradication of Poland and creating Ukropolin’ is rare in the Monco PL corpus (*Ukropolin* and *Ukropol* are more frequent, with various spellings), it is attested in social media and on the Internet. It acts as a vehicle of a conspiracy theory suggesting that Ukrainians, driven by ethnic hatred, are, in fact, trying to put an end to Poland. Interestingly, it may also, on occasion, refer to people of Polish origin (e.g., politicians) who are criticized for putting Ukrainian interests above Polish ones, e.g.,

- (5) *Gdy Ukropoliniaki dostaną jeszcze jedną kadencję, wpuszczą tu następne miliony “ukraińskich braci”, a ci “bracia” już zrobią z nami porządek.* (Monco PL: eostroleka.pl, 20/7/2023)

6 The spelling variant *UkroPolin* brings forward the two morphological segments in a more distinct manner. The alternative name *Ukropol* differs in that it does not foreground the Jewish involvement while following the basic premise of the conspiracy narrative.

7 Specific narratives that fall under the umbrella term NWO are too diverse and inconsistent to discuss them within the scope of this chapter, which is why I only chose to mention those elements that have been visible in my data and that refer to Polish–Ukrainian relationships. For

‘Once the Ukropolin supporters get another term of office, they will let in millions more “Ukrainian brothers”, and these “brothers” will have their way with us.’

Finally, it should be noted that the noun serves as the basis for a (rare) adjectival derivative *ukropoliński*.

4.8 Upainiec/UPAiniec; Upadliniec/UPAdliniec

Since the words *UPAiniec* and *UPAdliniec* are formally similar, I opted to discuss them jointly to avoid unnecessary repetitions. *UPAiniec* is visibly more frequent in the corpus.

Firstly, the capitalized initial segment *UPA-* in *UPAiniec/UPAdliniec* refers to the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (see section 1) and substitutes a fragment of the neutral ethnonym *Ukrainiec*. Thus, Ukrainians are modeled as those who supported (have supported) UPA and their brutal actions against Poles. At the same time, we are dealing with a PART—WHOLE metonymy fueling the hate rhetoric: a portion of 20th-century Ukrainian society involved in massacres orchestrated by UPA represents the whole nation.

It is noteworthy that apart from the straightforward metonymic reading, the nominations employing the acronym *UPA* might also be studied in light of the blending theory as put forward by Fauconnier and Turner (2003). The mechanism undoubtedly requires a separate, more detailed presentation, which falls outside the scope of the present chapter (an attempt at such an analysis was made by Mroczek 2023). For instance, it could be postulated that the nominal structures that employ the acronym *UPA* to refer to present-day Ukrainians compress time relations (thereby creating an impression that the events from the 1940s are happening at present, and that UPA still operates with the same anti-Polish agenda), as well as identity relations (thus implying that Ukrainians today are the same people who either were personally responsible for the atrocities in Volhynia and Galicia, or at least supported UPA). The compression whereby an inhabitant of Ukraine from the 21st century conceptually merges with the figure of the cruel enemy may have a powerful rhetorical and emotional effect (see, e.g., Fauconnier and Turner 2000 for details on the effects of compression in conceptual blends).

Apart from the spelling variants where the segment *UPA-* is not capitalized, where the motivation behind the noun is less visible, there is also the noun

details on the conspiracy theories used in service of disinformation, see Olech and Dobrowolska (2022).

Upadliniec, possibly exploiting the Polish negatively-loaded noun *padlina* ‘carion, animal carcass’ and the verb *upaść* ‘fall, collapse, fail’ with the past participle form *upadły*-V.PP.M.SG. Although Monco PL data provide no insight into the content language users read into the structure, Mroczek cites social media posts that substantiate the association of *Upadlina* with both lexemes, as well as with the acronym *UPA*, notably:

- (6) *Upadlina to bardzo adekwatna nazwa dla najbardziej skorumpowanego i upadłego w tym rejonie świata kraju czcicieli bandery ... taka padlina, UPAdlina. (as quoted in Mroczek 2023, 15)*
‘Upadlina is a really fitting name for the most corrupt and failed country in this region of the world, a country of worshippers of Bandera ... padlina ‘carcass’ of sorts, UPAdlina’

This example combines three possible motivating names for *Upadlina*. On the one hand, the reference to *UPA* is visible in the spelling used at the end of the post, as well as the mention of *Bandera*. On the other hand, the word *padlina* occurs as a metalinguistic comment on the name, and it is used to convey a negative evaluation of the country and, consequently, its inhabitants. Finally, the past participle *upadły* ‘failed, fallen’ has also been tied in to describe Ukraine as a country that (in comparison to its neighbors) is unsuccessful and corrupt. These underlying associations coexist in the text and justify multiple readings of the structure *Upadlina*/*UPAdlina*, and, by the same token, the name *Upadliniec*/*UPAdliniec*. However, given the relevance of *UPA* in Polish collective memory, it might be reasonable to prioritize the acronym motivation.

Regardless of their motivation, the names discussed in this section constitute a basis for other derivatives, mainly adjectival: *upaiński* and *upadliński*. No feminine forms have been recorded in Monco PL data, but both *Upadlinka*-N.F and *Upainka*-N.F can be found on the Internet.

5 Foregrounded Characteristics Ascribed to Ukrainians as Demonstrated by Texts Using Ethnophaulisms

The brief overview of ethnophaulisms, provided in section 4, has shown that they differ with respect to their frequency in texts, their origin, and their motivation. Some of them are fairly general in that their form does not evoke any specific beliefs about the Ukrainian people (e.g., *ukr*), hence, their use allows the speaker to foreground various features depending on the discursive aims. In

other cases, the form of a lexeme is inextricably linked with a given characteristic ascribed to Ukrainians (e.g., *rezun* motivated by the verb **rězati* ‘to cut’, and thus portraying Ukrainians as murderers, see also 5.4 below). Yet another group of lexemes serves the purpose of connecting past events with the present. This is done in a way that suggests that attitudes of Ukrainians towards Polish people have remained the same despite the passing of time, and the nationalist ideology of Bandera, together with UPA’s plans to exterminate Polish people, are still at play in the current Ukrainian politics and society (this is the case of, e.g., *banderowiec* used to refer to a modern-day Ukrainian, *UPAiniec*, and *UPAdliniec*). Taken jointly, these different types of lexical items and the ways they are used paint a generally unfavorable picture of a Ukrainian person.

The present section attempts to outline the characteristics that are foregrounded in texts using the analyzed ethnophaulisms.

5.1 *Attitudes towards Others*

Ukrainian people are perceived as still harboring strong hatred for Poles:

- (7) *Przecież ukry nienawidzą nas jeszcze bardziej niż rusczy. (Monco PL: dorzeczy.pl, 21/3/2018)*
‘But the *ukrs* hate us even more than the Russians-N.PEJ do.’
- (8) *pojedziesz [...] na wschodnia Ukraine, to sie nie zdziw jak ci jaki tamtejszy rezun truzymba na czterech literach widlami wyklepie—jak przyznasz sie żeś Polak. (Monco PL: wpolityce.pl, 10/10/2013)*
‘If you go [...] to Eastern Ukraine, don’t be surprised when a local slayer fashions a trident on your ass with a pitchfork—if you admit to being a Pole.’
- (9) *Mówiła wnuczce m.in.: “Po co ci chachoł?”, “Ukraińcy to cwany i fałszywy naród”, “Jestem już stara, znam życie, banderowcy nas nienawidzą”. (Monco PL: kobieta.wp.pl, 31/12/2023)*
‘She would tell her granddaughter things like “Why would you want a wheat sheaf?”; “Ukrainians are a cunning and deceitful nation”; “I’m old, I know life, Banderites hate us”’

At the same time, they are presented as having an *Eastern mentality* (*wschodnia mentalność*; Monco PL: wykop.pl, 8/11/2019), as opposed to Polish people who identify with the West. Consequently, Ukrainians are depicted as those who have a stronger linguistic, cultural, and mental bond with the Russians

(often derogatorily called *kacapy* or *ruskie* ‘Russkis’) than with Poles. In a number of examples, the idea behind the phrase *nasi bracia* ‘our brothers’, used to describe Ukrainians from the Polish perspective, is rejected, see (12), as well as (5) above:

- (10) *Znam kilku ukrów i prędzej kacapy z nimi sie dogadaja niz oni z nami.* (Monco PL: wykop.pl, 23/8/2022)
 ‘I know a few *ukrs* and sooner will the Russkis get along with them than they will with us.’
- (11) *To bydlę i dzicz siebie warte, kacapy i ukropy ... im szybciej zrozumiemy to jako naród tym lepiej.* (Monco PL: wykop.pl, 23/4/2022)
 ‘They are cattle and savages worthy of one another, Russkis and *ukrops* ... The sooner we understand that as a nation, the better.’
- (12) *mowienie o ukraincach nasi bracia to zalosna wielka pomyłka wiem jedno ze kacapy i ukraińscy banderowcy sa siebie warci i modle sie by ta swolocz nie weszła do uni.* (Monco PL: gazetaolsztynska.pl, 4/1/2015)
 ‘speaking of Ukrainians as “our brothers” is a giant pathetic mistake. I know one thing: Russkis and Ukrainian Banderites are birds of a feather, and I pray that this scum would not join the EU.’

The affiliation of Ukrainians with Nazis, fascism, and extreme nationalism is often pointed to, and exemplified by their supposed continuous admiration for Bandera (a personification of such attitudes) and UPA in general:

- (13) *Ukry [...] na cokółach pomników stawiają najbardziej krwawych, zwyrodniałych morderców II Wojny Światowej, odwołują się do swojej nazistowskiej przeszłości, uznają za bohaterów nazistów, ludobójców i bandytów.* (Monco PL: dorzeczy.pl, 29/11/2018)
 ‘The *ukrs* [...] put the bloodiest, degenerate murderers of World War II on pedestals, invoke their Nazi past, recognize Nazis, genocidal thugs and bandits as heroes.’

5.2 External Appearance

From the point of view of some Polish speakers, Ukrainians living in Poland are identifiable at first glance. They speak differently, which is signaled by the noun *Szozzon* discussed above, and expressed in collocations such as *szozonński akcent* ‘Shoshonian accent’. There is a certain “feel” to them, which makes them recognizable as “them”, “others”:

- (14) *Wchodząc/wychodząc widzę smartfony / rozmowy przez nie (bo Ukry już czują się tu jak u siebie) i widać kto z Ukrainy—choć od jakiegoś czasu to już ich rozpoznaje bez niczego.* (Monco PL: wykop.pl, 3/8/2020)

'When I go in or out, I can see smartphones / talking on the phone (cause the *Ukrs* already feel at ease here), and I can see who's from Ukraine—though for some time now I have been able to recognize them without any clues.'

Specifically, Ukrainians allegedly lack dental care, which makes their teeth look ugly:

- (15) *zęby zawsze ma czarne jak węgiel, ukry nie mają w ogóle opieki dentystycznej.* (Monco PL: wykop.pl, 20/10/2021)

'their teeth are always as black as coal, the *ukrs* have no dental care whatsoever.'

5.3 Character Traits

The assumption that there are some specific features shared by members of the same ethnicity gives rise to ethnic stereotypes, which are often entrenched in language expressions and, in that way, carried on through generations. Corpus data show that Ukrainians are seen as clever and cunning:

- (16) *Gdyby natura chciała, by Polak zza Wisły był odrobinę bystrzejszy od siebie samego, zrobiłaby go Cyganem, Murzynem bądź Szoszonem.* (Monco PL: dorzeczy.pl, 14/2/2020)

'If nature wanted Poles from beyond the Vistula to be a bit cleverer than they are, it would have turned them into Gypsies, Negroes or *Shoshons*.'

This would have been a positive characteristic, but at the same time they are seen as dishonest and untrustworthy:

- (17) *Ukraińców nazywa się pogardliwie szoszonami i traktuje z wyższością, ale także podejrzliwie.* (Monco PL: natemat.pl, 28/7/2017)

'Ukrainians are derisively called *Shoshons* and are treated with a sense of superiority, as well as with mistrust.'

In particular, they are often claimed to be behind Internet scams:

- (18) *ja ostatnio dostałem podobne wiadomości do ogłoszenia—pierwsza myśl "oho, szoszony zaś kombinują"* (Monco PL: wykop.pl, 20/3/2021)

'Lately, I have gotten similar messages after I published my ad—my first thought was, "O-o, the *Shoshons* must be trying on a scam"'

In line with the previously discussed association of Ukraine with the East, which is viewed as primitive and uncivilized by Poles aspiring to the West, Ukrainians are described as unmannered, savage, overdrinking, and in need of a code of ethics, which would give them a chance of improving their behavior and becoming civilized people, more similar to Poles today:

- (19) *To może jakiś "dekalog" dla ukrów że jakiś dziki, przeważnie nachlany banderowiec zabił Polaka. (Monco PL: dorzeczy.pl, 13/5/2019)*

'We may try "commandments" of sorts for the *ukrs* since some wild, habitually drunken banderite killed a Pole.'

- (20) *może nawet już umieć trzymać widelec—ale zęby zawsze ma czarne jak węgiel (Monco PL: wykop.pl, 20/10/2021)*

'maybe he even already knows how to hold a fork—but his teeth are still as black as coal'

- (21) *Natomiast tak jak my wtedy, ukry szybko ze wstydu się cywilizują. (Monco PL: wykop.pl, 21/3/2020)*

'As we did then, the *ukrs* will quickly become civilized out of shame.'

Although Polish people, especially after February 24, 2022, have shown a lot of support to Ukrainian immigrants and refugees, and Poland participated in military support for Ukrainians, many texts criticize them for wanting yet more. Ukrainians are characterized as demanding, insolent, entitled, and ungrateful:

- (22) *ok niech już ukry zamkną ryj cały świat im pomaga a im ciągle k% %@a mało. (Monco PL: wykop.pl, 1/3/2022)*

'ok the *ukrs* have better shut their mouths the whole world is helping them and it still isn't f** enough for them.'

- (23) *A Ukry srają na nas z gory za pomoc bo uwazaja ze im sie wszystko nalezy. (Monco PL: weszlo.com, 6/6/2022)*

'The *Ukrs* keep shitting on us for our help 'cause they think they are entitled to everything.'

- (24) *Ukry tylko: dawać broń, amunicję i pieniądze—świat ma już dość upaińskiej bezczelności—[...] my Polacy mamy być ich sługami w NASZYM kraju???*
(Monco PL: wnp.pl, 31/10/2022)

‘And the *ukrs* are all like: give us weapons, ammunition and money—the world has had enough of their upainian insolence—[...] they want us Poles to be their servants in OUR OWN country???’

- (25) *ostatnio pewna chachłaczka [...] oskarżała kontrolerów biletów w Warszawie o “ksenofobiczny atak”, bo chcieli jej wlepić mandat za jazdę na gapę. (Monco PL: dziennikzachodni.pl, 25/7/2018)*

‘Lately a wheat sheaf-N.F [...] accused ticket inspectors in Warsaw of a “xenophobic attack” because they wanted to fine her for traveling without a valid ticket.’

This perceived lack of gratitude both for military and financial aid and the support for the Ukrainian refugees leads to some speakers voicing irritation or anger. They feel Ukrainians coming to Poland receive more from the state than Polish people do but keep on demanding more and are unfairly given priority over Polish citizens. In this way, Polish citizens feel underprivileged and neglected by public institutions in their own country. The sentiment is expressed in (24) and will also be illustrated with more examples in 5.5 below.

5.4 *Typical Behavior*

Given the blood-stained history of Ukrainian-Polish relations, it is unsurprising that Ukrainians are portrayed as criminals: cruel murderers and rapists who would not shy away from hurting innocent people, women and children in particular, as illustrated by (28), where reminiscences of Volhynia massacres resurface. Interestingly, the texts do not talk solely about violent tendencies towards Polish people: Ukrainians are also blamed for killing children in the Donbas region (27) and shooting down Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 in 2014⁸ (see (29)).

- (26) *Ukry namordowały tylu cywili, nagwałciły tyle matek i corek, zon i dziewczyn w czasie “operacji antyterrorystycznej” [...]. (Monco PL: interia.pl, 22/7/2014)*

‘The *Ukrs* murdered so many civilians, raped so many mothers and daughters, wives and girlfriends during the “anti-terrorist operation” [...].’

- (27) *Niech teraz te chachły odpowiedzą za mordowanie dzieci w Donbasie. (Monco PL: oko.press, 26/2/2023)*

8 Actually, the findings of an investigation concerning the incident pointed to pro-Russian separatists as the guilty party.

'Let the wheat sheafs now answer for murdering children in the Donbas area.'

- (28) *Napiszcie banderowskie chachły co robili wasi kombataneci z polskimi dziećmi.* (Monco PL: *onet.pl*, 23/9/2014)

'You Banderite wheat sheafs, just write about what your veterans did to Polish children.'

- (29) *Ukry zamordowali ludzi lecących samolotem, zbrodniarze, bandyci.* (Monco PL: *labuszevska.blog.onet.pl*, 21/7/2014)

'The *Ukrs* murdered the people traveling on the plane, [they are] criminals, bandits.'

Moreover, their cruelty is somehow intrinsically linked to their ethnicity and is treated as something that brings them pleasure. Massacres of civilians are juxtaposed in (30) with the murders of over 20,000 Polish officers in Katyn by the Soviets in 1940, and while both are horrific, the author of the text perceives UPA's actions as even worse since the victims' terror supposedly brought pleasure to the perpetrators:

- (30) *Katyn to co innego. Tu mordowali bo im za to płacili a tu z czystej przyjemności. Ukry znęcali się nad swoimi ofiarami.* (Monco PL: *interia.pl* 12/11/2014)

'Katyn is a different matter. There they murdered because they were paid to do it, and here out of pure pleasure. The *Ukrs* tortured their victims.'

- (31) *Zabijanie cywilów maja upaińcy wyssaną z mlekiem matki.* (Monco PL: *onet.pl* 30/1/2015)

'Killing civilians: the *UPA*inians have imbibed it with their mother's milk.'

The figure of a Ukrainian wielding a weapon—typically a pitchfork or a knife—is alluded to on a regular basis. In particular, it is embedded in the name *rezun*, which is discursively revived with the main aim of evoking fear and undermining the sense of security of the Polish people:

- (32) *Ukry z nożami to zjawisko powszechne.* (Monco PL: *wszczecinie.pl*, 2/6/2024; a comment on a bar brawl)

'The *ukrs* wielding knives is a common thing.'

- (33) *Taka mała rada, miejcie oczy z tyłu głowy, bo nie wiadomo kiedy ukraiński rezun zechce odciąć wam łeb.* (Monco PL: *onet.pl*, 25/2/2015)

'Just a piece of advice: you got to have eyes in the back of your head because you never know when some Ukrainian slayer sets his mind on cutting your head off.'

- (34) *Nie mamy nawet pojęcia ilu banderowców jest w Polsce i ile broni udało się już przemyścić. (Monco PL: zmianynaziemi.pl, 23/2/2018)*

'We have no idea how many Banderites are currently in Poland and how many weapons they managed to smuggle into Poland.'

However, Ukrainians also get blamed for car accidents—in (35), a car accident in Wrocław is rhetorically framed as a continuation of UPA's strategy of eradicating the Polish minority. Now, the deadly weapons are not necessarily pitchforks, as in the 1940s, but cars:

- (35) *UPAIŃCY TO NAS TERAZ NIE KOSAMI I WIDLAMI, ALE SAMOCHODAMI POZABIJAJĄ! (Monco PL: gazetawroclawska.pl 6/8/2018; a comment on a car crash in Wrocław)*

'Upainians will no longer be killing us with scythes and pitchforks, they will kill us all with their cars!'

Less serious common offenses associated with Ukrainians include stealing. The texts recounting incidents when a Ukrainian was caught stealing are usually hearsay-based, and no concrete proof of the allegations is provided. However, it ties in with the previously discussed representation of Ukrainians as cunning conmen and scammers, as well as with depicting them as ungrateful people willing to steal from the ones who gave them jobs:

- (36) *U mnie w robocie przyjęli 3 ukrów, nie minęły jeszcze dwa tygodnie i już zaczęli wynosić różne elementy w plecakach. (Monco PL: wykop.pl 20/12/2019)*

'At my work they took in 3 ukr, not even two weeks have passed and they have already started carrying out various items in their backpacks.'

5.5 *Impact on Polish People*

Unsurprisingly, several texts show that Polish speakers are interested in Ukrainians to the extent that the latter have an influence on their lives, especially if the influence is perceived as negative.

Ukrainians are portrayed as disease spreaders, responsible for causing epidemics:

- (37) *Podziękujcie ukrom. U nich to szaleje tak jak epidemia gruźlicy. Zwożą choroby do Polski. (Monco PL: naszraciborz.pl; 29/3/2017)*

'Thank the *ukrs*. It is raging there, like the epidemic of tuberculosis. They are bringing diseases to Poland.'

- (38) *Spraszajcie tu jeszcze więcej ukrów bez zachowania standardów sanitarnych i epidemiologicznych z tego ich kraju, który jest europejską, największą wylęgarnią AIDS, odry, WZW i czerwoni. (Monco PL: dorzeczy.pl, 1/3/2019)*

'Invite over even more *ukrs* without maintaining sanitary and epidemiological standards—from that country of theirs, which is the largest European breeding ground for AIDS, measles, hepatitis and dysentery.'

Examples (37) and (38) depict clear spatial divisions between the territory of "us" and "them". Again, this representation ties in with the idealized self-presentation of Poles as adhering to Western sanitary standards and Ukrainians embodying the primitive Eastern way of living, causing them to suffer from diseases already eradicated or controlled in other states, as the author of (37) claims.

Moreover, a series of texts in my data concern the feeling of financial losses that the war and refugee assistance have brought to Polish people. The authors of these texts underline that Polish people bear the cost of aid to Ukraine, and there is not enough money to address the needs of Polish citizens (e.g., building new roads in (43)). A visually appealing image of an empty coffer or an ATM with no withdrawal limit hyperbolically show the sense of individual (e.g., *my taxes* in (41)) and collective (see (40)—*we give*, (39)—*our money, they cost us*) loss on the Polish part, as well as the idea that Ukrainians are greedy and have no qualms about draining the Polish budget. The Polish government is also criticized for funding Ukrainian immigrants extensively, see (44).

- (39) *poza tym kilka tysięcy twoich rodaków ukrów wczasuje sobie w ośrodkach dla uchodźców żądają statusu uchodźcy ile nas kosztują + 15 tys, studentów z Ukrainy studiujących za nasze pieniądze dostają stypendia i gwarancję pracy dzisiaj. (Monco PL: onet.pl, 27/10/2015)*

'besides several thousand of your fellow *ukrs* holiday in centers for refugees, demand refugee status. How much they cost us + 15 thousand students from Ukraine studying with our money get scholarships and guaranteed work today.'

- (40) *na ukrów dajemy, a w kasie pusto! (Monco PL: onet.pl, 27/2/2017)*

'We give away money to *ukrs*, and the coffer's empty!'

- (41) *Do tego z moich podatkow idzie na 500plus i leczenie Ukrów. (Monco PL: wykop.pl 17/10/2022)*
 'On top of that my taxes go for the family and health benefits for the *Ukrs*.'
- (42) *Ukry dodatkowo traktują nas jak bankomat bez limitu wypłat. (Monco PL: oko.press 4/9/2023)*
 'The *Ukrs* additionally treat us like an ATM with no withdrawal limit.'
- (43) *Kasa idzie na szoszonów więc skąd mają wziąć na obwodnice? [...] koszta ponoszą wszyscy Polacy. (Monco PL: nadwisla24.pl, 20/6/2023)*
 'The money goes to the *Shoshons* so how can we afford the beltways? [...] The costs are borne by all Poles.'
- (44) *Rząd [...] daje darmowe studia dla młodych banderowców, 500+ rodzinom ukraińskim i dopłata polskim firmom za zatrudnienie ukra [...]. (Monco PL: dorzeczy.pl, 16/4/2018)*
 'The government [...] gives free university tuition to young Banderites, family benefit to Ukrainian families and subsidies to Polish firms for employing an *ukr* [...].'

By the same token, Ukrainian immigrants are deemed responsible for pushing Polish people out of their jobs and affordable housing.

- (45) *A jak za chwile przyjdzie kryzys to pozwalniają POLAKOW nie UKRÓW. (Monco PL: dorzeczy.pl, 23/8/2018)*
 'And when the crisis comes in a while, they will let *POLES* not *UKRS* go.'
- (46) *Ci co mówią że ukry nic mi nie robią chcę przypomnieć że gdzieś muszą mieszkać i robią presję mieszkaniową na c ! \$! @wym polskim rynku gdzie wciąż brakuje mieszkań, a co za tym idzie ceny szybują. (Monco PL: wykop.pl, 18/8/2021)*
 'To those who say that the *ukrs* do not affect them: I want to remind you that they have to live somewhere and they put pressure on the f** Polish market, where there is still a shortage of housing, and prices skyrocket because of that.'

As already stated, Internet users voice their irritation that Ukrainians are treated better than Polish citizens. It is noteworthy that this feeling has not been caused by the massive migration to Poland after the Russian aggression: concerns about economic migrants from Ukraine have festered for some time

now. The claim *they are better off than us* (47, 51) is substantiated by allegedly higher jail sentences for harming a Ukrainian person in (48) and supposed priority given to Ukrainians by medical institutions in (49, 50).

- (47) *Ukry mają się u nas lepiej niż sami Polacy.* (Monco PL: *dziennikwschodni.pl*, 16/2/2020)

'Ukrs are better off in our country than the Poles themselves.'

- (48) *Za pobicie szoszona – 7 lat, za pobicie polaka ze skutkiem śmiertelnym – 4 lata.* (Monco PL: *dziennikwschodni.pl*, 29/12/2018; a comment on a sentence for an assault and battery charge)

'For beating up a *Shoshon*—7 years, for beating a Polish man to death—4 years.'

- (49) *dentystka mnie nie przyjęła bo ukry mają pierwszeństwo i zajęli termin.* (Monco PL: *wykop.pl*, 30/3/2022)

'my dentist did not see me because *ukrs* have priority and took the appointment.'

- (50) *KARETKI [...] WYSŁAŁY NA UPAINĘ RATOWAĆ ZDYCHAJĄCYCH BANDYTÓW BANDEROWCÓW, A POLACY UMIERAJĄ.* (Monco PL: *iswinoujscie.pl*, 21/3/2015; a comment on a shortage of ambulances)

'Ambulances [...] were sent to *UPA*ine to save the dying bandits *Banderites*, while Polish people are dying.'⁹

- (51) *Ukropy nie tylko mają tutaj wszystkie prawa obywatela [...] ale do tego są LEPIEJ traktowani w Polsce od Polaków (również przez służby i sądy).* (Monco PL: *dziennikwschodni.pl*, 2/3/2020)

'Not only do the *ukrops* have all civic rights here, [...] but they are also treated BETTER in Poland than Poles (that includes authorities and courts).'

Finally, Ukrainians are claimed to be involved in the NWO and the Great Replacement conspiracies. Linguistic analysis has not shown what role the Ukrainians are believed to play in the process and whether they are doing it deliberately or are just pawns in a bigger plan. The authors are also unclear

9 In this example, additional pejorative evaluation of Ukrainians is communicated by the choice of verb: *banderowcy* co-occurs with a form of the verb *zdychać* 'to die, typically of animals', which is contrasted with the verb *umierać* 'to die' used for Poles.

about whether this plan is carried out by external or internal enemies, as (53) seems to suggest. The texts are too inconsistent to tell. However, in all the examples, the influx of Ukrainian people is seen as detrimental to Polish people, who would gradually lose their civil rights and be uprooted from their native country.

- (52) *Podmiana Polaków na ukroń odbywa się w najlepsze ukr w Polsce już ma większe prawa jak Polak.* (Monco PL: moja-ostroleka.pl, 4/3/2022)

‘The swapping of Poles for *ukrs* is in full swing. An *ukr* in Poland already has more rights than a Pole.’

- (53) *Warszawski rząd planował ściagniecie ukroń i podmianę ludności, zaczęło się od ustawy o cudzoziemcach, widać teraz te wrogie Polakom plany jak na dłoni.* (Monco PL: nczas.com, 19/3/2022)

‘The Warsaw government planned to bring the *ukrs* in and swap population, it’s started with the law on foreigners, you can now clearly see these hostile plans against Poles.’

6 Conclusions

The analysis has shown that not only have historical resentments not disappeared, but at the beginning of the 21st century, new issues in Polish-Ukrainian relationships arose, together with new linguistic labels like *UPAińcy*. “Images from the past” clearly still cast a shadow on the way Ukrainian people are linguistically represented (e.g., cruel, ruthless, violent murderers, perpetrators). Economic migration from Ukraine to Poland and a massive influx of refugees since 2022 have brought about new sources of conflict: rivalry over workplaces, housing, and social benefits. Although Smykała (2023) points out that the discourse of hospitality towards Ukrainian people has been predominant in Poland since February 2022, the underlying negative representations carried by ethnophaulisms should not be ignored. Neither should we disregard conspiracy theories, giving rise to new vocabulary, e.g., *Ukropolin*, *Ukropoliniak*. Although the frequency of these words is low, they are not just individual language creations: a discourse community builds up around the new concepts, and lexical items help carry across a specific worldview.

In the material, the conceptual division into “us” and “them” overlaps with the distinction between the East and the West (from the Polish perspective, coinciding with the EU external border). Polish people often perceive themselves as part of Western culture and associate Ukrainians with the East.

Although the East has the potential to be an object of fascination, the texts that contain ethnophaulisms frame it negatively: it connotes a more primitive lifestyle, lack of “proper” medical care (dental care, vaccines), and uncivilized manners.

The question posed in section 2 unfortunately remains open: How much of the data reflects the real associations, attitudes, and evaluations shared by the majority of Polish language speakers? Given the already observed strategies of hybrid warfare and disinformation, Internet material may provide partial access to collective representations that are weaponized by interested parties to induce polarization and stoke fear and ethnicity-based hatred. However, it needs to be noted that my study focused on negative characteristics and lexical items as their vehicles, so, by necessity, it presented only one side of the coin.

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PART 4

Naming for In-Group Purposes

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Marking a Difference vs. Naming for Othering: Marginalized Groups' Terms for Dominant Majorities

The Case of Polish Deaf Writing about the Hearing

Jadwiga Linde-Usiekniewicz

1 Introduction

In his TEDx Lecture, *On Becoming Hearing: Lessons in Limitations, Loss, and Respect*,¹ Dirksen L. Bauman, a Deaf Studies scholar, talks in American Sign Language (ASL) about how he became hearing at the age of 21. It was not a magical cure that gave him the ability to hear—he had been able to hear since childhood. He became a dormitory supervisor at Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind, although he could not sign, and instantly turned into a hearing minority of one. His experience is not unique, as people who come into contact with the Deaf as adults and accept the Deaf-World and the cultural paradigm of Deafness start to denaturalize their majoritarian position and begin identifying as “hearing”, in opposition to the Deaf.²

Bauman's account of his experience made me wonder whether the terms used by minority groups to refer to people outside these groups are instances of *naming for othering*. Firstly, do they purposely employ labels that are emotionally charged in a negative way, pejorative, or otherwise denigratory? And secondly, can othering be performed by minority groups on dominant groups? Building on these questions, I want to examine if Polish Deaf *other* the (Polish) hearing and if the terms they use could be considered instances of *nam-*

1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yCuNYGk3oj8> (last accessed: August 15, 2024).

2 When writing about d/Deaf people the following spelling convention is generally adopted. Lowercase spelling, i.e., *deaf*, refers to a person's audiological status, while capital D, as in *Deaf*, is used to underline the cultural identity of a person (Gertz and Boudreault 2016, 73). The slash version *d/Deaf* is used to refer to both audiotogically deaf and culturally Deaf. However, Polish spelling rules allow for capitalization of nouns and not of adjectives, therefore those writers who conform to standard spelling conventions would capitalize the noun *Głuchy*, but not the adjective, as in example (1) below.

ing in the sense given above. For this purpose, I am analyzing three primary sources: two academic texts written by two Deaf activists and self-advocates, published in 2024, and an excerpt from an online Deaf forum from 2008. The two 2024 texts have been selected to reflect the extremes of Deaf activist and self-advocacy discourses (see section 4), while the Deaf forum transcript was chosen to capture an earlier moment in Deaf activism. As Deaf fora in written Polish all but disappeared in the last decade, due to advances in technology that allow the Deaf to upload signed videos as posts (Zdrodowska 2016), the transcript offers an interesting point of contrast.

My general claim is that the Polish Deaf do not *other* Polish hearing people in the sense presented in the quote from Jensen (2011) given at the beginning of the next section and that the labels used by the Polish Deaf to refer to Polish hearing people are not instances of verbal abuse.

To substantiate this claim, I begin this paper by introducing my theoretical framework based on Lajos Brons's (2015) idea of quasi-othering combined with Gerd Baumann and Andre Gingrich's (2006c) grammars of identity and alterity. To flesh out the context, in section 2, I provide background information about the Polish d/Deaf. In section 3, I examine the terms used by the Polish Deaf to refer to the hearing, and in section 4, I analyze the three primary sources to show how the three grammars postulated by Baumann and Gingrich (2006a) are reflected in the way the Polish Deaf write about the hearing. Finally, section 5 offers observations about the relations between the grammars adopted and the terms used by the Polish Deaf.

2 The Framework: Othering vs. Quasi-othering

According to Sune Qvortrup Jensen, the term *othering* refers to:

discursive processes by which powerful groups, who may or may not make up a numerical majority, define subordinate groups into existence in a reductionist way which ascribe problematic and/or inferior characteristics to these subordinate groups. Such discursive processes affirm the legitimacy and superiority of the powerful and condition identity formation among the subordinate.

JENSEN 2011, 65

In this sense, othering typically involves, either explicitly or implicitly, an unequal relation of power between the "otherer" and the "otheree". Nikolas Coupland discusses a different scenario:

[...] we can conceive of distancing as conferring mystery, magical qualities and even reverence, as a process of 'totemising' or 'fetishising.' The 'othered' group (which may be a group invoked to define an individual) will often be a minority group. But again it need not be, since majority groups will often be cast as 'other' to minorities.

COUPLAND 2010, 244

Yet, an important feature of his approach is that even under this scenario, the otherwise majority group is "minoritised in the process of 'othering'" (Coupland 2010, 244) and, by the same token, reduced to a subordinate position. What Coupland misses, however, is that even this scenario is only possible from the emic perspective, i.e., when the relevant minority considers themselves the in-group ("us", to quote Brons's 2015 term) and the majority is the out-group ("them"). A study of the ways Polish Romas conceptualize themselves in opposition to Poles (Mróz 1984 quoted in Baumann 2006; Mróz 1986) provides a good example of such a situation.

However, the distancing that may lead to reverence, invoked by Coupland (2010, 244), is not compatible with the operationalized notion of *othering*, as proposed by Jensen (2011, 65). The latter involves ascribing inferiority to the othered group. In addition, this operationalization is implicitly carried out without reference to the distinction between the emic and the etic perspective (Pike 1954). For these reasons, it may not be the optimal lens to examine the question of whether the terms used by minorities for the dominant majorities are instances of othering by derogatory terms (Coupland 2010, 250–251).

Two analyses of othering, taken in combination, seem better suited to account for the way minorities conceptualize majorities. The first is provided by Brons (2015) and the second by Baumann (2006), Gingrich (2006), and Baumann and Gingrich (2006a, 2006b). I am thus adopting Brons's (2015) template of contrasting othering with quasi-othering, and I am using the proposals of Baumann and Gingrich to complete the template where appropriate.

Brons (2015) postulates a distinction between what he calls *crude othering* and *sophisticated othering*. Both are instantiations of othering understood as:

the simultaneous construction of the self or in-group and the other or out-group in mutual and unequal opposition through identification of some desirable characteristic that the self/in-group has and the other/out-group lacks and/or some undesirable characteristic that the other/out-group has and the self/in-group lacks. Othering thus sets up a superior self/in-group in contrast to an inferior other/out-group.

BRONS 2015, 70

According to Brons, the formal structure of crude othering is presented as follows:

There is an assumption, which is usually hidden, that it is better to have some property F than to not have that property F; an explicit assumption that the self/in-group has this property F and the other/out-group does not; and an implicit, enthymematic conclusion that, therefore, the other/out-group is inferior and/or radically alien.

BRONS 2015, 80

By contrast, sophisticated othering is carried out through a series of 10 steps of reasoning, with some steps fallacious (Brons 2015, 82). This reasoning leads the sophisticated otherer to the conclusion that the out-group is inferior and/or radically alien. The notion of *radically alien*, present in the definition of *crude othering* above, should not be taken lightly: it is “the dehumanizing over-inflation of otherness leading to the construction of a radically alien other” (Brons 2015, 76).

Crude othering and sophisticated othering are nothing but variants (Brons 2015, 83), which have two elements in common: the assumption that it is better to have the property F (present in the definition of *crude othering*) and the conclusion about the superiority of the in-group. Brons (2015, 71) recognizes that some instances of crude othering may have developed from originally sophisticated othering but not vice-versa. A sophisticated othering may become crude when the argument leading to the conclusion that the out-group is inferior and/or radically alien is lost, and only the resultant conclusion remains (Brons 2015, 71)

However, Brons only contrasts sophisticated othering with quasi-othering. What his proposal lacks, at least for my purposes, is a similarly mild equivalent of crude othering, where the absence of a property F would not give rise to dehumanization.

That is why I have chosen to complete the template taken from Brons (2015) with Baumann and Gingrich's approach (2006b). They present a model in which the properties attributed to the out-group need not be non-dehumanizing. What they propose is a set of alternative grammars of identity/alterity. Their grammars are not “grammars” in the current linguistic sense, but rather “‘cognitive maps’ or ‘classificatory pathways’ or ‘logics’ or ‘operations’ or ‘models’” (Baumann and Gingrich 2006b, x). Their model includes three such defined grammars dubbed *orientalizing*, *segmentary*, and *encompassing*.

Within the orientalizing grammar, inspired by Edward Said's (1978) seminal formulations on asymmetrical relationships of power and their reflection in

culture and discourse, it is recognized that the out-group has some negative characteristics in contrast to their positive counterparts in the in-group and that parallelly the out-group has some positive characteristics that the in-group lacks. Thus, Said's classic interpretation of the occidental conceptualization of "Orient" could, according to Baumann, be paraphrased in the following way:

Occident is rational, enlightened and technologically advanced, which is good; by contrast Orient is irrational, superstitious and backward, which is bad. Yet, while Occident is (unfortunately and at the same time) calculating, sober and materialist, Orient is spontaneous, luxuriant and mystical.

BAUMANN 2006, 20

Within this logic, the balance between what is good in the in-group and bad in the out-group, as well as what is bad in the in-group and what is good in the out-group, prevents any of the characteristics from being, again, in Brons's (2015, 87) terms, "sufficient ground for dehumanization of that other". It is also noteworthy that the orientalizing grammar does not use the kind of reasoning involved in either sophisticated othering or sophisticated quasi-othering and can, therefore, be considered an instance of crude quasi-othering.

The segmentary grammar involves "a logic of fission or enmity at a lower level of segmentation, overcome by a logic of fusion or neutralization of conflict at a higher level of segmentation" (Baumann 2006, 22). Within such grammars, differences or even rivalries are backgrounded or overcome, and the two groups become partners and work together toward a common goal or against a common enemy while maintaining their separateness. As with orientalizing grammars, the differentiating characteristics cannot be such that would lead to dehumanizing because were it so, no alliance would be possible.

The encompassing grammar also involves the backgrounding of a difference, but, in contrast to the segmentary grammar, it leads to appropriating the out-group into the in-group. This grammar works over selected differences only, say, palatable ones, and only on one level. "The lower level of cognition recognizes difference, the higher level subsumes that which is different under that which is universal" (Baumann 2015, 25). Again, since subsumption is possible, the difference cannot be such that it would lead to dehumanizing.

The three grammars differ as to their treatment of the out-group. It is only within the segmentary grammar that the two groups may have equal status, and the only thing "they have to agree upon is their affiliation with a third category that is not identical with one of them but is situated on a different level of classification" (Sprenger 2006, 176). Neither the orientalizing grammar nor

the encompassing grammar involves such symmetry, but they are asymmetrical in different ways. The orientalized need not agree to the way they are being conceptualized by the orientalizers, yet the orientalizers need to “recognize that the orientalized contribute something very different but equally necessary” (Baumann 2006, 48). In the case of encompassment, the encompassed out-group has no say in how they are conceptualized (Sprenger 2006, 178).

What is more, Gingrich (2006, 12–13) elaborates on this by insisting on not only the confrontational but also the dialogic nature of the three grammars. Yet, if dialogue fails or is absent, the three grammars degenerate into *anti-grammars*, which take the form of “we are good, so they are bad” (Baumann 2006, 42; emphasis mine). Thus, the three grammars would be instances of crude quasi-othering, and the anti-grammars would correspond to Brons’s crude othering.

3 Polish Deaf

Numerous sources consistently estimate the number of Polish hard-of-hearing people at 3,000,000 and the number of deaf at up to 200,000. Among the latter, about 50,000 are signers, i.e., users of Polish Sign Language (PJM), a natural language of the Polish Deaf, established at the beginning of the 19th century (Linde-Usiekniewicz and Łozińska 2023).

Historically, in Poland, as in other countries, deafness has been perceived as a disability within the medical paradigm (Tomaszewski, Moroń 2018). The second half of the 20th century saw a shift in the paradigm worldwide: the Deaf themselves claimed their right to be treated as linguistic and cultural minorities within larger hearing national communities or even as a transnational community of Sign Language People (Batterbury, Ladd, and Gulliver 2007). Deaf Studies scholars, such as Lane (1999) and Ladd (2003, 2007), have compared Deaf people and the oralist education imposed on them in the 20th century to the oppression of the First Nations in Canada and the more contemporary medical insistence on cochlear implants as an attempt to colonize the Sign Language People (Batterbury, Ladd, and Gulliver 2007, 2904–2905).

In Poland, the Deaf began to conceive of themselves as Sign Language People, i.e., a linguistic and cultural minority and not persons with disabilities, at the turn of the 21st century. The gradual substitution of the disability paradigm by the identity paradigm was brought about by the agency of individuals who had come into contact with Deaf activism and the Deaf-World (Zdrodowska 2019, 305). Zdrodowska (2016) further links Polish Deaf empowerment to the emergence of social media and new technologies.

Thus, the Polish d/Deaf community comprises 50,000 Polish Sign Language People, i.e., the Deaf, who embrace the Deaf Culture, and about 200,000 deaf, for whom spoken Polish is the language of choice. Some of them either lip-read or access speech through hearing aids and/or cochlear implants and produce speech; others prefer to communicate in writing.

4 The Terms for the Hearing in Polish and Polish Sign Language Used by the Polish Deaf

Given the nature of the primary sources (written in Polish), the terms I am discussing are mostly Polish renditions of PJM terms and not actual PJM terms. Both my analyses and those offered by secondary sources come from the etic perspective. I am a hearing person, and so are the two authors I cite concerning the term *s/Ślyszak* (see below). Yet, their analyses are based on opinions of Deaf persons, so the in-group perspective is given at least a partial representation.

The most straightforward term for hearing people in Poland is *ślyszący* 'the hearing', which is structurally similar to its English counterpart: It is a gerundial form of the verb *śłyszeć* 'to hear', further nominalized through conversion. In some instances, it is capitalized. In such usage, the lowercase form refers to a person's audiological status, and the capitalized form marks their belonging outside the Deaf-World. The distinction is made explicit in example (11) below.

A more controversial term is *ślyszak/Ślyszak* 'hearie'. Again, the spelling convention adopted marks the difference between the person's audiological status and their cultural identity. From the formal derivational standpoint, the word is built upon the root *śłyszeć* 'to hear' and the suffix *-ak*. The suffix is used to form deverbal nouns and is polysemous insofar as it can form words referring to humans, animals, and inanimate objects. Yet, it is highly unlikely that the derivative *ślyszak* is based on the straightforward deverbal pattern *śłyszeć* 'to hear' > *ślyszak* 'lit. hearer; the one who can hear', present for example in *pływak* (*pływ-* + *-ak*) 'swimmer', derived from the verb *pływać* 'to swim'. It is much more likely that the model can be traced to two other formations with *-ak*: *lewak* 'leftie, left-winger' and *prawak* 'right-winger'; These are derogatory terms for the proponents of Leftist and Rightist values, respectively, used by those on the opposite side of the political spectrum. The term *lewak* is relatively old and can be traced to the second decade of the 20th century (Niepytalska-Osiecka, 2015, 81 and the literature cited therein). By contrast, *prawak* is a new coinage (Niepytalska-Osiecka 2015) featured only in the most recent online dictionaries of Polish. Both *lewak* and *prawak* are back-formations, deriving from adjectives *lewicowy* 'left-wing' and *prawicowy* 'right wing' with the suffix *-ak* substitut-

ing for the sequence of suffixes *-icowy*. Similarly, *styszak* would be the result of back-formation from the adjective *styszący*. However, nouns ending in *-ak* that do not derive directly from verbs are regarded as colloquial and possibly derogatory (Kurdyła 2015, 193 and the literature cited therein)

Both *s/Styszak* and *s/Styszący* are spoken Polish renditions of PJM expressions. Their PJM source forms are produced with the same manual component (crooked forefinger touching the ear twice or thrice) but differ in facial expression: the source form of *styszący* is produced with a neutral expression, and the source form of *styszak* with a facial expression of disdain (Magdalena Dunaj, pc). It is not obvious whether these two expressions constitute different lexical signs or whether they represent the same sign with different emotional facial expressions (Crasborn 2006, 668; Sandler 2012, 70).

This ambiguity is also reflected in the spoken Polish word *s/Styszak*. According to Figiel (2009, 168), some d/Deaf people consider it a spoken Polish colloquial term for a hearing person, in particular when spelled without capitalization. For others, by contrast, the capitalized version is an instance of pejoration, used to refer to those individuals who do not identify with the Deaf Culture, display audistic³ attitudes, including a disdain for PJM, and consider deafness a disability. As a denigratory term, it can be applied both to hearing people and to the deaf who reject their Deafhood. Note that the difference in spelling is much more relevant to d/Deaf people who use the two terms in writing and not in speech.

Wrześniewska-Pietrzak (2017), upon analyzing texts produced both by the d/Deaf and for the d/Deaf as well as answers to questionnaires with direct queries about the term *Styszak*, generally confirms the findings of Figiel. Yet, some of her respondents claim that they would use this term only when offended by some behavior of a hearing person. This might happen, for example, when a hearing person uses the offensive term *głuchoniemy* 'lit. deaf-and-dumb' instead of *g/Głuchy* 'd/Deaf', or when there is a strong negative emotional component involved due to stress or conflict, typically, when the communication between the Deaf-World and the Hearing world fails (Wrześniewska-Pietrzak 2017, 300). From what can be seen in both Figiel (2007) and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak (2017), the coinage reflects the resistance aspect of Deaf Culture (Zdrodowska 2019). Yet even this usage does not meet the criteria for crude othering (Brons 2015) since hearing does not constitute the dehumanizing feature (see above). However, since the use of the term *Styszak* is associ-

3 *Audism* is generally understood as discrimination of or prejudice against d/Deaf people. Here it is used with reference to deaf persons adopting such attitudes against Deaf persons.

ated with a failure of dialogue, some of its uses may border on an anti-grammar, as opposed to grammars of identity and alterity (Baumann and Gingrich 2006a; 2006b).

Yet another term for hearing people used within the Deaf community in Poland has been *szary* 'gray'. It has not gained traction but is attested in the Deaf forum materials as the title of the thread. Hearing people are conceptualized as gray in contrast to *Motyle* 'butterflies', which is another inside term for the Deaf (because the international symbol for the Deaf is a butterfly). Within this logic, the Deaf are colorful and vibrant, while the hearing are not because they do not have access to Deaf Culture.

The last term used for hearing people is *kompletny*, a hapax legomenon appearing in Kotowski (2024).

To answer the question posed in the Introduction, i.e., do Polish Deaf people purposely employ labels that are emotionally charged in a negative way, pejorative, or otherwise denigratory, and, even if they do, are we dealing with instances of othering, or only quasi-othering, it is necessary to study all the terms in context. That is why, in the next two sections, I will be analyzing the texts written by Polish Deaf people.

5 Othering or Quasi-othering? Orientalizing, Segmentary, and Encompassing Grammars in Action

For this study, I have examined three texts written by Polish Deaf people to see if they constituted instances of othering or only quasi-othering. Since I have assumed (see section 2) that crude quasi-othering could be instantiated by grammars posited by Baumann and Gingrich (2006a; 2006b), I wanted to see if all three grammars can be traced in the analyzed texts.

The three texts are just an illustrative sample. One of the texts is the transcript of an online Deaf forum (deaf.pl) discussion from early 2009 (courtesy of Magdalena Dunaj). The forum is no longer active as a site for the Deaf. Yet, in its time, it "attracted deaf users who were the 'proud deaf', meaning they identified themselves with a cultural attitude towards deafness" (Zdrodowska 2019, 16). The two other texts are recent and consist of two chapters written by Deaf activists and self-advocates: Bartosz Marganiec (2024) and Daniel Kotowski (2024). The three texts represent not only different moments in Deaf activism but also different media and different genres. The deaf.pl forum is a record of a discussion on the topic *Czym się różnią Głusi od 'szarych'?* 'How do the Deaf differ from the "grays"?', with 'grays' referring to the non-d/Deaf. The two chapters are representative of academic texts, combining research and

activism. The themes addressed by the two authors differ significantly. Marganiec (2024) discusses obstacles to full civic participation by the Deaf and how they are and could be overcome. Kotowski (2024) focuses on the agency of a small sub-group of the Deaf, those he considers “(Ultra)Independent”; he estimates that there are 100–200 such individuals among the Polish Deaf. I chose his text for analysis because of the term he uses for the hearing: *kompletni* ‘the compleat’, which I interpret as an instantiation of orientalizing grammar (see below).

In his text, Marganiec (2024) rightly claims that the Deaf should be able to exercise all their civic rights as Polish citizens, and he presents the relation between the relevant minority and the hearing majority within the segmentary grammar. By contrast, the deaf and hearing-impaired are conceptualized together with the Deaf within the encompassing grammar. The segmentary grammar is underlying, for example, the following two passages, and is marked by coordinating the nouns referring to hearing and Deaf people:

- (1) *To podejście zaczęło się zmieniać w wyniku działalności słyszących i głuchych badaczy na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim (Marganiec 2024, 11).*

‘This approach [i.e., considering the d/Deaf within the disability paradigm] has begun to change as the result of actions taken by hearing and Deaf researchers at the University of Warsaw.’

- (2) *Wzajemna otwartość na współpracę Głuchych i słyszących, chęć nawiązania kontaktu i profesjonalne usługi tłumacza języka migowego sprawią, że Głusi obywatele będą mogli i chcieli brać udział w życiu społeczno-politycznym na równych prawach, tak jak jest to zapisane w Konstytucji RP (Marganiec 2024, 27, original emphasis).*

‘Mutual openness to cooperation between the Deaf and the hearing, the wish to establish contact, and providing the professional services of sign language interpreters will result in **Deaf Citizens being able and willing to participate in socio-political life as equals**, as it is decreed by the Constitution of Poland.’

The encompassing grammar is reflected in the context of providing access. Here, Marganiec advocates not only for sign language interpreters for the Deaf signers but also for technologies necessary for the non-signing deaf.

- (3) *Skupiam się na dostępności rozumianej jako dostępność dla Głuchych korzystających z języka migowego. Opisane problemy dotyczyć jednak mogą także szerszej grupy ludzi, obejmującej osoby niesłyszące i słabosłyszące,*

których pierwszym wyborem byłyby na przykład napisy na żywo bądź systemy wspomagania słyszenia (Marganiec 2024, 8).

'I focus on accessibility for Deaf signers. The problems discussed here may concern a wider group of people, comprising hearing-impaired and hard-of-hearing persons whose first choice would be closed captions or hearing enhancing systems.'

The reason for adopting the segmentary grammar and joining the Deaf and the hearing as partners with common goals follows from the purport of the text. It is a manifesto calling for actual, and not merely declarative, inclusion of the Deaf, enabling them to exercise all their civic rights. Within the logic of Deaf self-advocacy, it is the hearing who are potential partners in the dialogue. Marganiec (2024) does not seek dialogue partners within the deaf and hard-of-hearing community but represents them with a "deaf are in fact Deaf" construal, contrary to other applications of grammars to be discussed further on.

The Deaf forum discussion is carried out in written Polish. According to Zdrodowska, these kinds of fora:

demand a high level of Polish language comprehension as everything is written, which results in a paradoxical stratification—the most active members who praise and fight for Polish Sign Language are those who are the most fluent in Polish. The vast majority of deaf.pl users are in fact passive readers.

ZDRODOWSKA 2016, 17

The forum is also accessible to non-signers, both deaf and hearing, and at least one participant has identified themselves as hearing. The posts are quoted in their original version, with typos left uncorrected.

The thread of the Deaf forum, *Czym się różnią Głusi od 'szarych'?* 'How do the Deaf differ from the "grays"?' imposes the orientalizing perspective on its contents. The orientalizing posts include:

- (4) *ze co jest normalne w swiecie gluchych, nie jest przyjete w kanonie zachowania wsrod osob slyszacych i odwrotnie :)* [original spelling]
'that what is normal in the Deaf World is not the accepted model of behavior among hearing persons and vice-versa :)'

Most of the posts are not that explicit: they usually point to a feature common to one group and absent in the other. The reverse claim is usually implicit only. The features thus contrasted are the presence of small talk among the hearing,

apparently absent among the Deaf (5); the Deaf being less reserved and distanced (6, 7); the Deaf being more prone to believe in gossip (8). The emerging picture is that of the Deaf being emotional, spontaneous, and open but naïve, and the hearing being rational but cold, capable of greasing the wheels of social discourse but reticent, which is akin to the classic Said's take on how the Occident perceived the Orient:

- (5) *Słyszący wytworzyli sztukę konwersacji, sposoby na podtrzymywanie rozmowy, uprzejmości, wyrażenia, za którymi ukrywa się prawdziwe myśli—często rozmowy są “o niczym” byle tylko gadać, bo milczeć nie wypada.*
 ‘The hearing have developed the art of conversation, techniques to keep the conversation going, expressions that hide one’s true thoughts—often the conversations are “about nothing” just to talk because it is not acceptable to be silent.’
- (6) *Głusi nie są tak zablokowani jak Słyszaki. PJM “wymusza” jakby u nich otwarcie emocjonalne, mam wrażenie, że nie mają problemów z wyrażaniem swoich uczuć, potrzeb i emocji. Dlatego są tak bezpośredni i otwarci w rozmowach między sobą. A Słyszaki? “Ładną dziś pogodę mamy” cedzą przez zęby.*
 ‘The Deaf are not as blocked as the Hearies are. It is as if PJM ‘forces’ their emotional openness, my impression is that they do not balk at expressing their feelings, needs, and emotions. That is why they are so direct and open in conversations among themselves. And the Hearies? “What a nice weather we’re having,” they grunt through clenched teeth.’
- (7) *Przypomnijcie sobie jak to jest w windach: ludzie odwracają wzrok w zakłopotaniu jak się da, żeby tylko nie wejść w kontakt wzrokowy, nie pogadać ... [...] Głuchy Głuchego chętniej zagada.*
 ‘Think of what happens in the elevator: people turn their gaze in embarrassment whenever possible to avoid eye contact and avoid talking to each other. [...] A Deaf is more willing to start a conversation with another Deaf.’
- (8) *ze słyszący mniej wierzą plotkom*
 ‘that the hearing give less credence to gossip’

At least within this forum, the orientalizing grammar does not degenerate into anti-grammar, despite one of the participants summing up the discussion by (9).

- (9) *Jednym słowem—jesteśmy lepsi :D*
 ‘In one word—we are better :D’

What prevents this statement from being considered an instance of anti-grammar is the presence of the emoticon, which confers it a jocose flavor, and the evident absence of the other part of the anti-grammar “so they are bad”. Though some accusations about crude othering of hearing people are made by a self-disclosed hearing participant, they are immediately refuted. In (10), it is done within the orientalizing grammar, and in (11) and (12) within the encompassing grammar: in (11) CODAS (i.e., hearing Children Of Deaf Adults, who are by the same token native signers) are included among the Deaf; in (12) hard-of-hearing people who may not even be signers are included among the d/Deaf.

- (10) *Tu wcale nie chodzi o porównywanie się, uniżanie słyszących, wyszukiwanie wady. Lecz szukamy tego co słyszący mają w sobie czego MY (Głusi) nie mamy i co MY (Głusi) mamy czego słyszący nie mają.*

‘It is not about comparing, treating the hearing as inferior, looking out for defects. We are looking for what the hearing have, and WE (the Deaf) do not, and what WE (the Deaf) have and the hearies do not.’ (original emphasis)

- (11) *To są Głusi mentalnie, a słyszący fizycznie, a nie Słyszący. Zwróć uwagę na wielkość liter.*

‘These are Deaf mentally and hearing physically, and not Hearing. Look at the capitalization.’

- (12) *Nas w naszym społeczeństwie powinna łączyć NASZA WADA SŁUCHU, nie ważne w ilu decybalach jest ubytek, nie ważne kto i kiedy ktoś poznał język migowy*

‘In our society, we should unite according to OUR HEARING IMPAIRMENT, it is not important how many decibels the [hearing] loss, it is not important who and when they have learned the sign language’

Interestingly, both Marganiec (2024) and the Deaf forum conceptualize the deaf under the encompassment grammar, but they differ in their representation of Deaf vs. hearing. It should not come as a surprise: the title of the thread imposes the orientalizing grammar, and the appeal to allow the d/Deaf to fully exercise their civic rights has to rely on the segmentary grammar.

In contrast to the two previous texts that can be analyzed in terms of the three grammars as developed by Baumann and Gingrich (2006a; 2006b),

Kotowski's (2024) text in its entirety requires Spivak's (1985) perspective on othering, "in which colonized subjects gain a sense of their identities as being dependent" (Gingrich 2006, 11). Yet, possibly as a provocation, he employs an orientalization or maybe an exoticization strategy aimed at (if not against) the hearing. His term for the hearing is *kompletny*, which I have rendered as 'compleat', to achieve a similar effect. However, the orientalization technique he employs relies on the title itself: *(Ultra)niezależny Głuchy w krainie kompletności* '(Ultra)Independent Deaf in the Land of the Compleat'—which alludes directly to titles of Polish adaptations of the two best-known books of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, which tend to take the form of *Guliwer w kraju Liliputów* and *Guliwer w kraju Olbrzymów* ('Gulliver in the Land of the Lilliputians/Giants', respectively).

No instance of either crude or sophisticated othering could be found in the three texts. In the case of both Marganiec (2024) and Kotowski (2024), this may be because the texts were aimed at hearing audiences, and the authors may have used self-restraint. The authors of deaf.pl posts had Deaf audiences in mind, but they apparently wanted to enter into a dialogue with the hearing. While the three grammars have been described as dialogic in nature, real othering, be it crude or sophisticated, is the antithesis of dialogue.

6 When the Grammars Meet the Lexicon

Contrary to what could have been expected, no regular association between the kind of grammar involved (see above) and the choice of the terms could be traced. Instead, the choice of terms is informed by the text's purport, genre, and register, which in turn depend on the intended audience. Thus, Marganiec's (2024) call for enabling the d/Deaf to fully exercise their civic rights is written within the confines of an academic genre using a formal register. Therefore, he exclusively uses the standard terms *słyszący* 'hearing', *ślabosłyszący* 'hard-of-hearing', and *niესłyszący* 'deaf', both in the segmentary and in encompassing grammars. The orientalizing grammar is prominently absent in his text.

Kotowski's (2024) text is intended for the same type of audience, since it appears in the same volume, and consequently meets the criteria for the academic genre. Yet, his chosen term, *kompletny* 'compleat', has been selected to provoke.

He writes:

- (13) *“Kompletny” to znaczy, że ktoś ma wszystko, pełen zestaw potrzebnych cech. Model takiej osoby porównuje się z osobą niekompletną w celu wyłapania jej braków, a następnie uzupełnienia ich. W relacjach społecznych działa to w taki sposób, że większość osób wpisuje się w model człowieka kompletnego. [...] Głuchy jest niekompletny, bo kiedy następuje porównanie go z resztą społeczeństwa, okazuje się, że nie słyszy—kompletni słyszą. [...] Głuchy nie mówi fonicznie, oni tak [...] Okazuje się, że nie spełnia on oczekiwań, więc kompletni członkowie społeczeństwa próbują coś w Głuchym uzupełnić, naprawić (Kotowski 2024, 68–69).*

“Compleat” means that a person has it all, all the necessary features. The model of such a person is compared to an incomplete one to identify what they lack and to provide them with it. Within social relations, the majority of people match the compleat model [...] The Deaf is incomplete, because when they are compared with the rest of society, it turns out they cannot hear—the compleat can. [...] The Deaf does not speak phonically, while they do. [...] It turns out that the Deaf does not meet [some] expectations so that the compleat members of society try to complete or fix the Deaf.’

This ironic shift of perspective should be read as an intervention and an attempt to resist the biopower exerted upon the Deaf (Kotowski 2024, 63, 69). Yet, the term *kompletny* is used in his preliminary and theoretical sections. When quoting interviews with his informants, and even when commenting upon some excerpts, he invariably uses the term *słyszący* ‘hearing’, without capitalization.

It is only within the Deaf forum that both *s/Słyszak* ‘hearie’ and *szary* ‘gray’ are attested, as well as *s/Słyszący* ‘hearing’. However, the lexical choices do not correspond to the grammars embraced by the forum participants. In posts representing all three grammars, all three terms were used, in some instances, within the same post. The only valid observation that could be made is that the choice between *słyszący* and *s/Słyszak* may depend on the overall register and style in which each post is formulated. While all posts tend to be couched in the informal register, they differ as to the degree of their informality: some represent neutral spoken Polish, while some are markedly informal and even casual, bordering on slang, similar to what happens in posts written by hearing speakers of Polish (Zdunkiewicz-Jedynak 2007, 93). Not surprisingly, the less formal, generally shorter posts are more emotionally charged and feature more emojis. It is within the most casual and emotionally charged posts that the term *s/Słyszak* tends to be found. The forum participants followed a semantic convention in which lowercase spelling was used to describe a person’s auditory status, and capitalization was used to mark their belonging to the dominant hearing culture.

7 Concluding Remarks

I have turned to two theoretical frameworks to discuss how the Polish Deaf, a linguistic and cultural minority, conceptualize the hearing population and what terms they use for the hearing. Brons's (2015) approach provided me with the notion of *quasi-othering*, which better suits the way the Polish Deaf establish their collective identity in opposition to the hearing majority. I have used Brons's (2015) distinction between crude and sophisticated othering, and his notion of quasi-othering, which is a counterpart of his sophisticated othering, barring its conclusion about the inferiority or radical alienness of the out-group. Since his proposal lacks the "quasi" counterpart for crude othering, I have used his proposal as a template, which I completed with Baumann and Gingrich's (2006a; 2006b) three grammars of identity/alterity. In my opinion, they could and should be considered instances of crude quasi-othering or possibly quasi-crude othering.

I have examined three texts: two academic ones and a transcript of an online Deaf forum. The two academic texts present different conceptualizations of the hearing. Marganiec (2024) follows the segmentary grammar when contrasting the Deaf and the hearing, and the encompassing grammar when including the hard-of-hearing and hearing-impaired individuals who do not identify as culturally Deaf. The two grammars follow from the purport of his text: a call for making social and political life accessible to the d/Deaf so that they can fully exercise their civic rights. Kotowski's (2024) activism runs along different lines. He rightly recognizes the biopower invested in the hearing and discusses ways in which the Ultra(Independent) Deaf manage to find themselves in the world of the hearing. Out of the three grammars identified by Baumann and Gingrich (2006b), he employs, marginally, the orientalizing grammar, but with a twist. The hearing are ironically represented as compleat, and the orientalization itself is limited to an allusion to Polish titles of some adaptations of the two best-known books from Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, i.e., to Lilliput and to Brobdingnag. In the Deaf forum posts, only two grammars have been represented. The predominance of the orientalizing grammar is triggered by the topic (the differences between the Deaf and the h/Hearing). The encompassing grammar affects mainly those hearing people who are culturally Deaf, i.e., CODAS (Children of Deaf Adults), who are native and fluent signers.

All the terms examined were not PJM signs but their renditions into spoken Polish. The most controversial one is *s/Styszak* 'hearie', deemed by some d/Deaf people to be a denigratory term for either hearing people or for deaf individuals who embrace the values of the hearing world, including audism and disdain for Polish Sign Language.

Marganiec (2024) invariably uses the standard term *słyszący* 'hearing' (lowercase), while Kotowski (2024) uses the term *kompletny* 'compleat' (also lowercase) in his introductory sections, but not in rendering the interviews with his informants and their analysis, where the term *słyszący* (lowercase) is invariably used. Thus, the two authors conform to Polish spelling conventions.

In the analyzed material, the non-standard terms for hearing people, i.e., *s/Słyszak* and *szary*, only appeared in the posts from the Deaf forum, but the standard term *słyszący* was also present. The spelling tended to reflect the sense distinction presented above. The choice between *s/Słyszak* and *s/Słyszący* seems not to reflect participants' attitudes toward hearing people but rather depends on the post's register.

Both Figiel (2009) and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak (2017) claim that the term *Słyszak* can be used as a slur, in particular when aimed at a deaf person "who has rejected the Deaf Culture" (Figiel 2009, 169–170). Yet, as Blakemore rightly claims:

offence may be attributed to a speaker who uses an otherwise acceptable term in the context of an utterance containing an expletive, pejorative epithet or prosodic device which has pejorative effects.

BLAKEMORE 2014, 2

It is, therefore, possible that in PJM, it is the non-manual device that imposes the derogatory character on the respective sign for 'HEARING'. This is then transferred to the spoken Polish counterpart, given the potentially ambiguous (between colloquial and denigratory) character of the spoken Polish suffix.

The analysis presented here suggests that the Polish Deaf do not *other* the hearing majority in the sense presented in the quote from Jensen (2011, 65) in section 1. In their majority, they tend to orientalize the hearing. As a result, the terms they use may not be instances of naming for othering. This rather benign attitude of the Polish Deaf towards the Hearing has been partly explained by Zdrodowska (2019, 310). The Deaf Resistance in Poland is aimed more against institutions than against hearing individuals.

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I'm Not Obese, I'm Fat! Reclamation of Words as a Strategy for Building Group Identity in the Polish Fat People Discourse

Magdalena Zawisławska and Marta Chojnacka-Kuraś

1 Introduction

1.1 *Obese People as an Excluded Group in Modern Western Society, Including Poland*

Nowadays, the metaphor “obesity epidemics” is very common in media discourse. In light of this narrative, obese people are subject to stigmatization. Thus, obesity can be considered a *discrediting attribute*, according to Erving Goffman (1963), that causes people to go to extreme lengths to remove it (such as swallowing tapeworms, taking dangerous, life-threatening drugs like amphetamine, or undergoing bariatric surgery). Obesity is a visible, stigmatized trait that cannot be hidden. As Amy Erdman Farrel (2011, 5) points out, based on appearance, society draws far-reaching conclusions about the character of obese people (referred to by Goffman as *character stigma*), that they are unpredictable, lazy, gluttonous, and unable to control their primitive instincts. She also notes that obese people are not treated by society as fully-fledged human beings entitled to polite and respectful treatment. Farrel draws the following conclusions from these facts:

Drawing from Goffman's taxonomy, fat is both a clearly visible *physical* stigma and a *character* stigma insofar as people assume the presence of fat means something negative about the person. [...] More fundamentally, however, the political cartoons, advertisements, and physicians' writing I explored from the 19th century suggest that fat stigma is deeply rooted in the development of ideas about race, gender, and civilization. Fatness was a motif used to identify “inferior bodies”—those of immigrants, former slaves, and women—and it became a telltale sign of a “superior” person falling from grace. In today's term, fat, if it had a color, would be black, and if it had a national origin, it would be an illegal immigrant, non-U.S., and non-Western.

FARREL 2011, 7–8

Obese people in modern Western societies (including Poland) are undoubtedly stigmatized and excluded because of their appearance, which does not conform to beauty standards, i.e., a slim, athletic, shapely figure. Charlotte Copper (2008) claims that a certain model of obesity perception has been formed and is considered the only appropriate one. She summarizes it as follows:

Within this dominant model, fatness is contextualized as pitiful and/or many of the following: lacking in moral fibre, diseased, potentially diseased, greedy and lazy, not just ugly but disgusting, pathetic, underclass, worthless, a repulsive joke, a problem that needs to be treated and prevented.

COPPER 2008, 2

In Poland, Maria Mamczur, the author of the book *Gruba. Reportaż o wadze i uprzedzeniach* 'Fat woman. Reporting on weight and prejudice' observes:

A fat person is worse. A modern whipping boy. You can still get back at them, relieve your frustration, and boost your ego. You can hate them, harass them, bring them down and humiliate them with impunity. Exclude. Because a fat person does not fit into the modern utopia—the beautiful world of eternally young, healthy and wealthy, to which most people aspire.

MAMCZUR 2022, 29; translation ours

Ewa Golachowska and Dorota Pazio-Wlazłowska (2023) used surveys to study how the Polish word *grubas* 'fatty' is perceived in contemporary Poland. Their results show that Polish people perceive those referred to as 'fatty' primarily in the physical aspect. The most salient element is their appearance, including body weight. Respondents most often indicate it as a feature that characterizes a fat person. Health, aesthetics, and acceptance are much less present in the semantics of the noun *grubas*, 'fatty'. According to the authors, for the stereotype of *grubas*, 'fatty', the dominant aspect is physical, which is expressed in excessive body weight, greater than socially acceptable. In light of the collected survey data, this is the most entrenched semantic feature determining the conceptual center of the model of the fat person (Golachowska, Pazio-Wlazłowska 2023, 325–326). Dictionary data also show a very negative image of an obese person. As Dorota Pazio-Wlazłowska (2022) notes, according to dictionaries, a typical fat person is a large person who overeats, is clumsy and has difficulty moving, and is unattractive to the opposite sex. Anna Teler (2021, 107) emphasizes the prevalence of body shaming on social media such

as Instagram and Facebook, a phenomenon whereby the body and its image become the subject of embarrassment, humiliation, and objectification due to weight, appearance, diseases, physical dysfunctions, or divergences from cultural requirements (e.g., hairy legs, cellulite).

1.2 *Fat Activism*

The excluded group of obese people, women in particular, has begun to develop an awareness of oppression and discrimination, which led to the creation of the social movements of body positivity, body neutrality, and fat activism.

According to Charlotte Cooper (2008), the fat activism movement in the US started in 1969 and consisted of three waves (the first one: 1967–1989, the second one: the 1990s, and the third one: starting in 2000). In June 1967, the first protest against the oppression of obese people took place in New York. Its participants burned diet guides and photos of the British model Twiggy.¹ In the 1970s, a group called *The Fat Underground* “published a manifesto [...] on the inefficacy of dieting, discrimination at work, eating, health, psychiatry, sexism, eating disorders, public furniture, medical power, stereotypes, and humour” (Cooper 2008, 9). This manifesto presented fat people as discriminated against and excluded in the same way as others are excluded due to classism, racism, sexism, ageism, capitalism, and imperialism (see Wójcik 2021, 386). More recently, an academic discipline called *fat studies* has emerged, which deals with social beliefs about human weight.

Kaja Wójcik (2021) writes that:

Body positivity and body neutrality are social phenomena whose manifestations have been visible in the media for several years. Although these concepts, and therefore the interpretations of corporeality behind them, come from activist circles in the United States, it seems that they also function with increasing success in Polish social reality and increasingly represent the norms and values of the young generation.

WÓJCIK 2021, 381–382; translation ours

Marta Woźniak (2021, 74) notices that the term *body positive* was created in 1996 by Connie Sobczak and Elizabeth Scott, who wanted to free the community from social messages that keep people in a constant state of struggle with their bodies. Woźniak (2021, 83) also reports that the term *body neutrality* appeared

1 Lesley Lawson (Twiggy)—a very popular model in the 1960s with a very slim, androgynous figure.

for the first time on the Internet in 2015 and was popularized by a fitness trainer, Anne Poirier. The premise of the body neutrality movement is to accept your body and think not about what it looks like but what it is capable of. These two social movements include obese people, but they are much broader because they also consider other body features that are not accepted in modern culture.

In Poland, the fat activism movement (referred to as *grubancypacja*) is just emerging. The novelty of this new way of thinking is proven by the fact that no Polish language dictionaries contain the expressions *ciałopozytywność* 'body positivity', *ciałoneutralność* 'body neutrality', or *grubancypacja* 'fat activism'. Only the University of Warsaw Language Observatory² records the word *grubancypacja*, which was registered in 2023.

In the present paper, we want to analyze two words: *gruby* 'fat' and *otyły* 'obese' in Polish-language discourse from the perspective of Polish fat activism, body positivity, and body neutrality. We concentrate on the re-evaluation of the word *otyły* 'obese' (which is generally considered a medical term or a neutral word) and the reclamation of the word *gruby* 'fat'. *Reclamation* is defined by Mihaela Popa-Wyatt (2020, 159) as "taking back control by targets of words used to attack them". She elaborates on this idea as follows:

A dominant group repeatedly deploys a slur as a linguistic weapon so as to achieve power over a target group. This weapon is a speech-act (the slurring speech act) which assigns a low power role to the target. In-group members can disarm this weapon by using the slur term to self-refer. By self-labelling in a non-derogatory way they create a new speech act (the reclaimed speech act) that is only accessible to in-group members. This new speech act assigns in-group members a powerful role. Creating and owning this new speech act also creates feelings of empowerment. Another effect of the new speech act is to make it harder for out-group members to use the slurring speech act.

POPA-WYATT 2020, 160

Fat activism and fat emancipation discourse in Polish can be considered a part of a larger and more complex discourse on obesity, where various perspectives collide. It is worth noting that from the medical perspective, the body-positivity movement and the idea of fat liberation can cause concern. The line

2 This is an online dictionary of Polish neologisms. It is a community dictionary, which means that every Internet user can contribute to it by submitting headword suggestions on this website (<https://obserwatoriumjezykowe.uw.edu.pl>; last accessed: July 8, 2024).

between obesity (as a disease) and just being fat (fat and healthy) is not clear; it depends on individual factors. The medical community insists that the belief that you can be fat and healthy is a harmful narrative that may harm people who have obesity (although they do not know about it or are not aware that obesity is a disease that requires appropriate treatment) and see a doctor too late.

In the first part of our text, we present data resulting from the quantitative analysis of our corpus. We analyze key vocabulary and the semantic prosody of selected lexical units with the highest keyness (e.g., *gruby* 'fat', *otyły* 'obese', *szczupły* 'slim', and *otyłość* 'obesity'; see 2.1 and 2.2). In the second part, we discuss the lexical-semantic phenomena most characteristic of this discourse, like newly coined derivatives and discursively modified meanings of keywords, especially the adjectives *gruby* 'fat' and *otyły* 'obese', as well as their function in the discourse.

For our research, we have compiled a corpus of texts written from the perspective of obese people, called The Corpus of Fat People Discourse (henceforth: CFPD). The corpus contains 262,000 segments, and it consists of the following texts:

- (a) The book by Maria Mamczur, *Fat woman. Reporting on weight and prejudice*;³
- (b) *Galanta Lala* blog;⁴
- (c) *The Vingardium Grubiosa* report;⁵
- (d) *Body (non)positivity—from the diary of fatty* blog;⁶
- (e) Interview "Girls don't explain themselves";⁷
- (f) Interview "Fat people don't need salvation, only respect".⁸

3 Maria Mamczur, *Gruba. Reportaż o wadze i uprzedzeniach*. Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej: Warsaw 2022.

4 A blog about body positivity by Urszula Chowaniec—fat activist (<https://galantalala.pl/>; last accessed: July 1, 2024).

5 A report by Natalia Skoczylas and Urszula Chowaniec published in 2022 regarding fatphobia experienced by fat people in contacts with Polish Health Care (<https://www.vingardiumgrubiosa.pl/raport/>; last accessed: July 8, 2024).

6 A blog by Natalia Fedan (<https://dziecisawazne.pl/cialoniepozytywnosc-z-pamietnika-grubej/>; last accessed: July 8, 2024).

7 An interview with Natalia Skoczylas and Urszula Chowaniec (<https://www.wysokieobcasy.pl/wysokie-obcasy/7,163229,27430735,grubancypacja-osoby-grube-doswiadcza-opresji-i-dyskryminacji.html>; last accessed: July 8, 2024).

8 An interview with a male fat activist (<https://krytykapolityczna.pl/kraj/marta-glanc-grubi-ludzie-nie-potrzebuj-zbawienia-tylko-szacunku/>; last accessed: July 8, 2024).

2 Methodological Framework

In this study, we use both quantitative research, i.e., corpus-based analysis, and qualitative research focusing on selected lexemes (*gruby* 'fat' and *otyły* 'obese'). From the perspective of corpus research, we describe keywords characteristic of fat people's discourse and the semantic prosody of lexical units with the highest keyness.

2.1 Keywords

In linguistics, keywords are words characteristic of a given text (author, style, genre, etc.). Pierre Guiraud (1954), who first introduced this term into linguistics, defined keywords statistically in relation to a single text: as words whose frequency in a given text by a given author is higher than in the language in general. Jadwiga Sambor treats keywords as "words characteristic of a given text, author, style, etc." but includes them in a broader class of thematic words (Sambor 2001, 519). In our research, the latest Corpus of Contemporary Polish (2011–2020)⁹ serves as a reference corpus.

The analysis of keywords in The Corpus of Fat People Discourse shows how certain words are re-evaluated or reclaimed (Popa-Wyatt 2020) by people belonging to a group that is socially excluded due to physical characteristics (overweight, obesity), who are often also activists of the body-positivity movement.

2.2 Semantic Prosody

Semantic prosody determines the character (positive or negative) of the examined lexical unit through the meaning of other words co-occurring with it. John Sinclair (1966, 87–88) described semantic prosody as a strictly pragmatic category, while Michael Stubbs (1995) called it *semantic discourse prosody*. Bill Louw (1993) believes that semantic prosody is a contextual phenomenon, a sort of secondary stylistic background of the basic meaning of the word. At the same time, semantic prosody is different from connotation. Alan Partington (1998, 68) argues that the difference between the two concepts is that connotation involves a single word, whereas semantic prosody is a meaning concerning a sequence of lexical units in a given utterance. Moreover, Louw (2000, 49–50)

9 The Corpus of Contemporary Polish (Korpus Dekady–Korpus Współczesnego Języka Polskiego—KWJP) covers texts from the second decade of the 21st century. It is a large reference corpus and might be used with the same confidence as reference publications, dictionaries, and encyclopedias. We have used the balanced corpus which contains 100 million words (kwjp.pl; last accessed: July 8, 2024).

believes that connotation refers to the phenomenon when a given user hears a word and immediately associates it with certain mental images. Prosody, on the other hand, is based on the relationship between a lexical unit and its immediate environment. According to Louw (1993, 2000), whose concept we adopt, the semantic prosody of words is studied quantitatively using corpora. Semantic prosody is determined based on the collocations of a given lexical unit, and, according to Louw (1993), a binary division into positive and negative evaluations of the examined lexeme should be adopted. Therefore, we ignore neutral or unclear collocations in our analysis. When examining contexts, we follow Dominic Stewart (2010, 107–108) in analyzing five to six words to the left and right of the analyzed lexical unit.

2.3 *Semantic Analysis of Expressions*

In the part concerning the qualitative analysis of lexis, we focus on the description of the structure and meaning of new words (Waszakowa 2017), as well as on changes in meaning in the sphere of evaluative connotations of adjectives basic to this discourse (Puzynina 1988, 1992; Linde-Usiekniewicz 2000; Tokarski 2008). Following Bożena Witosz (2010), we assume that fat people discourse is an example of the discourse of the excluded, i.e., created by social groups aware of exclusion due to a certain characteristic (e.g., sexual orientation, gender affiliation, political views, religion, etc.). In this case, the reason for exclusion is the body and its visible features: size/volume/mass. Fat people discourse is a voice from inside the group, statements by people about themselves. They convey their point of view about their everyday experiences with the rest of society (with non-fat “normal” people) and take actions (also at the level of language and communication) that are intended to change this situation—to counteract discrimination and show the true, not stereotypical, face of fat people (Bielska 2020, 179).

3 *The Analysis of the Corpus*

The most frequent lexical items (15 adjectives, 15 nouns, and 15 verbs that occupy the top positions on the frequency list) in our corpus (CFPD) were compared with the Corpus of Contemporary Polish (2011–2020) (CCP) in an attempt to determine the keyness of lexemes belonging to three separate word classes—adjectives, nouns, and verbs—in the CFPD corpus. Tables 1–3 give the following information about a lexical unit: raw frequencies of a lexical item in the Corpus of Fat People Discourse (*f* CFPD) and in the Corpus of Contemporary Polish (*f* CCP), normalized frequencies in the Corpus of Fat People

TABLE 10.1 Keyness of the most frequent adjectives in the Corpus of Fat People Discourse

Lexeme	f CFPD	nf CFPD	f CCP	nf CCP	LL	Log Ratio
<i>gruby</i> 'fat'	1 160	4 431	1 000	10	10 822.17	8.79
<i>inny</i> 'other'	472	123	156 502	1 565	8.99	0.20
<i>prosty</i> ¹⁰ 'simple'	459	1 753	41 747	417	615.08	2.07
<i>duży</i> 'big'	385	1 471	96 331	963	59.97	0.61
<i>dobry</i> 'good'	303	1 157	92 581	926	14.00	0.32
<i>cały</i> 'whole'	234	894	106 557	1 066	-7.67	-0.25
<i>ważny</i> ¹¹ 'important'	214	817	52 608	526	35.97	0.64
<i>szczupły</i> 'lean'	213	813	1 843	18	1174.54	5.46
<i>różny</i> 'different'	209	798	36 338	363	100.92	1.14
<i>własny</i> ¹² 'my own'	185	707	50 996	510	17.66	0.47
<i>otyły</i> 'obese'	156	596	324	3	1252.13	7.52
<i>społeczny</i> 'social'	150	573	35 254	353	30.20	0.70
<i>zły</i> 'bad'	143	546	31 394	314	36.66	0.80
<i>piękny</i> 'beautiful'	118	451	21 309	213	52.20	1.08
<i>nowy</i> 'new'	118	451	110250	1102	-129.87	-1.29

Discourse (nf CFPD) and in the Corpus of Contemporary Polish (nf CCP), log-likelihood ratio¹³ (LL) (Rayson and Garside 2000), and log ratio¹⁴ (Log Ratio)

10 The adjective *prosty* 'simple' is most often part of the phrase *po prostu* 'simply', so we disregard it in the analysis.

11 The adjective *ważny* 'important' appears in the phrases "it is important that ...", "the most important thing is that ...", "it is not important". We disregard it in further analysis because it does not provide any significant information about the examined discourse.

12 The adjective *własny* 'my own' is used in phrases such as *seeing something with one's own eyes*, *one's own experience*, *one's own well-being*, *one's own body*, and emphasizes a subjective, individual experience. We disregard this adjective in the analysis.

13 The higher the log-likelihood value, the more significant the difference between the two frequency scores:
95th percentile; 5% level; $p < 0.05$; critical value = 3.84
99th percentile; 1% level; $p < 0.01$; critical value = 6.63
99.9th percentile; 0.1% level; $p < 0.001$; critical value = 10.83
99.99th percentile; 0.01% level; $p < 0.0001$; critical value = 15.13. (<http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html>).

14 The log ratio is a statistic for keywords, collocations, and lockwords. The Log Ratio statistic is an "effect-size" statistic, not a significance statistic: it represents how big the difference between two corpora is for a particular keyword.

TABLE 10.2 Keyness of the most frequent nouns in the Corpus of Fat People Discourse

Lexeme	f CFPD	nf CFPD	f CCP	nf CCP	LL	Log Ratio
<i>osoba</i> 'person'	1 163	4 443	92 880	929	1791.72	2.26
<i>ciało</i> 'body'	773	2 953	32 185	322	2034.55	3.20
<i>rok</i> 'year'	704	2 689	395 113	3 951	-118.64	-0.56
<i>człowiek</i> 'human'	643	2 456	153 343	1 533	122.35	0.68
<i>czas</i> 'time'	480	1 834	172864	1 729	1.65	0.09
<i>kobieta</i> 'woman'	450	1 719	68 957	690	282.07	1.32
<i>życie</i> 'life'	372	1 421	112 261	1 123	19.09	0.34
<i>zdrowie</i> 'health'	365	1 394	16 835	168	895.38	3.05
<i>otyłość</i> 'obesity'	358	1 368	510	5	3 084.92	8.07
<i>badanie</i> ¹⁵ 'research'	354	1 352	23 532	235	649.61	2.52
<i>jedzenie</i> 'food'	325	1345	6660	67	1 272.42	4.22
<i>temat</i> ¹⁶ 'topic'	292	1 115	35 088	351	274.01	1.67
<i>waga</i> 'weight'	284	1 085	4 468	45	1 250.92	4.60
<i>lekarz</i> 'doctor'	275	1 051	19 555	196	474.51	2.43
<i>dieta</i> 'diet'	274	1 047	3 385	34	1 329.97	4.95

(Hardie 2014). We assume the critical cutoff point for statistical significance is at $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ (words that do not meet these conditions are marked in gray in Tables 10.1, 10.2, and 10.3).

The keywords show quite interesting tendencies in the examined discourse. The high keyness of the adjectives *gruby* 'fat' and *otyły* 'obese' is not very surprising, but the high position of the adjective *szczupły* 'slim' is quite puzzling. Usually, this adjective appears as an antonym of the adjective *gruby* 'fat'. In the

A word has the same relative frequency in A and B—the binary log of the ratio is 0
A word is 2 times more common in A than in B—the binary log of the ratio is 1
A word is 4 times more common in A than in B—the binary log of the ratio is 2
A word is 8 times more common in A than in B—the binary log of the ratio is 3
A word is 16 times more common in A than in B—the binary log of the ratio is 4
A word is 32 times more common in A than in B—the binary log of the ratio is 5 (<http://cass.lancs.ac.uk/log-ratio-an-informal-introduction/>).

15 The noun *badanie* 'research' in CFPD refers to scientific research or survey research, so we disregard it in the detailed analysis.

16 This noun appears almost exclusively in phrases such as *stereotypy na temat grubości* 'stereotypes about thickness', *przekonania na temat otyłości* 'beliefs about obesity'. For this reason, it is not included in the detailed analysis.

TABLE 10.3 Keyness of the most frequent verbs in the Corpus of Fat People Discourse

Lexeme	f CFPD	nf CFPD	f CCP	nf CCP	LL	Log Ratio
<i>móc</i> 'be able'	635	2 426	300 137	3 001	-30.82	-0.31
<i>wiedzieć</i> 'know'	429	1 639	132 338	1 323	18.22	0.31
<i>mówić</i> 'say-V.IMPF'	363	1 387	152 871	1 529	-3.54	-0.14
<i>musieć</i> 'have to'	272	1 039	122 710	1 227	-7.95	-0.24
<i>chcieć</i> 'want'	255	974	154 110	1 541	-62.73	-0.66
<i>myśleć</i> 'think'	253	966	47 528	475	101.62	1.02
<i>powiedzieć</i> 'say-V.PERF'	211	806	102 722	1 027	-13.45	-0.35
<i>powinien</i> 'should'	184	703	56 739	567	7.84	0.31
<i>chodzić</i> 'walk'	160	611	51 226	512	4.70	0.25
<i>trzeba</i> 'must'	151	577	55 251	553	0.27	0.06
<i>czuć</i> 'feel'	145	554	42 404	424	9.46	0.39
<i>widzieć</i> 'see'	138	527	62 332	623	-4.09	-0.24
<i>wyglądać</i> 'look'	135	516	34 941	349	17.99	0.56
<i>jeść</i> 'eat'	121	462	11 403	114	155.68	2.02
<i>lubić</i> 'like'	117	447	22 441	224	44.56	0.99

analyzed discourse, people are either slim people with privileges or fat people who are excluded and persecuted, as exemplified by (1)–(2):

- (1) *Oto biały i szczupły zbawiciel wjeżdża na salę kinową uratować nas przed grubą Monicą, Schmidtem, czy Norbitem.*
'Here comes a white and slim savior entering the cinema to save us from fat Monica, Schmidt, or Norbit.'
- (2) *Ciałopozytywność—raz jeszcze, niechże to wreszcie wybrzmi—polega na zajmowaniu się niwelowaniem nierówności pomiędzy światem szczupłych, a światem grubych.*
'Body positivity—once again, let it be heard—is about eliminating inequalities between the world of slim people and the world of fat people.'

The state of slimness is also something fat people aspire to, which is often their unfulfilled dream, see:

- (3) *Przez 20 lat była gruba i nieszczęśliwa. Odchudzała się bez efektu. Potrzebowała zmiany. "Miałam wrażenie, że siedzi we mnie piękna, szczupła dziewczyna, która chce się uwolnić z tego dużego ciała i nie może"—opowiada z goryczą.*

'She has been fat and unhappy for 20 years. She was trying to lose weight without any effect. She needed a change. "I had the feeling that there was a beautiful, slim girl inside me who wanted to free herself from this big body and couldn't," she says bitterly.'

- (4) *Te chwile, sekundy, kiedy znów nienawidzę siebie i widzę w lustrze tłustą świnię, a nie szczupłą kobietę.*
 'Those moments, seconds when I hate myself again and I see a fat pig in the mirror, not a slim woman.'

The adjective *duży* 'big' in many contexts refers to the fat body or body parts of fat people, see:

- (5) *No to jak w takim razie mówić o dużych ciałach? Najlepiej byłoby się od nich odstosunkować, prawdę mówiąc, ale skoro już jest taka potrzeba, to—gruba.*
 'So how can we talk about large bodies? It would be best just to leave them freaking alone, to be honest, but if you must, say—*gruby*.'
- (6) *W tej wiejskiej otyłości jest jakiś rodzaj vitalności. U Orzeszkowej w "Nad Niemnem" jest podobnie, panie z dworów są ściągnięte gorsetami, w talii bardzo wąskie, natomiast dziewczyny z ludu są mocno zbudowane, z dużymi tyłkami, z dużym biustem, bo przecież istotna była też kwestia wykarmienia dzieci piersią.*
 'In this rural obesity there is some kind of vitality. Just as in Orzeszkowa's novel "On the Niemen": the ladies from the manor houses are corseted to give them very narrow waists, while the commoner girls are strongly built, with big butts and large breasts, because the issue of breastfeeding the children was also important.'

The adjective *inny* 'other' often emphasizes the opposition between "me" (i.e., a fat person) and people usually fitting into the modern canons of body shape. It usually describes situations when a fat person is judged and compared to people with a "normal" figure, e.g.:

- (7) *W wielu historiach pojawiał się także wątek porównania do ciał innych, często innych kobiet czy ideału/kanonu atrakcyjności mający na celu wskazać, że ciała respondentek i respondentów nie są prawidłowe czy wręcz atrakcyjne.*
 'Many stories also featured the theme of comparison to the bodies of other people, often other women, or the ideal/canon of attractiveness, intended to indicate that the bodies of the respondents were not correct or even attractive.'

On the other hand, the adjective *różny* 'different' often emphasizes the diversity of shapes, silhouettes, and bodies of women and men of different weights and figures.

- (8) *W narracji do filmu powstałego z tej okazji Riri nie tylko mówi o seksualnej inkluzywności, o tym, że każdy może się czuć seksownie w swoim ciele i że jej bielizna jest dla różnych ciał, ale potwierdza to obsadą tancerek, aktorek i modelek biorących udział w wydarzeniu.*

'In the narration of the film created for this occasion, Riri not only talks about sexual inclusivity, about everyone being able to feel sexy in their own body and that her underwear is for all sorts of bodies, but confirms it with the cast of dancers, actresses, and models taking part in the event.'

- (9) *Powiedziałabym jej, że zainspirowała mnie do zrobienia wszystkiego, co w mojej mocy, aby uczynić świat bezpiecznym i pełnym szacunku dla ludzi o różnych kształtach i rozmiarach.*

'I would tell her that she inspired me to do everything in my power to make the world safe and respectful for people of all shapes and sizes.'

The set of keywords includes two antonymous adjectives: *dobry* 'good' and *zły* 'bad'. The adjective *dobry* 'good' often appears in phrases such as *dobra figura* 'good figure' (i.e., slim), *dobre intencje* 'good intentions', *w dobrej wierze* 'in good faith', *dobre praktyki* 'good practices', *dobra rada* 'good advice', etc. The adjectives *dobry* 'good' and *zły* 'bad' are also used to emphasize the opposition between the world of fat people (bad) and thin people (good), e.g.:

- (10) *[W]prowadza to różnicowanie ludzi na dobrych i złych grubasów, czyli coś, [...] z czego za wszelką cenę dotyczący ciała dyskurs powinien wyjść na stałe. Każde ciało to dobre ciało. Grube też.*

'[T]his differentiates people into good people and bad fat people, which is something [...] that the body discourse should reject forever. Every body is a good body. Fat ones, too.'

- (11) *Ktoś jest gruby, więc jest zły, nieatrakcyjny, leniwy i cały zestaw stereotypów, które zostały już przebadane, jakie są przypisywane grubym ciałom.*

'Someone is fat, therefore they are bad, unattractive, lazy, and a whole set of stereotypes that have already been studied that are assigned to fat bodies.'

The adjective *społeczny* 'social' presents a group of obese people in contrast to the rest of society or as people involved in creating a new social movement. It often appears in phrases such as *życie społeczne* 'social life', *ruch*

społeczny 'social movement' (about the fat activists), *grupa społeczna* 'social group' (about a group of fat activists), *sprawiedliwość społeczna* 'social justice', and *wrażliwość społeczna* 'social sensitivity' (the goals of fat activists).

The adjective *piękny* 'beautiful' is used in two ways: either as a term for slim people or as a feature of all bodies, which fits in with the postulate of fat people not to equate beauty with slimness, e.g.:

- (12) *Kultura piękna i jej siostra bliźniaczka, kultura diety, mieszkają na skrzyżowaniu. [...] Kogo widzisz, kiedy pytam jak wygląda najpiękniejsza kobieta świata? To generalizacja, ale większość z nas myśli o młodej kobiecie, o jasnej skórze [...], długich włosach, nogach do nieba, smukłej ale zaokrąglonej w biuście i biodrach sylwetce, pełnych ustach.*

'Beauty culture and its twin sister, diet culture, live at a crossroads. [...] Who do you see when I ask what the most beautiful woman in the world looks like? This is a generalization, but most of us think of a young woman, with fair skin [...], long hair, legs for days, a slim but rounded figure at the bust and hips, and full lips.'

- (13) *Musieliśmy się rozbierać na scenie, do bielizny. Otwieraliśmy się przed publicznością, ale też przed sobą nawzajem. Zaczęliśmy bardziej akceptować nasze ciała. Agnieszka chciała pokazać, że grubi też są piękni. Że to nie jest tak, jak myśli wielu, że grubas to jakieś mięso i nic więcej. Otyli mają piękne twarze.*

'We had to undress on stage, down to our underwear. We opened up to the audience, but also to each other. We started accepting our bodies more. Agnieszka wanted to show that fat people are beautiful as well. That it is not like many people think: that a fat person is just some meat and nothing more. Obese people have beautiful faces.'

In the analyzed discourse, what is striking is the high frequency of the nouns *osoba* 'person', *człowiek* 'man, human', and *kobieta* 'woman', coupled with the very low frequency of the word *mężczyzna* 'man' (only 101 appearances in the corpus). The noun *osoba* 'person' is often combined with the adjective *gruby* 'fat'. The high frequency of the word *osoba* 'person' clearly results from the authors of the texts consciously refraining from indicating gender. The noun *człowiek* 'man, human' is used generically (e.g., *Rozmiar człowieka w gabinecie lekarskim mierzy się na różne sposoby* 'The size of a person in a doctor's office is measured in various ways') or as a synonym for *osoba* 'person' (without an indication of gender). The collocations *gruby człowiek* 'fat man/person-N.SG', *grubi ludzie* 'fat people-N.PL' are also common. Despite consciously avoiding indicating the gender of obese people, in the corpus, the word *kobieta* 'woman' appears

four times more often than the word *mężczyzna* 'man'. A large portion of these uses concerns survey research among fat people (interestingly, the overwhelming majority of respondents were women). However, there are examples in the corpus that show a belief that fat women are more excluded in society than fat men, e.g.:

- (14) *Na pewno to, co przeżywają kobiety w kwestii fatfobii, różni się od doświadczeń mężczyzn. Wiąże się to z patriachatem i konkretnymi oczekiwaniami wobec kobiecych ciał, zmieniającymi się w zależności od obowiązującego kanonu piękna. Odstępstwa od niego mają negatywny wpływ na życie kobiet.*

'Certainly, what women experience in terms of fatphobia is different from men's experiences. This is related to patriarchy and specific expectations towards women's bodies, which change depending on the dominant canon of beauty. Deviations from it have a negative impact on women's lives.'

- (15) *[O]kazało się, że grube młode kobiety znacznie rzadziej wychodziły za mąż. To było dwadzieścia osiem procent w porównaniu do pięćdziesięciu sześciu procent szczupłych kobiet. Ich dochód w gospodarstwie domowym był o jedną trzecią niższy, trzy razy częściej żyły w biedzie i o połowę rzadziej kończyły studia.*

'[T]hey found that fat young women were much less likely to marry. This was twenty-eight percent compared to fifty-six percent of slim women. Their household income was one-third lower; they were three times more likely to live in poverty and half as likely to graduate from college.'

It is hardly surprising that the FPD corpus contains such nouns as *ciało* 'body', *otyłość* 'obesity', and *jedzenie* 'food'. Since one of the texts included in the corpus concerns the attitudes of health-care professionals towards fat people, the frequencies of the words *zdrowie* 'health', *życie* 'life', *waga* 'weight', *lekarz* 'doctor', and *dieta* 'diet' are also high.

The noun *ciało* 'body' often appears in the phrase *rozmiar ciała* 'body size'. It is quite interesting that the bodies of fat people are often talked about as if they were something separate from them, e.g., one of the survey questions for fat people is: *What language does medical staff use to talk about fat bodies?* The examples below clearly demonstrate this separation of corporeality from the actual person, see:

- (16) *Czy w Polsce, w kraju, który szczególnie nienawidzi wszystkiego, co odstaje od normy i jakkolwiek różni się od średniej można wydać książkę—pomnik doświadczenia traumy i życia w grubym ciele.*

'Is it possible to publish a book that would be a testament to the experience of trauma and life in a fat body in Poland, a country that particularly hates everything that deviates from the norm and differs from the average?'

- (17) *Ze względu na krzywdzące przekonania o grubych ciałach, grube osoby, zwłaszcza kobiety, wobec których oczekiwania dotyczące wyglądu są bardziej restrykcyjne, pozostają w związkach, które nie są dla nich dobre i pełne miłości ze względu na strach przed pozostaniem samej, brakiem wiary przed znalezieniem innej szansy na romans i relację.*

'Due to harmful beliefs about fat bodies, fat people, especially women for whom the expectations about their looks are more exigent, stay in relationships that are neither good for them nor loving due to fear of being alone and the lack of faith in finding yet another chance for romance and relationship.'

The noun *otyłość* 'obesity' generally refers to a disease and typically appears with collocates like *leczenie otyłości* 'obesity treatment', *nadwaga i otyłość* 'overweight and obesity', and *pacjent z otyłością* 'a patient with obesity'. The noun *jedzenie* 'food' is typically used in the expressions *zaburzenia jedzenia* 'eating disorder', *jedzenie kompulsywne* 'compulsive eating', *(nie)zdrowa relacja z jedzeniem* '(un)healthy relationship with food', *nadmierne jedzenie* 'excessive eating, overeating', *ograniczenie jedzenia* 'reducing food intake', *utrata kontroli nad jedzeniem* 'loss of control over eating'. Food is therefore presented as the chief problem of fat people, not as a basic necessity of life or simply a pleasure.

4 Semantic Prosody

We performed a semantic prosody analysis for lexemes for which the log ratio (LR) was greater than 5, i.e., *gruby* 'fat' (LR 8.79), *otyły* 'obese' (LR 7.52), *szczupły* 'lean' (LR 5.46), and *otyłość* 'obesity' (LR 8.07). In our study, following Louw (1993), we only consider positive and negative contexts, while disregarding the neutral and ambivalent ones. Examples of positive contexts include *sprawczość i podmiotowość grubych osób* 'the agency and subjecthood of fat people', *kreatywność otyłych osób* 'the creativity of obese people', *piękno nie ma rozmiaru, a bycie otyłym jest OK* 'beauty has no size, and being obese is OK'.

Examples of negative contexts include: *postrzeganie grubych osób jako leniwych i niekompetentnych* 'perceiving fat people as lazy and incompetent', *grubasy są leniwe i śmierdzą* 'fat people are lazy and they stink', *niechęć czy wręcz nienawiść do osób otyłych* 'dislike or even hatred towards obese people',

TABLE 10.4 Semantic prosody of selected keywords in the Corpus of Fat People Discourse

Lexeme	Positive collocations	Negative collocations
<i>gruby</i> 'fat'	28 %	72 %
<i>otyły</i> 'obese'	11 %	89 %
<i>otyłość</i> 'obesity'	–	100 %
<i>szczupły</i> 'slim'	24 %	76 %

społeczne uprzedzenia wobec otyłych 'social prejudice against obese people', *żaden facet nie dotknie takiej tłustej świni* 'no man will touch such a fat pig', *otyłość bierze się z obżarstwa* 'obesity comes from gluttony', *opresja szczupłego, pięknego ciała* 'an oppression of a slim, beautiful body'. The results of examining contexts from the perspective of semantic prosody are presented in Table 10.4.

Although people in this group openly declare that they prefer to be called 'fat' rather than 'obese' and try to reclaim and change the evaluation of the adjective *gruby* 'fat' (an issue we cover in the next part of the paper), the analysis of semantic prosody did not show substantial differences between the contexts related to the adjectives *gruby* 'fat' and *otyły* 'obese'. The adjective *gruby* 'fat' is only slightly more often used in positive contexts than the word *otyły* 'obese', but a significant majority of its collocations are negative. This most likely results from the fact that the examined corpus of texts includes various discourses and narratives (apart from texts written from the point of view of fat people, the out-group perspective is also present, e.g., in quotes and paraphrases of utterances the fat people are subjected to), and therefore different ways of evaluating words. However, there is a negative evaluation of the noun *otyłość* 'obesity' in the discourse of fat people—the word *otyłość* 'obesity' never appears in combination with expressions with a positive evaluation. What is surprising is the very negative evaluation of the adjective *szczupły* 'slim' that results from the combination of the cult of thinness typical of contemporary Western culture with the simultaneous oppression and exclusion of fat people.

5 Qualitative Phenomena in the Fat People Discourse

We want to focus on two of the most expressive lexical-semantic features of fat people discourse. The first involves a group of new word formations with

the root morpheme *grub-* 'fat', especially the lexeme *grubancypacja* and related derivatives. The second is a specific, discursively conditioned modification of the meaning of basic words, like *gruby* 'fat', which is no longer negative, but becomes a neutral description of the body; *grubość*—no longer only 'thickness' or 'fatness', but rather 'being fat'; *otyły* 'morbidly obese' and *otyłość* 'obesity (as a disease)'.

5.1 *New Words with the Morpheme grub-*

These new words with the morpheme *grub-* are nominal parts of speech: nouns (names of people characterized by a given feature or activity, and abstract names) and adjectives (relational, expressing a general connection between the named object and the word-formation basis). We did not find any new verbs based on the root *grub-* in the examined discourse. This proves that new lexical structures are primarily nominalizations: Polish equivalents of English expressions and concepts that have been coined in order to give names to hitherto unnamed phenomena. The most characteristic and important expression that captures the essence of Polish fat people discourse is the word *grubancypacja*, which is the Polish equivalent of the English expression *fat liberation*.¹⁷

In terms of word formation, the lexeme *grubancypacja* is a compound composed of two words: the adjective *grub(y)* 'fat' and the noun *emancypacja* 'emancipation'. The word formation mechanism involves formal blending: the inflectional stem of an adjective *grub-* is directly combined with the part of the word *emancypacja* that remains after cutting off the initial segment *em-*. The blending (fusion) process usually takes place without morphological division and the use of word-formation affixes. As a result, we get a new lexical unit that means 'emancipation of fat people'. Due to its formal structure, the Polish noun *grubancypacja* does not translate back into English as *fat liberation* without the loss of formal blending. If we wanted to achieve a parallel effect in English, that structure might read *fatancipation*.

The adjective *gruby* 'fat' as the word-formation basis of the compound is related to the keyness of this word in the CFPD. However, the use of the word *emancypacja* 'emancipation' rather than *wyzwolenie* 'liberation' is less obvious. The noun *emancypacja* is less common; it is specialized and associated by Polish language users primarily with the emancipation of women in the

17 A more detailed analysis of the word *grubancypacja* and the conceptual structure GRUBANCYPACJA (as a cognitive blend) in the Polish discourse on obesity was provided by Chojnacka-Kuraś (2024).

19th and 20th centuries. The choice of this noun could be dictated by both formal (ease of constructing word formations) and semantic reasons. The word *emancypacja* emphasizes the subjecthood and activity of those who fight for their rights and equal treatment, as well as the success of these efforts. This motivation is illustrated in this statement by the author of this word, Natalia Skoczylas:

- (18) *Termin “grubancypacja” przyszedł do mnie, gdy myślałam o emancypacji i emancypantkach, o przywracaniu sobie godności i miejsca, ale w bardziej bojowy sposób. [...] Rozumiem grubancypację jako aktywną obecność i mówienie o doświadczeniu w grubym ciele.*

‘The term “grubancypacja” came to me when I was thinking about emancipation and emancipated women, about restoring dignity and a place to myself, but in a more militant way. [...] I understand “grubancypacja” as actively being present and talking about the experience in the fat body.’

Fat emancipation activists overtly explain the word formation motivation behind the word *grubancypacja*, as well as the purpose of its popularization. They primarily include the need to name phenomena that are important for a minority group—both negative and harmful (such as discrimination and stigmatization of fat people by the rest of society) and positive (*grubancypacja* is the name of this positive phenomenon), which are intended to counteract the negative:

- (19) *“Grubancypacja” pochodzi od słów “grubość” i “emancypacja”, bo mówiąc o systemowej dyskryminacji, chcemy jednocześnie podkreślać sprawczość i podmiotowość grubych osób w pracy na rzecz równego traktowania. Popularyzujemy to słowo w naszym podcaście, bo wierzymy, że codzienność grubych osób może wyglądać inaczej i żeby ją zmienić, trzeba dotykające nas zjawiska takie jak fatfobia, dyskryminacja czy przemoc nazywać po imieniu.*

“Grubancypacja” comes from the words “grubość” ‘thickness / fatness / being fat’ and “emancypacja” ‘emancipation’, because when talking about systemic discrimination, we want to emphasize simultaneously the agency and subjecthood of fat people in working for equal treatment. We popularize this word in our podcast because we believe that the everyday life of fat people may be different, and in order to change it, we need to call the phenomena that affect us, such as fatphobia, discrimination or violence by their names.’

In the fat people discourse, there are other structures in formal-semantic relation to the noun *grubancypacja*: the feminine noun *grubancypantka* (i.e., ‘activist of fat emancipation’ / ‘supporter of the fat emancipation movement’) and the relational adjective *grubancypacyjny* ‘related to the fat emancipation movement’, e.g., *grubancypacyjny raport* ‘a fat-emancipation report’, *grubancypacyjny edukator* ‘fat-emancipation educator’, *grubancypacyjne lektury* ‘fat emancipation reading’. The masculine noun *grubancypant* is used only sporadically, referring to the first male activist and educator of fat emancipation in Poland:

- (20) *Grubi mężczyźni mają tendencję do przyjmowania postawy “good fatty”. Czyli żartują ze swojego ciała, często się poniżając—mówi Jędrsek, pierwszy grubancypant w Polsce [...].*
 ‘Fat men tend to adopt a “good fatty” attitude. So they joke about their bodies, often humiliating themselves—says Jędrsek, the first *grubancypant* (“fat activist-N.M”) in Poland [...].’

We can see here the correlation with the analysis of keywords in the corpus—among the most frequent nouns; there is *kobieta* ‘woman’, but not *mężczyzna* ‘man’. Fat people discourse in Poland is dominated by women; they create this discourse and are more willing to share their stories.

There are also other compounds in the discussed discourse, based not on the structure and concept of *grubancypacja*, but on the adjective *gruby* ‘fat’ itself, in the meaning given to it by the creators of the discourse. This group of words includes the nouns *grubaktywistka* ‘fat activist’ / ‘activist of fat emancipation-N.F’ and *grubaktywizm* ‘activism of fat people’ / ‘actions of activists of fat emancipation’. We have not found any confirmation of the use of the masculine noun *grubaktywista*. Finally, we can also observe the interfixal compound *grubopozytywność*, constructed analogously to the word *ciałopozytywność* (the Polish equivalent of *body positivity*); the noun *ciało* ‘body’ is replaced with the morpheme *grub-* ‘fat’. This is to emphasize the positive attitude towards this particular body feature that was the basis of the body positivity movement in its early days before it expanded and changed its goals (Gelsinger 2021; Wolska-Zogata 2022).

The sources of these expressions are concepts taken from English and critical fat studies. But there is one original way of using the adjective *gruby* ‘fat’ in Polish fat people discourse, namely the expression *Vingardium Grubiosa*, i.e., the name of the podcast created by Natalia Skoczylas and Urszula Chowaniec. *Vingardium Grubiosa* originated as a humorous, attention-grabbing, and intriguing modification of the spell *Vingardium leviosa* from J.K. Rowling’s

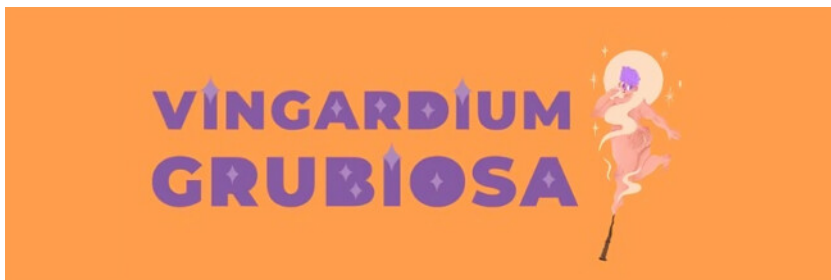


FIGURE 10.1 The logo of the *Vingardium Grubiosa* podcast (<https://www.vingardiumgrubiosa.pl/>)

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AND URSZULA CHOWANIEC

books about Harry Potter. This spell caused objects to levitate, to float in the air as if they were weightless. The part *lev'*- from the original version is replaced by *grub'*- (referring to the concept 'gruby'). In English, this spell would sound like this: *Vingardium Fatiosa*. It is an example of word formation based on analogy to a specific linguistic structure that also has a conceptual motivation. In Polish, the adjective *puszysty* 'fluffy' connotes lightness and is used as a euphemism when referring to fat people (e.g., *puszysta pani* 'lit. a fluffy lady'). When we combine this name with the graphics complementing the logo of the podcast (see Figure 10.1), the irony and the fact that the authors talk in a humorous vein become even more apparent.

5.2 Why gruby 'Fat', and not otyły 'Obese'?

First, it is worth mentioning that describing someone's body in terms of fatness entails a quantification and reference to a certain standard, accepted norm. While the semantics of many gradable adjectives in the positive grade include reference to some standard, either real or imagined (Bogusławski 1994, Linde-Usiekniewicz 2000), here the standard, the accepted "average" state, is more cultural and societal than in the case of the other adjectives. Polish has many expressions used to describe people with fat bodies, primarily adjectives and nouns.

Adjectival terms include: *gruby* 'fat', *otyły* 'obese', *puszysty* 'fluffy', *pulchny* 'plump', *okrągły* 'round' (the last three have a euphemistic function), *thusty* 'fat, greasy', *tegi* 'stout', *korpułentny* 'corpulent', *spasiony*, *utyty*, *utuczony* 'fat, lit. fattened', and others. Nominal expressions can be divided into three categories: 1) names of trait bearers derived from adjectives indicating features: *grubas* < *gruby* 'fatso < fat', *spaślak* < *spasi(ony)* 'porker < pork', *thuscioch* < *thusty* 'fatty < fat'; 2) metaphorically used names of round (large) objects, as well as

fatty and rounded meat and flour dishes: *baryła* 'barrel', *beka* 'barrel-NAUGM', *pulpet* 'meatball', *pyza* 'dumpling'; 3) names of animals associated with thickness: *wieprz* 'hog', *świnia* 'pig', *wieloryb* 'whale' (Roszak 2013).

As we can see, all nouns mentioned here are not neutral, they are used as labels defining a person through the prism of their appearance; they are marked as colloquial, insulting, and stigmatizing. Each of the adjectives mentioned also has the potential for some negative evaluation. Polish does not make it easy to talk about fat people in a neutral way. It is very difficult to find lexical means that would describe these people objectively, without conveying judgmental attitudes and negative connotations, or without euphemizing and infantilizing. In the opinion of some Polish language users, the adjective *otyły* 'obese' is a more appropriate term to characterize a person with a large body mass/volume/size than the word *gruby* 'fat'. To many speakers, the adjective *otyły* is the professional term, more polite than the direct, colloquial, and rude *gruby*. Taking this context into account, the acceptance of the word *gruby* 'fat' as crucial to the fat people discourse, and the relation between the words *gruby* 'fat' and *otyły* 'obese' require comment.

5.3 *The Words otyły 'Obese' and otyłość 'Obesity' as Rejected and Censored Units*

Among all possible adjectival terms referring to fat people, activists primarily use the words *gruby* 'fat' and *otyły* 'obese', which they clearly contrast with one another. In the discourse we discuss, both the adjective *otyły* 'obese' and the noun *otyłość* 'obesity' are definitely rejected and written with an asterisk substituting one of the letters, like people write slurs and other vulgar words on social media, to avoid banning.

- (21) *Możliwe, że trafiliście w internecie na zapis "ot*ły_a" lub "ot*łość". Skąd ta gwiazdka? Ano właśnie z potrzeby przypomnienia, że instagram czy inne media społecznościowe to nie jest gabinet lekarski, oraz że nie godzimy się, żeby jednostek chorobowych używać jako obelg wobec osób.*

'You may have come across the word "ot*ły_a" or "ot*łość" on the Internet. Where does this asterisk come from? Well, we need to remind you that Instagram or other social media are not a doctor's office, and that we do not accept using names of disease entities as insults towards people.'

Words relating to obesity are criticized as expressions that impose a medical perspective. Fat activists are of the opinion that these lexemes identify all large, fat, unhealthy bodies, and thus negatively evaluate both the bodies themselves

and the people living in these bodies. They see this phenomenon as one of the manifestations of the medicalization of language, which, in their opinion, is a precursor to verbal abuse:

- (22) *Poza tym mam poczucie, że używanie zmedykalizowanego języka wobec ciał, zwłaszcza ciał nieprzystających do normy, to dawanie pozwolenia na “concern trolling”, czyli udawanie, że chodzi o zdrowie, a tak naprawdę otwiera furtkę do przemocy werbalnej.*

‘Moreover, I feel that using medicalized language for bodies, especially bodies that do not conform to the norm, is giving permission for “concern trolling”, i.e., pretending that it is all just about health, but in fact it opens the door to verbal violence.’

The discourse of the majority group with “normal” (i.e., standard) bodies is framed in a rather comforting, though false narrative that they do, in fact, care about the medical condition of fat people. Fat activists notice that people with “normal” bodies do not want to be seen as rude, which they believe they would be if they used the word *gruby* ‘fat’, or criticized the way a fat person looks. They prefer to justify their assessment of a fat person and their recommendations about the advisability or necessity of losing weight in terms of caring about fat people’s health. That’s why they prefer to use the word *otyły*, ‘obese’. In the fat activism discourse, such an attitude is seen as an elegant-sounding excuse for the criticism and stigmatization of a minority group, as can be seen in the following passage, where the author makes ironic remarks about the alleged “care” attitude:

- (23) *Mówienie o ludziach “gruba_y” wskazuje, że chodzi nam o estetykę, to nie wygląda dobrze. Odwołajmy się więc do stanu zdrowia i wtedy cała narracja o konieczności odchudzania się dla zdrowia i szkodliwości choroby (o której w sumie nie wiemy, czy dana osoba ją ma, czy nie, ale kogo by to obchodziło) spina się elegancką, medycznie brzmiącą klamrą. I już, można się w spokoju okopywać na pozycji autorytetu.*

‘Saying about people that they are “gruba_y” ‘fat’ indicates that we care about aesthetics, it doesn’t look good. So, let’s refer to the state of health and then the whole narrative about the need to lose weight for health’s sake and about the harmfulness of the disease (though we don’t actually know whether a given person has or not, but who cares) becomes elegant, medical sounding. And now you can feel free to entrench yourself in a position of authority.’

The definition in the latest dictionary of the Polish language (i.e., *Wielki słownik języka polskiego*—wsjp¹⁸) seems to confirm the activists' beliefs regarding the understanding of the adjective *otyły* 'obese'. It is assigned the meaning "characterized by too much fat under the skin or too much body weight compared to accepted standards, which is considered unhealthy". This definition includes references to accepted (socially created) standards as a reference point in assessing the body, and to quantitative evaluative elements ("too much"), it also evokes the DISEASE frame ("considered unhealthy"). Combined, these semantic components lead to a qualitative evaluation of a person through the prism of their appearance (body size). By the same token, *otyłość* 'obesity' is defined in wsjp as "the characteristic of someone who has too much fat under the skin or too much body weight compared to accepted standards, which is considered unhealthy".

Moreover, in wsjp the adjective *otyły* 'obese' only refers to humans. In contemporary general Polish, we do not describe inanimate objects as 'obese', nor do we use the term metaphorically for abstract concepts. When applied to animals, especially pets, e.g., *otyły kot* 'obese cat' or *kot z otyłością* 'cat with obesity', the term suggests irregularities in the functioning of the cat's organism (disease), and implies the owner's guilt (overfeeding).

In the fat people discourse, the semantic relation between the words *gruby* 'fat' and *otyły* 'obese' or *otyłość* 'obesity' is directly expressed:

- (24) *Przymiotnik "otyły*" odnosi się [...] do jednostki chorobowej, nie do cechy wyglądu człowieka, jaką jest grubość.*

'The adjective "otyły*" 'obese' [...] refers to a disease entity, not to a feature of a person's appearance, which is body thickness / being fat.'

- (25) *Nienawidzę, kiedy ludzie używają słowa "otyły" jako synonimu słowa "gruby", dlatego że otyłość ma swoją definicję jako jednostka chorobowa. Definicję bardzo nieaktualną i wymagającą zaktualizowania, co się zresztą w różnych częściach świata dzieje. Ma ją nie każda gruba osoba, o czym wiemy z badań i mamy na to dowody.*

'I hate it when people use the word "otyły" 'obese' as a synonym for "gruby" 'fat' because obesity is defined as a disease. The definition is very outdated and requires updating, which is already happening in various parts of the world. Not every fat person has obesity, which we know from research and have evidence for.'

18 <https://wsjp.pl> (last accessed: July 10, 2024).

According to the approach presented here, the two adjectives are not synonyms: The adjective *gruby* has a wider scope of meaning, and it applies both to obese people (people with obesity) and to simply fat people who do not have obesity (i.e., are not obese in the medical sense):

- (26) *Nie każdy gruby ma otyłość, ale każda osoba z otyłością jest gruba. Widzicie tu tę rozkoszną autostradę umysłowych uproszczeń? Poza wszystkim, czy to nie wstyd, że mamy XXI wiek, a do oceniania stanu zdrowia osób korzystamy z miary powstałej w XIX w. Tak, mam na myśli BMI. Gruby i otyły to nie są synonimy.*

'Not every fat person is obese, but every obese person is fat. Can you see the highway leading to mental simplification? After all, isn't it a shame that we are in the 21st century and to assess people's health we use still a measure created in the 19th century? Yes, I mean BMI. Fat and obese are not synonyms.'

Therefore, if fat emancipation activists reject the word *otyły* 'obese' as imposing a DISEASE frame, the word that remains to name the minority group we discuss in a possibly neutral way is *gruby* 'fat'.

5.4 *Gruby 'Fat' and grubość 'Thickness, Fatness': Neutral Terms for a Body Parameter?*

A dictionary-semantic analysis of the adjective *gruby* 'fat' from a historical perspective (Pacula 2021) shows how its subsequent meanings and the sphere of evaluative connotations have developed over the centuries. In this study, we concentrate on the contemporary Polish and current meanings of words emerging from their uses. The word *gruby* 'fat' has several meanings, depending on the reference. We can say *gruby* about a slice of ham or a sweater, or about a man or a joke.

The wsjp, the most up-to-date lexicographic source, contains eight meanings for *gruby*. The first four concern the features of material objects, for example, a slice ("one whose opposite surfaces or edges are significantly separated from each other"), a rope ("having a large cross-section"), a sweater ("composed of many layers and therefore protecting against cold"); when we call the voice *gruby* 'thick, coarse', we mean that it is "has a low vibration frequency" (it is a specialist term). From each of these uses, a slightly different meaning emerges. But we can say that in all of them, the adjective *gruby* has a neutral parameterization nature. Referring to the works of Puzynina (1988) and Linde-Usiekniewicz (2000), it can be added that the adjective *gruby* referring to objects includes quantitative evaluation (an estimated assessment in

terms of the quantity of a given parameter—there is ‘a lot’ of something), but it is devoid of qualitative assessment (they do not express a judgment about whether something is ‘good’ or ‘bad’).

This changes when we use the adjective *gruby* ‘fat’ to describe a person (in the fifth meaning recorded in WSJP). When *gruby* refers to someone’s appearance (e.g., *gruby mężczyzna* ‘fat man’), it means “having too much fat or muscle under the skin”. Its definition includes the quantitative assessment signal “too much”. But when we look at the corpus data, it turns out that texts reveal additional judgments that qualitatively evaluate these people—too much fat is bad. As we wrote in the introduction, Pazio-Wlazłowska’s works (2021, 2022) show that people described as fat, overweight, and obese are portrayed unfavorably, and many stereotypical, negative features (regarding smell, sounds, eating habits, and even character and competencies) are attributed to them.

The last three meanings in WSJP (illustrated by the expressions *gruby komplement* “boorish, rude, vulgar compliment”, *gruby błąd* “big mistake”, and *gruby szacunek* “general, approximate, imprecise calculation or estimate”) contain a negative qualitative assessment of someone’s behavior (statements), activity, or attitude as evidence of their lack of politeness, sophistication and competence, and the rudeness or inappropriateness of their behavior. The adjective *gruby* ‘fat’ (as well as the adverb *grubo* ‘roughly’) is also colloquially used as an intensifier, introducing the meaning ‘very’ in combination with nouns usually naming negative phenomena (e.g., *gruby skandal* ‘a big scandal’, *gruby błąd* ‘a big mistake’). All these uses confirm the negative semantic prosody of the adjective *gruby* itself.

The abstract noun *grubość* ‘thickness’, derived from the adjective *gruby*, also has several meanings in WSJP. They are parallel with the definitions of the basic adjective. The first three meanings are object-oriented and neutral-parametric in nature; they refer to the features of material objects (e.g., *grubość sznura* ‘rope thickness’, *grubość swetra* ‘sweater thickness’) and, in terminology, to voice (*grubość głosu* ‘voice thickness’). The fourth and last meaning concerns a person (their appearance or general body structure) and contains an element of quantitative assessment—*grubość* is defined here as “the characteristic of someone who has too much fat or muscle”. If applied to a person, the noun *grubość* can also be translated as ‘fatness’, when the author of the statement evaluates someone’s body in terms of fat (amount of fat tissue), not muscle or generally being “well-built”.

In the general Polish language, the word *grubość* used in relation to humans is almost exclusively associated with the names of parts of the human body (e.g., *grubość palca, skóry, tkanki* ‘finger, skin, tissue thickness’)—rather than ‘fatness’. Even the connection with the more general noun *ciasto* ‘body’ seems

less typical (*grubość ciała* 'body thickness'), not to mention such potential collocations as *moja/jej/czyjaś grubość* 'my/her/someone's fatness'. In the analyzed discourse, however, the noun *grubość* 'fatness' or 'being fat' is combined with possessive pronouns, which shows that fatness is perceived as a property of someone, one of many characteristics (like height or eye color) that someone identifies with and treats as a natural, integral trait:

- (27) *Może wstydziła się za samą siebie? Tego, że nie podobata się jej moja grubość?*

'Maybe she was ashamed of herself? That she didn't like my fatness?'

- (28) *Brakuje ciągle filmów czy seriali, w których bohaterka jest gruba tak po prostu—że jest to jej taką cechą równie ważną jak to, że jest blondynką. I że jej grubość nie jest przyczyną kłopotów czy dramy, która się wokół tej postaci dzieje.*

'There are still no movies or series in which the female protagonist is simply fat—that it is as important a feature as her being blonde. And that her fatness does not cause problems or drama surrounding the character.'

To sum up this part, it should be noted that in the perception of Polish speakers, *gruby* 'fat' in relation to a person is an evaluative, colloquial term. Despite this, the authors of the texts in the CFPD take some risks and try to use it in a positive context, with a modified meaning (ultimately, however, this does not provide significant results). Of all the Polish adjectival descriptions of fat people, this one has the greatest potential for neutrality. In the analyzed discourse, *gruby* and *grubość* are recognized by the authors of the CFPD as neutral descriptors of someone's body parameters (analogous to thickness as a neutral parameter of material objects, without judging a person for having such a body) and even more—the basis of identity (*grubość* understood as 'being fat').

5.5 *Reclamation of Words and Building Identity*

Making the adjective *gruby* 'fat' a keyword in the fat people discourse and introducing the noun *grubość* 'thickness' as the name of a parameter that is intended to be a neutral body dimension (such as height) is an unconventional and, to some extent, risky procedure. On the other hand, paradoxically, of all the synonyms of the adjective *gruby* 'fat' mentioned before, it seems to be the best choice because it is commonly known, addresses the matter directly, and, most importantly, has the semantic potential of neutrality. Its ambiguity, as well as references to the objective dimensions of objects (height, width, length, and thickness), is a potential basis for "silencing" negative connotations and even changing its valuation in relation to the human body. Something like this is

happening in the discourse of fat people—the words *gruby* ‘fat’ and *grubość* ‘thickness, being fat’ are intentionally used (and proposed to other language users) not only as neutral descriptors but also as exponents of individual and in-group identity.

The example below (which is an extended repetition of (5) with an additional sentence relevant to this part of our considerations) confirms the choice of the word *gruby* ‘fat’ as the most appropriate to talk about the minority group of fat people. Fat activists would prefer not to talk about large bodies at all; body diversity in terms of mass/size/volume should be something normal that does not need to be labeled. They would like to talk primarily about people, regardless of what bodies they live in (skinny or fat), about what they are like, and what they need in social spaces. Creators of fat people discourse point out that the body (or rather our impressions and feelings based on the visible features of the body) cannot be a barrier that does not allow us to see a real person, their character, abilities, and competencies. But if someone for some reason wants to distinguish and name the group of people with fat bodies, fat activists deem the word *gruby* ‘fat’ the best description:

- (29) *No to jak w takim razie mówić o dużych ciałach? Najlepiej byłoby się od nich odstosunkować, prawdę mówiąc, ale skoro już jest taka potrzeba, to—gruby. Gruby to przymiotnik odnoszący się do cechy fizycznej, tak samo jak wysoki, rudy, długonogi.*

‘So how can we talk about large bodies? It would be best just to leave them freaking alone, to be honest, but if you must, say—*gruby*. *Gruby* ‘fat’ is an adjective referring to a physical feature, just like tall, redhead, long-legged.’

Accepting yourself in your body as it is and reclaiming the word *gruby* ‘fat’ for yourself is the first step to building your own (and then in-group) identity. But it is not easy. Construal of the self is a liberating, but also long and demanding process. In the statement below, the re-evaluation and acceptance of the word *gruby* ‘fat’ is presented metaphorically as a long journey:

- (30) *Wiadomo, warto z tym słowem uważać, bo w odniesieniu do konkretnej osoby może nie zostać przyjęte z entuzjazmem. “Gruba” jest mocno obciążona, latami używania jej wobec naszych dużych ciał jako obelgi. Uznanie “grubej” za swoją jest bardzo wyzwalające, ale potrzeba na to czasu. To indywidualna, bardzo osobista podróż.*

‘Of course, one needs to be careful with this word, because in relation to a specific person it may not be received enthusiastically. “Gruba” “fat-

ADJ.F.SG" has negative connotations and has been used as an insult to refer to our bodies for years. Accepting "gruba" 'fat' as yours is very liberating, but it takes time. It is an individual, very personal journey.'

In the last example, we would like to present an outline of communication practices and rules of linguistic politeness for talking with and about fat people. The most engaged fat emancipation activists have worked through this new language (and new way of thinking and talking about oneself) within themselves. This does not apply to the entire group, however. So, the term *gruby* 'fat' should be used to refer to fat people only when we know that these people accept it, feel good about it, and that it will not be harmful to them:

- (31) *Sama korzystam z tego słowa z dużą swobodą, więc nie zwracam na nie uwagi. [...] Widzę, że często osoby, które nie przepracowały tego słowa, mają moment, że jeżą się na jego użycie. Myślę, że używanie słowa "gruba" jest okej, jeśli wiemy, że osoby, wobec których chcemy go użyć, będą czuły się z tym dobrze i same siebie określają w taki sposób.*

'I use this word very freely myself, so I don't pay attention to it. [...] I see that people who have not worked through this word often have a moment when they bristle at its use. I think it's okay to use the word "gruba" if we know that the people we want to use it about will feel good about it and would describe themselves that way.'

6 Conclusion

Fat emancipation activists oppose negative social phenomena related to fat people (such as fat shaming, fatphobia, and discrimination against fat people), which we consider as an example of the othering phenomenon. Their discursive activities can be interpreted as a strategy of de-othering.

The authors of the analyzed discourse try to reclaim the basic word *gruby* 'fat' for themselves—and find a word that expresses their individual and group identity: *Tak, jestem gruba/gruby* 'Yes, I'm fat-ADJ.F.SG/fat-ADJ.M.SG'. Acting on behalf of themselves and the entire group, they proclaim: "we, fat people, are among you as a part of society, and we are normal, healthy people". By rejecting the words *otyły* 'obese' and *otyłość* 'obesity', neutralizing the valuation of the adjective *gruby* 'fat', and changing its function from stigmatizing to descriptive, fat activists propose a new language to talk about themselves and the group they represent. In this regard, fat emancipation discourse can be seen as an

example of “linguistic disarmament”: representatives of discriminated groups (i.e., fat people) deprive the dominant group (i.e., people with standard bodies) of a lexical tool of discrimination.

Based on texts forming and developing the Polish discourse of fat emancipation, it can be concluded that a long-term goal of fat liberation activists is not only the acceptance of one's own and other people's bodies as they are but also the neutralization and normalization of body weight/size/volume and its variability. Neutralization would consist of emphasizing (in the way we think and talk about bodies) the functionality of the body (what we can do with our body, how we can use it) instead of its appearance, without judgment or excitement. Normalization would manifest itself in including fat people (and their needs) in society as an obvious and natural (not other) part that does not require labeling.

Contributorship Statement

The authors have contributed equally to the chapter.

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Naming the Sides of the Israel– Hamas Conflict in Czech, Slovak, and Polish Texts

Milena Hebal-Jeziarska

1 The Purpose of the Chapter

The chapter presents a linguistic analysis of naming the sides involved in the Israel– Hamas war within the broader context of the Israeli– Palestinian conflict. It focuses on texts written in West Slavic languages, specifically Czech, Slovak, and Polish. I study texts reporting on the conflict between Hamas and Israel that commenced on October 7, 2023. However, the examination of these texts is situated within a broader linguistic analysis of the longstanding conflict involving Palestine, Hamas, and Israel. In particular, the chapter provides an overview of the vocabulary used to refer to Israel, Hamas, and Palestine, as well as to describe their attributes, people, and actions.

While all parties involved in the conflict are strangers for most of those who write and read about it in Polish, Czech, and Slovak press, the detailed analysis of lexical means used to refer to them (i.e., naming) will show that their strangeness is conceived and presented differently. Consequently, in the analyzed discourse the extent to which the parties involved are prone to othering (as defined by Brons 2015) varies. One of the factors at play is representing the strangers in terms of FAMILIAR and UNFAMILIAR STRANGERS (see section 4).

This analysis draws on data from both national corpora and corpora compiled specifically for research purposes (see section 3 for details). The study employs a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative methods include frequency analysis of selected terms, collocation analysis, keyword analysis, and frequency lists. The qualitative analysis involves not only contextual analysis of the extracted lexemes, but also discursive analysis of texts related to the Israel– Hamas war. Additionally, Czech, Slovak, and Polish lexicographic sources are utilized in the lexicological analysis.

2 Israeli–Palestinian Conflict and Israel–Hamas War¹

The ongoing Israeli–Palestinian conflict is a part of the larger Arab–Israeli conflict and is one of the longest-lasting conflicts in the world. Its direct cause is considered to be the partition of the British Mandate territory of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states and the international zone (Jerusalem), including the establishment of the state of Israel. This decision, made by the United Nations General Assembly on November 29, 1947 (Resolution 181), received international approval but was opposed by the Arabs living in Palestine and other Arab states (Encyklopedia PWN 2024, Britannica 2024).

On May 14, 1948, Israel declared independence, while no Arab state emerged at that time. The reaction of the Palestinians and neighboring Arab countries (Egypt, Jordan [then Transjordan], Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia) was an invasion of Israel, which ended with Israel's victory and the occupation of parts of the Palestinian territories. According to the website provided by the UN, Israel occupied 77% of Palestinian territory. The remaining part, where the Arab state (Arab Palestine) was supposed to be established, was under the control of Egypt and Jordan.

In 1967, Israel occupied the territories controlled by Egypt and Jordan, namely the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Despite the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 242,² which called for Israel's withdrawal from these territories, Israel continued to occupy them. As a result of further wars and clashes between Israel, Arab states, and Palestinians, as well as international interventions (especially by the UN Security Council), the status of Palestinian lands kept changing.

A significant step was marked by the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1994 between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, which led to the establishment of the Palestinian Authority covering the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Since then, Palestinian authorities have been striving for independence and recognition of the state of Palestine on the international stage, achieving only partial success.

In 2013, President Mahmoud Abbas decided to transform the entity into the State of Palestine. This state is partially recognized by other countries. Disputes with Israel persist despite international efforts to resolve them. Both sides

1 The historical introduction was developed based on several sources: the Encyklopedia PWN, the Encyclopedia Britannica, a website provided by the UN (<https://www.un.org/pl/palestyna/tlo.php>), and an article by Gąsior (2010).

2 S/RES/242 November 22, 1967.

accuse each other of violating established agreements, and the territories of the State of Palestine are regarded by many countries as occupied by Israel.

The war between Hamas and Israel, which is the main focus of this article, broke out on October 7, 2023, with an unexpected attack by Hamas on Israel, primarily in the Gaza Strip. Fighting also took place in the West Bank. Additionally, Hezbollah launched an attack on Israeli territories along the borders of Lebanon and Syria. Militant groups led by Hamas crossed the border between the Gaza Strip and Israel, attacking Israeli civilians and soldiers. The assault also involved missile strikes. According to Britannica, the attack resulted in the deaths of 1,200 people and the abduction of 240 individuals into the Gaza Strip. Hamas claimed that the attack was a response to the Israeli occupation, blockade of Gaza, and settlement expansion.

Israel declared war on Hamas on the same day and launched a large-scale land and air operation. According to Britannica,

more than half of the Gaza Strip's population had been displaced, and the war had become the deadliest for Palestinians since the war of 1948. [...] the war leveled much of the Gaza Strip and led to a calamitous humanitarian crisis.

Britannica 2024, "Arab–Israeli wars."

Wikipedia reports that during the Israeli operation in Gaza, 35,000 people have been killed. Since the start of the Israeli operation, more than 35,000 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed, of which at least 56% are estimated to be women and children (as of May 2024). Israel's actions have led to numerous pro-Palestinian protests worldwide. On May 24, the International Court of Justice ruled that Israel must immediately halt its offensive in Rafah. Despite international efforts to end the conflict and peace talks in progress, the war continues.

3 Detailed Description of Data

The following text collections were used for conducting the study: corpora of texts collected specifically for this study; national corpora of individual languages, including the Czech National Corpus, the Slovak National Corpus, and the Polish National Corpus, Monco PL; Wikipedia pages describing the conflict; and other texts in paper format.

Also instrumental in the lexicological analysis were dictionaries of the Polish, Czech, and Slovak languages (see further details).

3.1 *The Corpora Compiled for the Project*

For this project, three small corpora of web texts were constructed: a Czech language corpus, a Slovak language corpus, and a Polish language corpus. The texts were excerpted from the Internet. Efforts were made to maintain representativeness by including texts from various websites and covering different events that took place during the Israel– Hamas war (until June 2024). There was also an effort to ensure that the types of texts and the time in which they were written were analogous across all three corpora. The corpora are small, each containing 10,000 tokens. They cover the period from October 7, 2023, to June 5, 2024. All corpora were built using the Sketch Engine application, which allows for the application of the same algorithms for material extraction in all corpora.

3.2 *National Corpora and Dictionaries*

As mentioned earlier, in addition to the tailored corpora compiled for this analysis, the existing corpora of the three West Slavic languages were also used. However, it needs to be specified from the outset that they differ significantly from each other. This is particularly notable for the Polish language corpora, which are constructed in a different manner than the Czech and Slovak corpora, which are based on the Sketch Engine search tool and hence have different parameters for collocation searches programmed into their search engines. The basic information about the corpora of the respective languages is presented in Table 11.1.³

However, all the corpora allow for checking both absolute and relative frequencies, expressed in values of ipm (instances per million). None of the aforementioned corpora provide the ability to search for keywords. It is important to note that all the corpora are sizeable enough to provide users with rich and representative material for studying the usage of lexical items.

In addition to the materials presented above, the article also used the following lexicographic sources: *Akademický slovník současné češtiny* (ASSC) ‘Academic Dictionary of Contemporary Czech’, *Krátký slovník slovenského jazyka* (KSSJ) ‘Short Dictionary of the Slovak Language’, *Slovník súčasného slovenského jazyka* (SSSJ) ‘Dictionary of the Contemporary Slovak Language’, and *Wielki słownik języka polskiego* (WSJP) ‘Great Dictionary of the Polish Language’.

3 Information on the size of the corpora should be treated as approximate due to differences in tokenization. The description of the types of Czech and Slovak corpora is taken from the pages www.korpus.cz and www.korpus.sk respectively.

TABLE 11.1 Basic information about the selected Slavic corpora

Name of the corpus	Name of the subcorpus	Size	The period from which the texts originate	Corpus type
Czech National Corpus	SYN V12	5 billion	1990–2022	versioned corpus, unification of all the SYN-series synchronic written corpora
Slovak National Corpus	Prim-public-10	1.65 billion	1956–2022	versioned corpus, unification of all the prim-series synchronic written corpora
National Corpus of Polish (NKJP)	Balanced part of the NKJP	300 million	1926–2010	synchronic reference corpora
The Corpus of Contemporary Polish (KWJP)	Balanced part of KWJP	100 million	2011–2020	synchronic reference corpora
Monco PL	Monco PL	8 billion	2019–2024	web corpora

4 Frequency Analysis and Analysis of Text Profiles

This section of the chapter will present frequency data for words related to Israel/Jews, Hamas, Palestine, and Arabs in West Slavic languages, along with their textual profiles. For this purpose, the available national corpora will be referred to, followed by the frequency distribution of these words in the corpora constructed specifically for the project.

The idea behind studying frequency data stems from the assumption that people involved in Middle Eastern conflicts generally belong to the conceptual category of STRANGERS/OTHERS as construed from the Central European perspective. Linguistic data indicate how much is written about a particular country, nation, or group, which in turn may affect their mental representations in language users with respect to more specific types of STRANGERS/OTHERS. The higher the frequency of words related to a particular group, the more the STRANGER attracts the interest of the media and society and becomes known to a discourse community (FAMILIAR STRANGERS/OTHERS). Conversely, the lower the frequency, the less the STRANGER is known and the less interest they generate (UNFAMILIAR STRANGERS/OTHERS⁴). Through their absence in the discursive space—described by van Leeuwen (2008, 29–30) in terms of strategies of suppression and backgrounding—they are also excluded and, in a cer-

4 For more about types of STRANGERS/OTHERS see Nowicka (1990).

tain sense, stigmatized. A similar insight is provided by analyzing the texts in which the studied words appear or do not appear.

In all the national corpora, there is a significant frequency discrepancy between lexemes referring to Israel and those referring to Palestine. The lowest frequency is observed for the Czech, Slovak, and Polish equivalents of the English term *Palestinian Authority*, followed by the equivalents of the terms *Hamas*,⁵ *Gaza*, and *Palestine*. In none of the national corpora does the frequency of the phrase corresponding to the English *Palestinian Authority* exceed 0.5 ipm. The Czech, Slovak, and Polish equivalents of the English word *Gaza*, including the phrase *Gaza Strip*, as well as *Hamas*, also have low frequencies overall, although significant differences are visible among the corpora. In the Polish corpora NKJP and KWJP, occurrences of these lexemes are among the rarest (ranging from about 2 to 3 ipm), they are slightly higher in the Czech corpus (ranging from 4 to 6 ipm), and the highest values are recorded in the Slovak corpus (from 7 to 10 ipm). The West Slavic counterparts of the proper noun *Palestine* also exhibit a low frequency across all examined corpora, while the Czech, Slovak, and Polish equivalents of the adjective *Palestinian* have a higher (albeit objectively still low) frequency, with the Slovak corpus leading in this regard. The textual profiles of these lexemes are similar across all corpora. Their occurrences are limited to the press and journalism, with occasional appearances in scientific or popular science literature, or fiction.

Next, in terms of frequency, are words referring to Arabs. However, it should be noted that the lexemes *Arab* (cs., sk., pl.) 'Arab-N' and *arabský* (cs., sk.), *arabski* (pl.) 'Arabian-ADJ' refer to all members of the nation originally inhabiting the Arabian Peninsula, now dispersed worldwide, and in the colloquial meaning also to inhabitants of the Muslim-majority countries, e.g., Iran and Afghanistan. In all the studied languages, nouns occur with low frequency, approximately 5 instances per million words, whereas adjectives appear more commonly, reaching up to 20 instances per million words.

Lexemes referring to Israel have a significantly higher frequency (adjectives reach up to 50 ipm). Words related to Jews are also frequently used, although it is essential to remember that these lexemes encompass Jews living worldwide,

5 The lexeme *Hamas* is a relatively new word in all the languages studied, which is reflected not only in the variability of spellings in Czech (*Hamas* or *Hamás*) and Slovak (*Hamas* or *Hamás*). The word *Hamas* refers to "the most active Palestinian organization in the last decade of the 20th century, using terrorist methods both on the territory of the state of Israel and in the lands of the Palestinian Authority, and is inextricably linked to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood" (Krawczyk 2007, 186; translation mine). Its formation is associated with the First Intifada that took place in 1987.

not just those residing in Israel or the Gaza Strip. The textual profiles of words referring to Israel and Jews are much more balanced. Occurrences with these lexemes, while dominant in the press and journalism, are also amply found in scientific and popular science literature, and even in fiction (not frequently, but not sporadically).

Based on frequency data from the national corpora, it can be concluded that Palestine, the Gaza Strip, and the Hamas group, unlike Israel, did not attract the interest of journalists or writers. This undoubtedly translates into the knowledge about these regions of ordinary citizens of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland. Palestine, the Gaza Strip, and the Hamas are unknown strangers. The manner of describing the war between Hamas and Israel, including the portrayal of Palestine and the Gaza Strip, is particularly important because it reveals previously unknown aspects. The limited number of non-press sources, the distance from the conflict, and limited knowledge about the situation in the Gaza Strip mean that English-language sources, from which journalists and publicists will draw information, play a crucial role, which will undoubtedly influence the naming of both sides of the conflict in the languages studied here. The consequences of the low frequency of terms related to Palestine and Hamas, as well as the unbalanced textual profiles of these terms, will also be evident in ways of naming the opposing side involved in the war with Israel.

In the corpora built for the project, the frequency of words referring to Israel and Hamas is more balanced for obvious reasons. In these corpora, the Czech, Slovak, and Polish equivalents of the lexemes *Israel*, *Hamas*, and *Gaza* (including *the Gaza Strip*) predominate. Among adjectives, the West Slavic counterparts of the words *Israeli* and *Palestinian* are the most frequent, the former being more prevalent. Interestingly, the lexemes *Palestina* (cs.), *Palestína* (sk.), *Palestyna* (pl.) ‘Palestine’ appear quite rarely in all three corpora, which may be due to the fact that other lexemes, such as Hamas and the Gaza Strip, are used in their stead.

5 Naming the Conflict

The name of the conflict that began on October 7, 2023, has evolved over time. Initially, the outbreak of the war was consistently described across all the studied languages as *útok Hamásu na Izrael* (cs., sk.) or *atak Hamasu na Izrael* (pl.). These expressions correspond to the English formulation ‘Hamas-led attack on Israel’. The lexemes *útok* (cs., sk.), *atak* (pl.) ‘attack’ in the studied Slavic languages denote a sudden, unexpected assault and simultaneously, in military terminology, the initiation of a war. In the Western Slavic media, this

attack, particularly at the outset, was evaluated negatively. This was linguistically expressed through adjectives describing the words *útok* (cs., sk.), *atak* (pl.) ‘attack’ associated with terror: *teroristický útok* (cs., sk.), *atak terrorystyczny* (pl.) ‘terrorist attack’. Its nature was characterized by words referring to the brutal manner in which it was conducted, such as *krvavý útok* (cs.) ‘bloody attack’ and *brutálny útok* (sk.), *brutalny atak* (pl.) ‘brutal attack’. Moreover, the adjectival collocates point to the idea that a similar attack has never happened before and that it came as a surprise to Israel and the world, e.g., *překvapivý* (cs.), *prekvapivý* (sk.) ‘surprising’ and *šokující* (cs.) ‘shocking’. Czech, Slovak, and Polish media sometimes provide occurrences where the attack by Hamas, although condemned, is also explained by evoking possible motives behind it:

- (1) “*Rozumieme frustrácii Palestínčanov na okupovaných územiach s prístupom súčasnej vlády k riešeniu ich osudu. Ale ozbrojený útok je najhoršia možná odpoveď,*” napísal Tomáš Valášek.⁶

“‘We understand the frustration of Palestinians in the occupied territories with the current government’s approach to resolving their fate. However, an armed attack is the worst possible response,’ Tomáš Valášek wrote.”

- (2) *Atak na Izrael. Terrorysti z Hamasu nie wzięli się znikąd.*

‘The attack on Israel. Terrorists from Hamas did not emerge from nowhere.’

Because the conflict did not end with a one-time attack by Hamas but evolved into a full-scale war, the primary lexemes describing the events analyzed here became *válka* (cs.), *vojna* (sk.), *wojna* (pl.) ‘war’. The sides involved in the conflict are most often described as Israel and Hamas, less frequently as Israel and Palestine, and only occasionally as Israel and Gaza, in expressions such as *válka Izraele s Hamásem* (cs.) ‘Israel’s war with Hamas’, *izraelsko-palestínska vojna* (sk.) ‘Israeli-Palestinian war’, and *wojna między Izraelem i Hamasem* (pl.) ‘war between Israel and Hamas’. In these phrases, Israel appears as the first element, while Hamas, Palestine, or occasionally Gaza appears in the second position.

From occurrences containing the aforementioned expressions, it is evident that the authors of texts deem the readers not well-informed about the conflict,

6 Tomáš Valášek is a foreign policy expert in the political party Progressive Slovakia. He spoke on behalf of the party, as indicated by the first-person plural verb form used in his statement. His remarks sparked controversy in Slovakia. <https://www.postoj.sk/139377/ps-rozumieme-frustracii-palestincanov-no-odsudzuje-utok-hamasu-na-izrael> (last access September 30, 2024).

and they feel the urge to broaden their knowledge. Therefore, texts explaining the issues related to the conflict are made available alongside those reporting on the war.

- (3) *Slovník pojmů k válce Izraele s Hamásem (denik.cz)*
'Glossary of terms for the war between Israel and Hamas'
- (4) *Vojna Izrael vs. Palestína Z čoho pramení izraelsko-palestínsky konflikt? (sme.sk)*
'War: Israel vs. Palestine. The origins of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict'
- (5) *Wojna Izraela z Palestyną. O co chodzi w najdłuższym konflikcie świata? (wp.pl)*
'War between Israel and Palestine: What is the longest-running conflict in the world about?'

Quite often, instead of the names of countries, the name of the area where the war is taking place is used, such as the Gaza Strip or the Middle East. In such cases, the phrases corresponding to English *war in the Gaza Strip* or *war in the Middle East* are used, expressed in Western Slavic languages by the adjectives *blízky* (cs.), *blízky* (sk.), *bliski* (pl.) 'near' and nouns *východ* (cs., sk.), *wschód* (pl.) 'east', e.g., *válka v Pásmu Gazy* (cs.), *vojna v Pásme Gazy* (sk.), *wojna w Strefie Gazy* (pl.) 'war in the Gaza Strip' and *válka na Blízkém východě* (cs.), *wojna na Blízkom východe* (sk.), *wojna na Bliskim Wschodzie* (pl.) 'war in the Middle East'.

The diversity of conflict names is characteristic of texts written in the Western Slavic languages studied here. This reflects the challenge of naming the side attacking Israel, which stems not only from the extraordinarily complex Israeli–Palestinian situation but also from the lack of reliable sources and knowledge, as well as the issue of naming policy. This is also reflected in the overall low frequency of lexemes referring to Palestine, as discussed above. Naming one of the sides of the war as Hamas identifies the initiators of the attack, indicating that the attacking party is not the Palestinian Authority/State of Palestine but rather one of its factions.

In contrast, Czech, Slovak, and Polish expressions corresponding to the English *Israel–Palestine war* (replacing the words corresponding to the English term *Hamas* with the words corresponding to the English term *Palestine*) imply that the Hamas organization metonymically represents the entire State of Palestine, which is not true. In turn, the use of expressions corresponding to the English *Israel–Gaza war* narrows the meaning of *Gaza* to Palestinian territory only. Partially, the use of generalized expressions such as *war in the Middle*

East or war in Gaza that foreground the location rather than the sides of the conflict allows the author to avoid the issue of naming the other side of the conflict, although it certainly does not provide accurate information about the ongoing war.

In the following sections of the article, I will examine the ways of naming both sides of the conflict.

6 Naming Hamas

Britannica (2024) defines *Hamas* as a “militant Palestinian nationalist and Islamist movement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip that is dedicated to the establishment of an independent Islamic state in historical Palestine.” Hamas was founded in 1987 and became a significant political force within the Palestinian Authority and later the State of Palestine. From the outset, it opposed other Palestinian political entities, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)⁷ and al-Fatah.⁸ In 2006, Hamas won the parliamentary elections and formed a government in conjunction with the al-Fatah party. Subsequently, Hamas entered into a conflict with the President of the Palestinian Authority, which led to a division of power. Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip, while the al-Fatah party, from which the President hails, maintained authority over the West Bank. Hamas is recognized as a terrorist organization by several countries and institutions, including the United States, the European Union, and Israel.

The definitions of *Hamas* available to ordinary readers on Wikipedia in the Polish, Czech, and Slovak languages explicitly refer to terrorism:

- (6) *palestinská islamistická teroristická organizace, která vznikla v roce 1987 jako odbočka egyptských Muslimských bratří “Al-Madžama Al-Islami.”*
 ‘A Palestinian Islamist terrorist organization that was established in 1987 as a branch of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood’s Al-Mujama Al-Islami.’

7 “Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), umbrella political organization claiming to represent the world’s Palestinians—those Arabs, and their descendants, who lived in mandated Palestine before the creation there of the State of Israel in 1948” (Britannica 2024).

8 “Fatah, political and military organization of Arab Palestinians, founded in the late 1950s by Yassir Arafat and Khalil al-Wazir (Abū Jihād) with the aim of wresting Palestine from Israeli control by waging low-intensity guerrilla warfare. In the late 1980s it began seeking a two-state solution through diplomatic avenues, and its leaders were prominent players in the Oslo peace process that established the Palestinian Authority” (Britannica 2024).

- (7) *je palestínska islamistická a polovojenská/teroristická organizácia založená v roku 1987.*
 'It is a Palestinian Islamist and paramilitary/terrorist organization founded in 1987.'
- (8) *polityczno-militarna islamska (sunnicka) i fundamentalistyczna organizacja palestyńska o charakterze terrorystycznym*
 'A political-military Islamic (Sunni) and fundamentalist Palestinian organization of a terrorist nature'

Analyses conducted on linguistic material drawn from large national corpora and the small corpora built for the project's purposes reveal a negative image behind the lexeme *Hamas*. The generated collocates describe the organization Hamas as Palestinian, radical, extremist, Islamist, and terrorist. The overall profile of the word *Hamas* also includes terms related to suicide bombings, martyrs, terrorists, jihad, Hezbollah, bombs, and snipers. The collocates and keywords generated from the corpora built for the project primarily refer to the attack on October 7th, members of this organization, Israeli hostages, and the military wing of Hamas terrorism.

When discussing the collocations of the lexeme *Hamas* from a comparative perspective, several issues are worth noting: interlinguistic differences in describing the organization Hamas, interlinguistic differences in the choice of lexemes referring to naming the attributes of the organization, its actions, and its members, as well as a higher frequency of lexemes referring to terrorism in the Czech language. These differences are visible in the analysis of collocations, keywords, and qualitative analyses of individual articles.

In the West Slavic languages examined here, the set of lexemes used to classify Hamas corresponds to the English lexemes: *organization*, *movement*, and *group*. However, the use of these words in texts in each language differs significantly in statistical terms. Particularly noticeable are the differences between the Polish language and the Czech and Slovak languages. In Czech, as in Slovak, the main word used to describe the organization Hamas is *hnutí* (cs.), *hnutie* (sk.) 'movement', followed by *organizace* (cs.), *organizácia* (sk.) 'organization', and in the third place *skupina* (cs., sk.) 'group'. In Polish, meanwhile, the main words for describing Hamas are *ugrupowanie* 'group' and *organizacja* 'organization'. The lexeme *ruch*, meaning 'movement', is rarely used in the Polish press and journalism (for instance, KWJP cites only one occurrence of the expression *ruch Hamas* 'Hamas movement').⁹

9 The lexeme *ruch* 'movement' most often appears in Polish texts as a translation of the

The reasons for the choices of classifying terms to describe the organization Hamas have several sources. Notably, foreign language sources, especially texts in English posted on the Internet, from which publicists and journalists derive their knowledge, play a significant role. In the English language corpus NOW,¹⁰ the words with high frequency and high log-likelihood values for collocates are *group*, *movement*, and *organization*. The lexeme *group* has a significant advantage in terms of frequency, while the next two words rank much lower and do not have the large frequency differences that exist between their equivalents in the West Slavic languages studied here.

The English lexeme *group*, like the Polish word *ugrupowanie*,¹¹ is used to describe the organization Hamas and has become established primarily in the Polish language. WSJP defines it as a group of people who share similar goals or are joined by common sociopolitical and religious beliefs. Synonymous words include *obóz* 'camp' and *stronnictwo* 'faction', which suggests that, among the many roles Hamas plays in Palestine, it is seen in Polish texts as a political and religious force. The word *ugrupowanie* is not stylistically marked, allowing it to combine with both positively and negatively connoted words. However, its profile demonstrates strong associations with words related to terrorism, radicalism, fundamentalism, and Islam. The word *terrorystyczny* 'terrorist-ADJ' in Polish combines with the lexemes *ugrupowanie* and *organizacja*. The lexeme *Hamas* in Polish connects with adjective collocates perceived negatively in Polish, such as *fundamentalistyczny* 'fundamentalist', *islamski* 'Islamic', *nacjonalistyczny* 'nationalistic', *radyczny* 'radical', *skrajny* 'extreme', and *terrorystyczny* 'terrorist', thus indicating its negative linguistic image.

The same applies to the lexeme *organizacja* 'organization', which has a slightly broader meaning than the word *ugrupowanie*. According to the definition provided by WSJP, *organizacja* is a group of people or states that jointly conduct some activity to achieve specific goals. The collocate *terrorystyczny* 'terrorist' indicates that these goals are achieved through violence and cruelty.¹²

acronym *Hamas*, often considered part of its name, e.g., "Hamas Islamski Ruch Oporu (Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamijja) is a terrorist organization that originated from the Egyptian terrorist organization Muslim Brotherhood" (Stankiewicz 2014, 447).

10 Corpus of English NOW (News on the Web) <https://www.english-corpora.org/now/> (last access September 30, 2024).

11 The Polish word *ugrupowanie* contains the same lexical stem as *grupa* 'group'.

12 The definition of *terroryzm* 'terrorism' in WSJP mentions the use of violence and cruelty to intimidate and subdue someone.

In Polish, the lexeme *ruch* ‘movement’ is rarely used in the press, and the expression *ruch oporu* ‘lit. resistance movement’, which the Hamas organization uses to describe itself, is not employed. Exceptions include translations of the name *Hamas* and isolated instances of its use. This is related to two issues. Firstly, the collocational profile of the lexeme *ruch* does not fit the organization Hamas as it is perceived in Polish texts. Secondly, the expression *ruch oporu* ‘resistance’ is historically marked in Polish discourse and associated chiefly with the Polish resistance movement during WWII or resistance movements of a similar cultural-historical nature.

The lexeme used sporadically in Polish to refer to the Hamas organization, corresponding to the English word *movement*, is primarily used in Czech and Slovak. This choice may seem surprising at first glance. Although the words *hnutí* (cs.) and *hnutie* (sk.) do appear relatively high on the list of collocates associated with the lexeme *teroristický* ‘terrorist’, the lexemes *organizace* (cs.), *organizácia* (sk.) ‘organization’ rank significantly higher, followed by *skupina* ‘group’ in terms of frequency. It seems that the choice of the lexemes *hnutí* and *hnutie* was influenced by the word-for-word translation of Hamas’s name, which, as mentioned, describes itself as a “resistance movement”. In Czech and Slovak discourse, this term is not discursively marked as it is in Polish. Moreover, the term is stylistically neutral. It has a broad scope and can also refer to an organization or political party:

- (9) *politická organizace sdružující jednotlivce za účelem získání politické (státní) moci, politická strana, politické sdružení (ASSC)*
 ‘political organization uniting individuals for the purpose of obtaining political (state) power, political party, political association’ (ASSC)
organizované hromadné úsilie o uskutočnenie nejakej myšlienky; myšlienkový, politický a pod. smer: ochranárske, antiglobalistické h.; emancipačné, feministické h.; svetové mierové h.; športové, olympijské h.; politické h. typ masovej politickej strany (SSSJ)
 ‘organized collective effort to realize a particular idea; ideological, political, etc. direction: environmental, anti-globalist movements; emancipation, feminist movements; global peace movements; sports, Olympic movements; political movements, such as mass political parties.’ (SSSJ)

The collocations *hnutí Hamas* and *hnutie Hamas*, like their Polish counterparts, are negatively connoted. Collocates indicate that the organization has a radical, extremist, Islamist, fundamentalist, and terrorist character.

Other formulations describing the Hamas organization in texts reporting on the Israel–Hamas war highlight its paramilitary nature, such as *ozbrojené křídlo*

Hamásu (cs.), *ozbrojené krídlo Hamásu* (sk.), and *zbrojne skrzydło Hamasu* (pl.) 'the armed wing of Hamas'. These denote an organized group of armed individuals within Hamas, akin to the Polish term *bojówka* 'militia' (defined in WSJP as a group acting like a military unit intended for forceful actions). There are also less frequent formulations suggesting that Hamas is akin to a military force or army. Such associations may be triggered by terms like the Slovak *armada* 'arm' or expressions like *ozbrojené komando* (sk.) 'armed comando', *vojenské zariadenia Hamasu* (sk.) 'military equipments of Hamas', and the Polish *palestyńskie oddziały szturmowe* 'Palestinian assault units'.

However, descriptions of Hamas in terms of a regular military force seem incohesive. On the one hand, they are linguistically categorized as armed forces, on the other, detailed accounts of the vehicles and weapons used by Hamas members during attacks (e.g., jeeps, motorcycles, and trucks) do not evoke the associations with typical military equipment.

The actions of Hamas members during the attack on Israel contribute to the negative image of this group. These actions can be classified as crimes. Descriptions predominantly feature terms related to violence, murder, rape, torture, and the abduction of Israeli civilians and military personnel, as well as foreigners present in Israel at the time. The summarizing terms for the actions of Hamas members in the West Slavic languages studied here are *masakr* (cs.), *masaker* (sk.), *masakra* (pl.), meaning 'massacre'.

Other terms that are used to classify the Hamas group refer to its members. These are words most commonly used in the plural form, referring to those who use violence: *teroristé* (cs.), *teroristi* (cs., sk.), *terroryści* (pl.) 'terrorists'; *útočníci* (cs., sk.), *napastnicy* (pl.) 'attackers'; *zamachowcy* (pl.) 'assassins'; referring to armed individuals: *bojovníci* (cs., sk.), *bojownicy* (pl.) 'fighters'; *militanti* (sk.) 'militants'; *ozbrojenci* (cs., sk.) 'armed men'; referring directly to the organization's name: *hamasisté* (cs.), *hamasisti* (sk.), *hamasowcy* (pl.) 'Hamas members/supporters'; referring to supporters of radicalism: *palestinští radikálové* (cs.), *palestínski radikáli* (sk.), *palestyńscy radykałowie* (pl.); referring to Islam: *islamisté* (cs.), *islamisti* (sk.), *islamiści* (pl.); referring to Arabs: *arabové* (cs.), and referring to the state of Palestine: *palestinský* (cs.), *palestínsky* (sk.), *palestyński* (pl.).

The lexemes *teroristé* (cs.), *teroristi* (cs., sk.), *terroryści* (pl.), *útočníci* (cs., sk.), and *napastnicy* (pl.) are used in texts written in Polish, Czech, and Slovak primarily in descriptions of the unexpected attack carried out by Hamas, for example:

(10) *Teroristi Hamasu znásilňovali Izraelčanky mimoriadne brutálne.*

'Hamas terrorists raped Israeli women extremely brutally.' (Böhmer, Ballová 8.12.2023)

- (11) *Terrorysti chodzą od domu do domu, zabijają ludzi i zabierają ich ciała.*
(Zagner 7.10.2023)
 ‘Terrorists go from house to house, killing people and taking their bodies.’

The texts reporting subsequent events shift away from words related to terrorism. An exception is found in Czech texts, where the word *teroristé* ‘terrorists’ is used more frequently than in Polish and Slovak texts (see below). In Slovak, the word *militanti* ‘militants’ is often used to denote Hamas fighters. According to SSSJ, the term refers to someone who fights for the enforcement of their views and goals, even using violence and weapons. The term *militants* is also frequently used in English texts, which may partially influence Slovak journalists’ choice of this lexeme. This term is characteristic only of Slovak texts. It is not commonly used in Czech due to its obsolescence, and it does not exist in Polish.

Particular attention should be paid to the Czech and Slovak lexeme *bojovník* and the Polish word *bojownik*. While these terms denote someone who fights in an armed conflict,¹³ and align with the latest trend in the use of these terms, i.e., *bojownicy Talibanu* (cs.), *bojownicy Al-Kaidy* (sk.) ‘Taliban fighters’, ‘Al-Qaeda fighters’, their traditional linguistic image does not correspond to the nature of fighters in organizations like Hamas but rather to fighters meaning ‘heroes’. Examples include expressions like *Boží bojovníci* (ASSC) ‘God’s warriors, referring to Hussites’,¹⁴ *legenda o bojovníkovi za pravdu a spravodlivosť* (SSSJ) ‘legend of the fighter for truth and justice’, *protifašistickí bojovníci za mier* (SSSJ) ‘anti-fascist fighters for peace’, and *bojownik o prawa człowieka* (WSJP) ‘human rights fighter’. This indicates a traditional positive image that clearly contrasts with the context of Hamas fighters.

It seems that the use of these words in Polish, Czech, and Slovak texts results from the fact that they are translations of the word *fighter*, often used in English-language texts to refer to members of Hamas and similar organizations.

13 “*Kdo bojuje v ozbrojeném střetnutí nepřátelených stran*” (ASSC) ‘Who fights in an armed conflict between opposing sides’; “*Kto bojuje so zbraňou v ozbrojenom konflikte, bitke; Kto se zapája do hnutia za niečo al. proti niečomu, bojuje za dosiahnutie al. potlačenie niečoho*” (SSSJ) ‘Someone who fights with a weapon in an armed conflict or battle; someone who participates in a movement for or against something, fighting to achieve or suppress something’; “*osoba biorąca udział w walce zbrojnej, nienależąca do oddziałów wojskowych*” (WSJP) ‘A person who takes part in the armed conflict, who is not a member of armed forces’.

14 “Hussite, any of the followers of the Bohemian religious reformer Jan Hus, who was condemned by the Council of Constance (1414–1418) and burned at the stake.” (Britannica 2024).

The first equivalent listed in English-Czech, English-Slovak, and English-Polish electronic dictionaries for the word *fighter* is indeed *bojovník* (cs., sk.), *bojownik* (pl.). The use of this word in West Slavic languages may thus somewhat soften the image of Hamas members by evoking associations with cultural and historical Slavic heroes.

From a comparative perspective, it is worth noting that although words related to terrorism are a constant attribute in West Slavic languages when describing the group Hamas, there is a noticeable difference in the frequency of their usage between Polish, Slovak, and Czech.

Analyses of texts dedicated to the Israel–Hamas conflict indicate that in the Czech language, Hamas is more frequently described as a terrorist group, its members as terrorists, and its activities as terrorism. This manner of description, however, may at least partially stem not so much from the need to evaluate the reported events but from the literal understanding of the lexeme *terrorizmus* ‘terrorism’. This is suggested by a discussion in the influential magazine *Respekt*. In an article titled *Máme mluvit o teroristech?* ‘Should we talk about terrorists?’, the editor-in-chief debates whether the use of the word *terrorizmus* (as well as related terms) in a text also signifies taking a specific side in the conflict, which should not occur in professional journalism. The author disagrees with the opinion of the well-known reporter John Simpson, who argues that using these terms implies taking a particular side, which is not the role of a journalist. According to the editor of *Respekt*, describing the organization Hamas as terrorist is consistent with the dictionary definition of terrorism and is, therefore, a fact, not an evaluative expression intended to present a subjective view of events.

In summary, the organization Hamas, its mode of operation, and the ways of naming its members lead to it being seen primarily as an armed criminal and terrorist group. An important issue that will be addressed in the next part of the article is the identification of the organization Hamas with all Palestinians and the state of Palestine, which, in light of the predominantly negative image of this group depicted in West Slavic languages, causes the transfer of negative traits associated with Hamas to all of Palestine and its citizens.

7 Naming Palestine

As mentioned in the previous sections, Palestine is sometimes referred to as a side in the war with Israel. This is due not only to the complex nature of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, of which the war between Israel and Hamas is a part, but also because the lexemes *Palestina* (cs.), *Palestína* (sk.), *Palestyna* (pl.)

‘Palestine’ and *palestinský* (cs.), *palestínsky* (sk.), *palestyński* (pl.) ‘Palestinian’ are polysemous terms. Two main meanings of these lexemes can be distinguished. One refers to the geographic area encompassing the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, while the other pertains to the governing structures of Palestine, namely the Palestinian Authority and the State of Palestine, which was declared in 2013.

Although the issue of recognizing the new state by the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland¹⁵ is complex, the words *Palestína* (sk.), *Palestyna* (pl.) are recorded in the latest Polish (wsjp) and Slovak (sss) dictionaries,¹⁶ and the respective definitions of the noun suggest that its referent is treated as a state:

- (12) *Palestína* [...] *štát na Blízkom východe od r. 2013 (na územiach nazývaných ako Západný breh Jordánu a Pásmo Gazy a v r. 1998–2012 označovaných ako Palestínska autonómia) susediaci s Izraelom a Jordánskom: na území Palestíny prebiehali ťažké boje; uznanie Palestíny za štát je proces plný konfliktov* (sss)

‘Palestína [...] a state in the Middle East since 2013 (in areas known as the West Bank and Gaza Strip and referred to as the Palestinian Authority from 1998 to 2012) neighboring Israel and Jordan: heavy fighting took place on the territory of Palestine; recognition of Palestine as a state is a process full of conflicts’

- (13) *Palestyna* [...] *państwo o tej samej nazwie.* (wsjp)¹⁷
‘Palestyna [...] a state of the same name.’

The overall representation of Palestine emerging from large corpora and reconstructed based on occurrences of the lexemes *Palestína* (cs.), *Palestína* (sk.), *Palestyna* (pl.) ‘Palestine’ and *palestinský* (cs.), *palestínsky* (sk.), *palestyński* (pl.) ‘Palestinian’ includes expressions related to armed conflicts, peace talks, the Palestinians’ struggles for freedom, recognition of Palestinian autonomy and statehood, Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, names of Palestinian

15 The official name of the Palestinian Authority in individual West Slavic languages is *Palestínská autonomie* (*Palestínská národní správa*) in Czech, *Palestínska samospráva* in Slovak, and *Autonomia Palestyńska* (*Palestyńskie Władze Narodowe*) in Polish. However, in texts, it is often also referred to by the words *Palestína*, *Palestína*, or *Palestyna*.

16 For the Czech language, there is no dictionary covering the letter P that was published after 2013.

17 The State of Palestine includes the Gaza Strip and the West Bank (west of the Jordan River).

politicians, names of Arab countries, Zionism, and Israel. An essential part of their collocational profiles also includes words related to jihad, Islam, and terrorism.

The material collected for the project indicates that, alongside Hamas, Palestine in West Slavic texts is often treated as a side of the conflict. This situation arises when Hamas is identified with the state of Palestine through the use of the words *Palestina* (cs.), *Palestína* (sk.), *Palestyna* (pl.) 'Palestine' and *palestinský* (cs.), *palestínsky* (sk.), *palestyński* (pl.) 'Palestinian' in contexts where the referent is Hamas or territories controlled by it. The most visible example is the previously cited phrase *wojna Izrael–Palestyna* 'Israel–Palestine War'. Similar expressions include *palestyński bojownik* (pl.) 'Palestinian fighter', *palestínsky ozbrojenec* (sk.), 'Palestinian militant', *Palestyńczyk* (pl.) 'Palestinian (noun)' meaning a *Hamas fighter*, or *palestyński atak* (pl.) 'Palestinian attack' meaning a *Hamas attack*, *palestínské území* (sk.) 'Palestinian territory' meaning land controlled by Hamas.

- (14) *Při palestinských útocích na izraelském území podle izraelské armády přišlo o život více než 1000 lidí, zatímco zdravotnické úřady v Hamásem ovládaném Pásmu Gazy hlásí 830 obětí izraelských protiúderů. (irozhlas 10.10.2023)*

'According to the Israeli army, more than 1,000 people have been killed in Palestinian attacks on Israeli territory, while health authorities in the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip report 830 casualties from Israeli counter-strikes.'

- (15) *Palestínski ozbrojenci z Pásmu Gazy v sobotu ráno spustili rozsiahly a prekvapivý útok na Izrael. (Sopóci 7.10.2023)*

'Palestinian militants from the Gaza Strip launched a large and surprising attack on Israel on Saturday morning.'

- (16) *Palestyńscy bojownicy wzięli izraelskich zakładników w mieście Ofakim na południu kraju—podaje izraelska telewizja 13 TV. Niektóre domy w pobliżu granicy płoną. Mieszkanka kibucu Be'eri powiedziała mediom, że jej ojca porwali bojownicy Hamasu i wywieźli do Strefy Gazy—pisze Times of Israel. (salon24 7.10.2023)*

'Palestinian fighters took Israeli hostages in the city of Ofakim in the south of the country, according to Israeli television channel 13 TV. Some houses near the border are burning. A resident of the Be'eri kibbutz told the media that her father was abducted by Hamas militants and taken to the Gaza Strip, according to the Times of Israel'

- (17) *Dlaczego Palestyńczycy zaatakowali Izrael?* (Kociszewski 8.10.2023)
 ‘Why did the Palestinians attack Israel?’

These types of expressions are a considerable oversimplification, presenting an inaccurate picture of the conflict. While Hamas is indeed an important political force within the state of Palestine, it is not its sole representative. It remains in dispute with other significant political forces in Palestine: the al-Fatah party and the President of the State of Palestine.

Palestine is also a side of the Israel–Hamas war, understood as both the territory of the Gaza Strip (part of the State of Palestine) and the people living in this area. The Gaza Strip serves as both a kind of prison for Hamas hostages and a site of military operations, where Hamas facilities are destroyed and where Palestinian civilians suffer (due to actions by Israel and Hamas) and flee. It is sometimes called *peklo* (cs., sk.), *piekto* (pl.) ‘hell’. Examples of expressions illustrating these images include *rukojmi odvěčeni do zajetí* (cs.) ‘hostages taken into captivity’, *zakładnicy są przetrzymywani w Strefie Gazy* (pl.) ‘hostages are held in the Gaza Strip’; *zniszczenie Hamasu* (pl.) ‘destruction of Hamas’; *civilní obětí* (cs.) ‘civilian victims’, *uprchlíci* (cs.) ‘refugees’, *uprchlický tábor* (cs.) ‘refugee camp’, *přeplněné stany* (cs.) ‘overcrowded tents’, (about refugees) *zranění* (cs.) ‘injured’, *nemocní* (cs.) ‘sick’, *traumatizovaní* (cs.) ‘traumatized’:

- (18) *V Rafáhu se podle odhadů OSN v přeplněných stanech, přístřešcích a bytech tísní 1,2 milionu Palestinců, podle některých odhadů až 1,4 milionu.* (iDnes 6.05.2024)

‘In Rafah, according to UN estimates, 1.2 million Palestinians are cramped in overcrowded tents, shelters, and apartments, with some estimates reaching up to 1.4 million.’

- (19) *Generálny tajomník už mesiace nalieha na prímerie, plný a neobmedzený prístup humanitárnej pomoci a okamžité a bezpodmienečné prepustenie všetkých rukojemníkov zadržovaných v Gaze [...].* (sme 31.05.2024)

‘The Secretary-General has been urging for months for a ceasefire, full and unrestricted access to humanitarian aid, and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages held in Gaza [...].’

- (20) *Hamas otvorzył wrota piekieł w Gazie.* (Kociszewski 8.10.2023)
 ‘Hamas has opened the gates of hell in Gaza.’

- (21) *Tylko dla przykładu: Hamas wykorzystuje palestyńską ludność cywilną (w tym dzieci) jako żywe tarcze, a Izrael usprawiedliwia operację militarną*

w Strefie Gazy, w której ginie palestyńska ludność cywilna (w tym dzieci!) koniecznością zniszczenia Hamasu. (Cygan 23.11.2023)

'For example, Hamas uses Palestinian civilians (including children) as human shields, while Israel justifies its military operation in the Gaza Strip, which results in Palestinian civilian casualties (including children), as necessary to destroy Hamas.'

An important aspect of the depiction of Palestine is the language referring to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands. Linguistically, this is expressed through words such as *okupovat* (cs.), *okupovať* (sk.), *okupować* (pl.) 'occupy'; *okupowany* (cs., sk.), *okupowany* (pl.) 'occupied'; and *okupace* (cs.), *okupácia* (sk.), *okupacja* (pl.) 'occupation'.

In summary, Palestine often appears in texts primarily as a region (in a broader sense), a state, and land occupied by Israel. In a narrower sense, Palestine is represented by the expressions *Pásmo Gazy* (cs., sk.), *Strefa Gazy* (pl.) 'Gaza Strip'—the main site of military events and the people living in Palestine, who are victims of the war—in some occurrences called *peklo* (cs., sk.), *piekło* (pl.) 'hell'. In some instances, Palestine is equated with Hamas.

8 Naming Israel

Unlike Palestine, Israel is not defined in multiple ways. Its names refer unequivocally to the State of Israel located in the Middle East, in Western Asia, on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea.

Analysis of data gathered from national corpora shows that Israel is portrayed in texts written in Polish, Czech, and Slovak primarily as a state embroiled in military conflicts, especially with Arabs, particularly Palestinians. Therefore, many collocates relate to territorial conflicts, the Palestinian Authority, the Gaza Strip, Palestinians, Arabs, military actions (and weapons), and peace talks. In all corpora, there is a group of collocates that refer to the occupation of lands by Israel. In the Polish corpus, compared to the Czech and Slovak ones, more collocates refer to Israel's active military character (offensive as well as defensive), e.g., *Izrael atakuje* 'Israel attacks', *rozpoczyna ofensywę* 'launches an offensive', *ma prawo do obrony* 'has the right to defend itself', *wprowadza blokadę* 'imposes a blockade', *Izrael ostrzeliwuje* 'Israel shells'. Meanwhile, in the Czech corpus, more collocates refer to terrorist activities occurring within Israel.

In the corpora built for the project, the naming of Israel is mainly expressed through lexemes such as *Izrael* (cs., sk., pl.) 'Israel', its derivatives and phrases

such as *židovský stat* (cs.), *židovský štát* (sk.), *państwo żydowskie* (pl.) 'Jewish state'. In Czech, Slovak, and Polish texts, the overall image of Israel is that of a military state and military power. This is indicated by the collocations referring to the Israeli air force, army, forces, services, soldiers, drone, military operation, missile, shelling, rocket, attack, defense, and strike (airstrike, counterstrike).

Common to all languages is the collocate referring to hostages kidnapped by Hamas.

The image of Israel in texts concerning the Israel–Hamas war varies, ranging from the victim of an attack through the avenger-defender of its country (a state fighting an enemy) to a perpetrator committing crimes against Palestinians. The representation of a victim of attack is evoked by lexemes related to the Hamas attack (see section 6) and lexemes referring to hostages and victims among Israeli residents and soldiers.

The image of an avenger-defender is manifested in occurrences referring to revenge. Lexemes like *pomsta* (cs., sk.), *zemsta* (pl.) 'revenge'; *odveta* (cs., sk.), *odwet* (pl.) 'retaliation'; and *odvetný* (cs., sk.), *odwetowy* (pl.) 'retaliatory' are indicative of this. These are often modifiers of military operations, e.g., *odvetný nálet* (cs., sk.), *odwetowy nalot* (cs., sk.) 'retaliatory air raid' and *odvetný úder* (cs., sk.), *odwetowe uderzenie* (pl.) 'retaliatory strike'. These phrases also suggest that Israel is not the party initiating actions and that its actions are, in fact, a reaction, in this case, to the actions of Hamas. It is worth noting here that the words corresponding to the English lexemes *revenge* and *retaliation* are often used by leaders of Israel and Arab countries. Also, in this case, the words *revenge/retaliation* were first spoken by representatives of the Israeli government. The West Slavic equivalents of words related to revenge and retaliation may have a different connotation than those used originally. While the definitions of the Czech and Slovak words *odveta* 'retaliation' do not include a marker evaluating the act of retaliation as a kind of response,¹⁸ in Polish, the words *odwet* 'retaliation' and *odwetowy* 'retaliatory' have an additional negative meaning. In Polish, *zemsta* 'revenge' and *odwet* 'retaliation' is a negatively evaluated action carried out by someone in response to someone who had wronged them (see WSJP). Therefore, the use of the lexemes *odwet* 'retaliation' and *odwetowy* 'retaliatory' in Polish subtly condemns both the party initiating the bad action and the party responding to it, while in Czech and Slovak, the blame is assigned to the party initiating the bad action.

18 According to KSSJ, *odveta: odplata (za něco zlé, nepříjemné ap.)* 'retaliation: revenge (for something bad or unpleasant, etc.)'

Other noteworthy lexical items used in the studied texts include *útok* (cs., sk.), *atak* (pl.) ‘attack’; *útočit* (cs.), *útočiť* (sk.), *atakować* (pl.) ‘to attack’; and *úder* (cs., sk.), *uderzenie* (pl.) ‘strike-N’; *udeřit* (cs.), *uderit’* (sk.), *uderzyć* (pl.) ‘to strike’. There is, however, an interesting usage pattern for words corresponding to the English words *attack* and *strike*. The lexemes *útok* (cs., sk.), *atak* (pl.) ‘attack’ and *útočit* (cs.), *útočiť* (sk.), *atakować* (pl.) ‘to attack’ in texts concerning the Israel– Hamas conflict primarily characterize the action initiating the war. These lexemes are somewhat limited to the Hamas attack on Israel and are much less frequently used to describe Israeli actions. In the latter case, journalists are more likely to use the words *úder* (cs., sk.), *uderzenie* (pl.) ‘strike-N’. The word *strike* (and its equivalents in West Slavic languages), unlike *attack*, primarily refers to a one-time and precise strike. An additional factor influencing the usage of the terms *úder* (cs., sk.), *uderzenie* (pl.) ‘strike-N’ and *udeřit* (cs.), *uderit’* (sk.), *uderzyć* (pl.) ‘to strike’ is their frequent use by Israeli government and military representatives.

The use of these words in Czech, Slovak, and Polish texts builds the image of Israel as a defender of its land, precisely targeting and destroying the enemy, e.g.,

- (22) *Izrael uderzył w nocy na 150 podziemnych celów Hamasu (Nabiałek 23.10.2023)*
 ‘Israel struck 150 underground Hamas targets overnight.’

The lexeme *útok* (cs., sk.) is more often used in the Czech and Slovak press in the context of Israeli actions when it is a non-recurring action with extensive consequences, e.g.,

- (23) *Útok na uprchlický tábor v Rafáhu porušuje mezinárodní právo, zlobí se i spojenci Izraele (Mejzrová 28.05.2024)*
 ‘The attack on the refugee camp in Rafah violates international law, Israel’s allies are angry.’

- (24) *Tragický útok v Rafahu vyvolal ostrú kritiku Izraela. (Tóda, Čorej 28.05.2024)*
 ‘The tragic attack in Rafah sparked sharp criticism of Israel.’

The examined material indicates that in the Polish language, the lexemes *atak* ‘attack-N’ and *uderzenie* ‘strike-N’ are used more interchangeably than in Czech and Slovak.

It is also worth paying attention to occurrences containing expressions negatively evaluating Israeli actions. These often refer to military operations con-

ducted by Israel, in which the victims are the Palestinian civilian population, or refer to Israel's treatment of Palestinians before the outbreak of war, e.g., *masakr* (cs.), *masaker* (sk.), *masakra* (pl.) 'massacre' and *genocida* (cs.), *genocída* (sk.), *ludobójstwo* (pl.) 'genocide'. In most cases, however, these are quotes from other people rather than the author's opinion.

- (25) "*Je to nelidské,*" uvedl vysoký komisař OSN pro lidská práva Volker Türk. "*Rafáh je nyní městem dětí, které nemají v Gaze kam bezpečně jít.*" (*iDnes* 6.05.2024)

"It is inhumane," said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk. "Rafah is now a city of children with nowhere safe to go in Gaza."

- (26) "*Opustila jsem Izrael, protože jsem nemohla snést břemeno být privilegovanou občankou v rasistickém státě,*" sdělila katarské stanici. Tvrdí, že ji denně rozčilovala "*izraelská okupace a diskriminace palestinských spoluobčanů.*" (*iDnes* 24.10.2023)

"I left Israel because I could not bear the burden of being a privileged citizen in a racist state," she told the Qatari station. She claims that she was daily angered by "Israeli occupation and discrimination against Palestinian fellow citizens".

In summary, Israel, unlike the other side of the conflict, namely Hamas and Palestine, is named quite unequivocally, most often by the proper name of the state and its derivatives in the respective languages, as well as descriptive phrases equivalent to the English phrase *Jewish state*. The linguistic view depicted in the texts presents Israel as a military power, a military state, an avenger-defender, and a state that has committed crimes against Palestinians.

9 Conclusions

Naming the sides involved in the Israel–Hamas war is characterized by asymmetry. On the linguistic plane, this asymmetry is already expressed in the sheer number of designations for both sides of the conflict. Israel, the state that was attacked and subsequently declared war on Hamas, is linguistically referred to mainly by the lexeme *Izrael* (cs., sk., pl.) 'Israel', and synonymously by the descriptive expressions *židovský stát* (cs.), *židovský štát* (sk.), *państwo żydowskie* (pl.) 'the Jewish state'. However, the designation of the other side of the conflict is problematic, considering that apart from the name *Hamas*, the ambiguous word *Palestina* (cs.), *Palestína* (sk.), *Palestyna* (pl.) 'Palestine' is also used. The

name of the war, i.e., describing it as the Israel– Hamas war, is also asymmetric because it means a war between a state and a paramilitary organization. Symmetrical linguistic names like the Israel– Palestine war, assuming we understand Palestine as the State of Palestine, are, however, a simplification and untruth.

Descriptions of both sides of the conflict are also mostly asymmetric due to the extra-linguistic reality or its perception in a given country, which always has some reflection in the linguistic plane.

The asymmetry is visible in naming the armed groups on both sides of the conflict. Israel has an army, which is an organized structure that is part of the State of Israel. Its description indicates that it is well-equipped. The words describing it refer to professional military weapons, e.g., a tank. Hamas, on the other hand, is portrayed as a paramilitary group without military vehicles. The words describing it refer to jeeps, off-road vehicles, and motorcycles. In texts where expressions naming Hamas' armed wing as an army are used, there is a symmetry in naming the military groups on both sides of the conflict. Such an example can be found on the Slovak server sme.sk: *Hamas vs. Izrael porovnanie armád* 'Hamas vs. Israel, comparison of armies'. These are rare cases.

The asymmetry is also observable in naming members of the Israeli army and the Hamas organization. Members of the Israeli army are most often called soldiers, while words for members of the Hamas organization range from attackers and terrorists through Hamas members to fighters or militants. The asymmetry is also visible in naming the basic military actions, especially when using the words *útok*, *atak* 'attack', more often used to describe Hamas actions, and *úder* (cs., sk.), *uderzenie* (pl.) 'strike', more often used for Israeli actions.

The parties involved in the conflict also differ with respect to the types of strangers they represent from the Central European perspective: the FAMILIAR and the UNFAMILIAR ones. This distinction appears to be linked with a difference in the way the two groups are linguistically represented.

It is noteworthy, however, that the naming of victims of Hamas and Israeli actions is, to some extent, symmetrical. On both sides, the victims are both civilians and members of the Israeli army (soldiers) and armed members of Hamas (fighters) or its senior representatives.

Naming both sides of the conflict and their attributes, actions, and members plays a huge role in the perception of the conflict as a whole and its main actors. Particular lexical choices can lead to excessive simplifications and misrepresentation of events, as is the case with equating the Hamas organization with the entire State of Palestine and its citizens. This in turn results in Palestinians being in some instances as strongly othered as Hamas. However, the analysis only documents the representations of groups and events between October 7,

2023 and June 5, 2024. As of March 2025, the conflict is ongoing and the media perception of the parties has been changing over time.

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Afterword

Jadwiga Linde-Usiekniewicz and Marta Falkowska

As already mentioned in the introductory chapter, the present volume is the outcome of a research project called *Naming for othering in a diversified Europe*, carried out by linguists from three European universities: the University of Heidelberg, Charles University in Prague, and the University of Warsaw. The scope of the project and the discipline represented by the contributors resulted in our focus on “naming”, i.e., linguistic practices used in Polish, German, Croatian, Czech, and Slovak to establish the dialectic of “us” vs. “others”. The “naming perspective” is therefore explicit in the titles of the four sections of the book and in many titles of individual contributions. Yet, even in those chapters that do not include the term *naming* in their titles, this perspective prevails in accordance with the project’s goals.

The adoption of the naming perspective has had some consequences on how the research was designed, carried out, and presented. The most important one has been directing our attention to texts where instances of othering through language practices have been identified. Diverse approaches to othering have been adopted in the volume, inspired in particular by Brons (2015), Coupland (2010), Jensen (2011), and Rohleder (2014). However, their applications in various contributions share a common restrictive thread: focusing on language itself and backgrounding the cultural, societal, economic, and political aspects of othering. With the notable exception of the chapter by Jadranka Gvozdanović (this volume), extralinguistic aspects of othering are discussed solely as part of the overall background for naming practices. While this kind of approach has been implicitly criticized by, among others, Thomas-Olalde and Velho (2011), our research can be read as further and partly independently confirming validity of claims and observations made within other frameworks (see below).

Another consequence of the perspective adopted is the semasiological orientation of our research. In most chapters (possibly with a partial exception in the case of the contribution by Agnieszka Mikołajczuk, this volume), the starting point is a lexeme or a set of lexemes that may refer to a group of persons or to individuals. Not only do these lexical items highlight a feature that makes their referents “different”, but, to put it more strongly in terms proposed by Hall (2017, 131), they “essentialize all the forms of difference into an us-versus-them opposition that operate[s] through the dialectics of otherness.” Only then are the contexts of their use studied to show in more detail how the lexemes operate in

actual linguistic practices and what these practices ultimately reveal about attitudes, conceptualizations, imageries, representation—in all, about what Hall calls “politics,” and defines as “the effects and consequences of representation” (Hall 1997, 6).

The semasiological orientation also stems from the kind of linguistic data used. The research is mostly based on various types of corpora, and in many instances the preliminary search for linguistic data involves defining strings of letters that would correspond to tokens of lexemes or word forms. Another thing to bear in mind, though, is that owing to the main subject of the book, linguistic data used in it reflect (by necessity) a particular mindset of the speakers, i.e., their focus on (perceived) alterity and the implied inferiority of persons/groups. Since the texts have been selected in order to analyze lexical and grammatical means recruited by the speakers for the purpose of othering, it comes as no surprise that the examples cited throughout the book are densely packed with derogatory or even offensive language. As such, the texts can hardly be deemed representative of stances of general societies that speak the studied languages. Consequently, these datasets are admittedly biased and may not be reasonably used to address the question of the frequency of the discussed linguistic phenomena.

Many of the contributors to this volume use semasiological orientation not only to identify relevant tokens of naming, but also to delve into internal structures of the lexemes themselves, thus identifying their morphological, i.e., meaningful components (Gvozdanović, this volume; Římalová, Kopřivová, and Rejzek, this volume; Petrak, this volume; Banasiak and Wnuk, this volume; Falkowska, this volume). Their analyses enable them to look beyond the denoting potential of words and reconstruct their associative meanings.

Among those authors some go even further and, following the tenets and procedures of the linguistic worldview approach (Bartmiński 2009) in order to reconstruct the semantic profiles of words. Within this approach, the profiles are reconstructed not only on the basis of word structures and their motivation, but also their discursive use. Seen in the light of Hall's (1997) theory of representation and constructionist view of linguistic meaning, the linguistic worldview methodology appears as bridging both the semiotic and the discursive elements of linguistic meaning. This in particular is the case of contributions by Římalová, Kopřivová, and Rejzek, as well as by Falkowska.

The linguistic worldview methodology is also present in the chapter written by Mikołajczuk, though she focuses on the discursive aspects of language use. In her study of how teachers on strike are represented as terrorists, she analyzes, to paraphrase Hall (1997, 3), “the words we use about them, the stories we tell about them, the images of them we produce, the emotions we associate

with them, the ways we classify and conceptualize them, the values we place on them.” In particular, Mikołajczuk’s analysis shows how conceptual frames (and the vocabulary they furnish) are recruited to represent social issues and relations. These frames offer specific scenarios and assign roles to social agents (e.g., teachers as terrorists, children as hostages), thereby strengthening the existing conflicts and divisions. The chapter also demonstrates that even without resorting to the frameworks of media studies, sociology or philosophy, the method of close reading of texts is self-sufficient enough to produce results that corroborate the findings of other scientific disciplines.

Many of the contributions address naming for othering within what Hall (2017) calls the “fateful triangle” of race, ethnicity and nationality: Łaziński (this volume), as well as Kołos and Karlińska (this volume) focus on the race and ethnicity apices of the triangle. By contrast, Falkowska (this volume) focuses exclusively on ethnicity. In Hebal-Jezierska’s contribution (this volume), ethnicity is strongly interwoven with nationality, with Israel consistently represented as Jewish nation-state, while Palestinians more often as an ethnicity without a state.

What is interesting, the two chapters that focus on national identities, i.e., Polish (Banasiak and Wnuk, this volume) and Croatian (Petrak, this volume), when contrasted with two chapters that focus on the race and ethnicity apices (Łaziński, this volume; Kołos and Karlińska, this volume), seem particularly telling in the light of a quote from Hall (1996) given in Thomas-Olalde and Velho (2011, 40–41): “The English are racist not because they hate the Blacks but because they do not know who they are without the Blacks.” In particular, our reading of the results presented by Banasiak and Wnuk (this volume) shows that the debate about Polishness does not involve Poles not knowing who they are without non-Whites. The growing visible presence of non-Caucasians in Poland, which is a rather new phenomenon, tends to foment hate and contempt, though, as shown by Kościańska and Petryk (2022) and by Ohia-Nowak (2025), different forms of racisms themselves are not a new phenomenon.

One of the observations of Kościańska and Petryk (2022) is that anti-Black racism in Poland has been perpetuated second-hand, i.e., not through direct contact of Poles with Black people, but through their representation in literature. This meshes with Łaziński’s finding about the stigmatizing potential of the traditional Polish word denoting a Black person, i.e., *Murzyn*. Upon comparing Polish translations of mainly English-language literary text with their original, he has found that the word in question is often added, even when absent in the source text, where the protagonist is identified not by their race but by other linguistic means. This unwarranted use of racial descriptors painfully resembles the activation of the process that Frantz Fanon illustrated with an exclaima-

tion “Tiens, un nègre!” (“Look, a Negro!”, as cited in Hall 2017, 62). Fanon called it “épidermisation” (Fanon 1952, 28), which in Hall’s account is rendered as “epidermalization—the inscription of racial difference on the skin” (Hall 2017, 62), even though, since Łaziński’s study concerns literary protagonists, there is no real-life person who could be “shattered and destroyed by the racializing look that comes from the place of the white other” (Hall, 2017, 61–62).

Polish and German linguistic data (Kołos and Karlińska, this volume; Gvozdanović, this volume) respectively bring indirect evidence of race being a social construct and some words referring to non-whites in both languages act as “sliding signifiers” (Hall 2017, 45). In the case of the German, the word is *Kanake*, which has spread its denotation from people from Polynesia and South Pacific Islands to all people of color. Similarly, Polish *ciapaty*, whose putative etymology suggests initial reference to persons from the Indian subcontinent, is currently used in reference to people who are neither Caucasian nor Black.

As already mentioned, the entire volume focuses on the linguistic aspect of othering, and in particular on its lexical exponents. Its contribution to the study of othering as a complex social, cultural, cognitive and psychological phenomenon therefore consists in a detailed analysis of selected instances of:

[...] the power of language practices and of discourses on which those categories [i.e. of others] are based, in order to grasp their entanglement in the dynamics of knowledge production and dominance.

THOMAS-OLALDE AND VELHO 2011, 34

This is particularly applicable to three of the contributions: those that analyze very specific discourses, i.e., Falkowska (this volume), Hebal-Jeziarska (this volume), and Mikołajczuk (this volume). In particular, the chapters by Hebal-Jeziarska and Mikołajczuk analyze press articles that are regarded by their audiences as sources of knowledge, and are by the same token vehicles of (hegemonic) knowledge production as understood by Thomas-Olalde and Velho (2011).

Yet, the exact grounding of our primarily qualitative research in purely linguistic data and predominantly linguistic methodologies used impose certain limitations on our contributions. For instance, we do not address issues of subject formation, neither in reference to othering selves nor to the otheres (see Thomas-Olalde and Velho 2011 for the tantamount importance of these issues), the only exception being the chapter by Zawislawska and Chojnacka-Kuraś, who do give voice to subjects othered and externally formed on the basis of their body shape. Even Linde-Usiekniewicz, who although giving voice to Polish Deaf, only superficially addresses their subjecthood, focuses on how they

refer to the hearing majority. While not central to her topic, subject formation is also invoked indirectly in a quote from one of her primary sources, i.e., Kotowicz, who analyzes the term *kompletni* ‘the compleat’ applied to the hearing majority and how this notion of completeness of non-Deaf affects the Deaf.

As already mentioned in the introductory chapter, some of our contributors, especially those who study naming within the fateful triangle, invoked above, address the questions raised within the critical race theory (CRT). However, as the result of semasiological approach, little attention is paid to social, political, economic, and legal practices accompanying linguistic othering. Yet another issue important to researchers representing the CRT approach, while backgrounded in our book, is the intersectional (see Crenshaw 1989) nature of othering: it affects persons on the basis of their position within the fateful triangle of race, ethnicity and nationality, but also on the basis of their gender, disability and body shape, to quote just those addressed in the present volume. Only Gvozdanović (this volume) explicitly addresses the position of women immigrants and rightly points out that women migrant workers are doubly financially underprivileged—both as migrants and as women.

Interestingly, our studies have shown that although all the languages studied here possess gender as a grammatical category, the intersectionality posited by CRT seems to be working in a different way. In the texts cited throughout the book, women are usually lumped together under a generic masculine label. Feminine noun forms (e.g., used with reference to migrants or foreigners) are—as a rule—visibly rare (see e.g., Gvozdanović for detailed statistics on masculine and feminine forms, construal of women, and remarks on the gender-sensitive language; see also Římalová, Kopřivová, and Rejzek on the low frequency of feminine nouns, this volume). Likewise, new feminine coinages (formal blends included) are scarce. One reason for it may be that the process of othering entails conceptualizing people as a homogenous group or a mass, its psychological underpinning being the *outgroup homogeneity effect* (Baumeister and Vohs 2007). Linguistically, this construal is expressed predominantly through the use of plural forms (as attested e.g., by the data provided by Gvozdanović, as well as by Římalová, Kopřivová, and Rejzek; Kołos and Karlińska, this volume) or mass nouns (such as Polish *robactwo* ‘vermin’, see Kołos and Karlińska, this volume).

As yet another consequence of semasiological and textual approach, the speaking subjects, either as individuals or as groups are identified only in some contributions. This is the case of Petrak’s study of the debate about purity of Croatian language, Zawisławska and Chojnacka-Kuraś’s chapter on the language of fat activism, and in Linde-Usiekniewicz contribution on how the

Polish d/Deaf name the hearing majority. In the instance of the debate on Polishness (Banasiak and Wnuk, this volume), a tentative case can be made that the speaking subjects who invoke Polish “onionism” would fill the criteria of “cool-o-Polishness” and vice versa.

In other contributions the speaking subjects are less easily identified. However, if we examine what they do say about the otherrees, again within the fateful triangle, we can discover a common core of their way of constructing themselves. First of all, they assume their whiteness and possibly Polish/Czech/German ethnicity as “normal”. To invoke (and expand, by adding the European identity dimension) the apt diagnosis made by Eske Wollrad:

White [and ethnically European] subject formations are based on the construction of Whites [and ethnic Europeans] as a group that is represented as ‘normal’ and homogeneous and as situated outside of racialising [and ethnicizing] dynamics.

WOLLRAD 2007, 41; English translation quoted in THOMAS-OLALDE AND VELHO 2011, 40

What comes to mind is the observation that the speaking subjects in most of our material are in fact WEIRD. Though the acronym itself was coined in psychology to criticize findings based on study of a restricted sample of subjects (Heinrich, Heine, and Norenzayan 2010), the subjects come up as Western/White, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic—or at least that is the way they construe themselves in the process of othering as self-formation.

Finally, while our research shows that the notion of *othering* may prove useful when operationalized for linguistic purposes, an issue that requires further exploration is whether outside linguistics the concept itself contributes to a better understanding of more specific phenomena:

[...] the *Othering*-perspective may over-generalise experiences of discrimination, exclusion and racism. If all these experiences are subsumed under the concept of *Othering*, their concrete and variable forms of racializing and/or discriminating practices might be misjudged as the “usual manifestations” of the dynamics of *Othering* and finally ignored altogether.

THOMAS-OLALDE AND VELHO 2011, 46–47

Thomas-Olalde and Velho suggest that the explicatory potential of the notion of *othering* may in fact be overstated. If treated as an overgeneralized umbrella term, *othering* may blur the lines between different mechanisms of out-group formation; a peril that we should bear in mind.

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This book explores how language is used to create division and discrimination in diverse European societies by emphasizing differences in ethnicity, race, national identity, beliefs, or appearance. The authors analyze how public discourse—particularly in political and media narratives—shapes and reinforces an “us vs. them” mindset. They examine words and expressions that denigrate or marginalize specific groups in Polish, German, Czech, Slovak, and Croatian, and observe how certain communities are also reclaiming terms that were once hurtful. The analyses of linguistic strategies employed in the process of othering demonstrate that the concept of othering can be effectively applied to linguistic data.

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