MAŁGORZATA KOWALCZYK
ORCID: 0000-0002-0699-7935
Chrześcijańska Akademia Teologiczna w Warszawie
E-mail: kowalczykmalgo@gmail.com

PETR POSLEDNÍ
ORCID: 0000-0002-0188-4245
Univerzita Pardubice
E-mail: Petr.Posledni@upce.cz

THE WORD LEADING TO AGREEMENT

Contemporary pedagogy of culture, along with broadening the subject of research, aims to deepen methodological instruments, and simultaneously draws knowledge and experience from various fields of human existence from the post-modern civilization. In the recent years authors of the particular works have been paying special attention to the elementary language basics of children, shaped in the early school education. Experts react to the often alarming state of habits and skills of the students in grades 1–3, spending long hours at the computers or tabloids, and limiting their communication to single words or fragments of sentences that blur the meaning and sense of the statements. However, in the school practice, the solution to this problem depends on the teachers' ability to approach linguistic knowledge and experiences, as well as on the thoughts contained in the philosophy of language, psychology of personality, sociology of culture and national history. The key that opens the entrance to the teaching pragmatics lies in creating a situation that enables children to discipline and at the same time, being based on fun, uses language as a means of discovering and strengthening interpersonal relationships[1].

For language educators, the thought of Ludwig Wittgenstein is still relevant, indicating that awareness of each human being is defined by public speech that permits mutual agreement between the parties involved in the communication. The meaning of each word is conditioned by linguistic, social and cultural con-

---

[1] A comprehensive approach to shaping language culture is presented in the publication of Ida Kurcz: *Psychologia języka i komunikacji*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa 2000.

texts, while the sense of a specific word – as the philosopher writes about it in the fundamental work entitled *Philosophische Untersuchungen* (1953)[2] – is based on the method of the word's usage in speech. Only assumption that the sentence has a logical structure and is based on the language system, makes the expression a mirror image of the world. John Langshaw Austin in his theory of "speech acts", also moves in this direction when differentiating the structure describing the state of entities from the performances that create "language events" and are a reference to reality[3]. Without such ground it is difficult to realize what hermeneutics is. According to Hans Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur, it is not about creating the meaning of the words, that are repeated and can take symbolic features, but about creating a sense of an utterance, a sense depending on how the utterance is understood by the recipient[4]. For this reason the way to understand the sense is opened by a dialogue between the participants of the communication. The post-modern philosopher Donald Hirsch adds to above thoughts the conclusion that agreement is mainly determined by the impact of significance on the recipient (significance)[5].

Contrary to the attempt of some philosophers of limiting themselves only to the arbitrary processes guided by the logical rules of the grammar system, the modern trend of considerations on language didactics goes in the opposite direction. Researchers emphasize the relationship of the speech with child's developmental psychology and socio-cultural issues. According to the Norwegian psychologist Kaja Johannessen, the clinic's director, first-graders always – regardless of predispositions derived from the family environment – when working at school, find themselves in a difficult personal situation; in the new surroundings, in the unknown role of a student who comes to face with others, they are a subject to rules of behavior in the conventional contact with the other people, in particular including contact with the educator. Regardless of whether the first classist is silent and shy, or on the contrary, shows some excitability and does not control spontaneous reactions, he or she is forced to break the barrier of fear due to "the unknown". In this situation – says the Swiss psychologist – Aletha Solter – the student is not even helped by positive grades and praises from teachers, mistakenly identified with motivation for joint actions, or finally by various punishments. A child breaks fear only when is interested in the theme of play that strengthens its mood and when feels valued. In this case the importance of empathy and creation of the elemental interpersonal ties does not need to be emphasized. Contacts between children are not less important, at least those, which involve sharing of

---

[2] L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, Frankfurt am Main, 1953.

[3] J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1990.

[4] H.G. Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), Tübingen 1960; P. Ricoeur, *La conflit des interprétations. Essais d'herméneutique*, Points, Paris 1969.

[5] E.D. Hirsch, *The Aims of Interpretation*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1976.

the first impressions. They depend on arising the willingness of cooperating with others, that is based on solving interesting school tasks[6]. According to the Dutch linguist and writer Gaston Dorren – as one can notice when reading his, available in Polish translation, book *Babel*[7] – every use of speech builds an emotional attitude towards the language, consisting in distinguishing what is "easy-difficult", "ours – foreign", "liked – discarded", "beautiful – ugly".

Essential are student's first experiences with different language functions. The process of speech retention usually begins with a contact – fatic function. Very early on, the student naturally notes, that when establishing contact with classmates or a teacher, important is the way in which presents himself or herself through greeting, presenting his or her name, or expressing a desire of sharing impressions. The fatic function (fatic) turns out to be a phenomenon closely related to the conative function (conative) – addressed in speech to a specific person or group of students, and at the same time associated with the emotic function (emotic), that reflects the involvement of the speaker. These listed functions – as noted by the student – play an important role depending on the choice of words: appropriate nouns, adjectives, verbs and their sequence, the way of accenting the words, and the overall intonation of voice. Above all, however, the child becomes aware of what the key-informative (referential) function is, that involves the transmission of the content of statements. Establishing the interpersonal ties – as the student learns – is conditioned by the fundamental difference between the ascertainment of the certain content and the question or request, and the imposition of one's own opinion as opposed to the expected response from the recipient[8]. Already during the first contact, and especially at the time of cooperation and joint actions of the group, the seeds of possible dialogue are being formed, constituting the basis for the intercourse in and outside the classroom. Finally, every speaker becomes directed – not yet fully being consciously and rationally justified by the meta-linguistic function (metalingual), that provides clarification of the output code: to what extent it is a code, that is common and understood by everyone, and to what extent it is strange and illegible language.

It is during the varied language functions that the student notices that there are hitherto undeclared or disregarded contradictions of a sociocultural character. Even usage of the elementary lexical means reveal from which environment student comes from and what factors had previously influenced his or her communication

---

[6] A. Solter, *Bez trestů a odměn. Výchova spokojeného dítěte ve věku 2–8 let*, Stanislav Juhaňák – Triton, Praha 2019, s. 16.

[7] G. Dorren, *Babel: w dwadzieścia języków dookoła świata*, przeł. A. Sak, Wydawnictwo Karakter, Kraków 2019.

[8] J. Porayski-Pomsta, *O rozwoju mowy dziecka, dwa studia*, Dom Wydawniczy i Handlowy Elipsa, Warszawa 2015.

with the environment. Family conditioning comes to light, and not only in the sin-gle-parent families, e.g. where only a mother is raising a child alone, but also in the "parents changing partners" families or homes struggling with the social problems, e.g. unemployment, or lack of time dedicated to the child due to overwork, etc. In such an environment, students do not always participate in conversations with adults, and meet with the lack of interest and questioning about their needs. In Po-land – and beyond its field – the social, material and cultural differences between the rural and urban families still play an important role, i.e. between the insufficient cul-tural background limited only to the elementary mass culture patterns and the broad environment with the access to library resources, cinemas, theaters, or participation in the social and amateur activities. Different living conditions in the countryside and cities affect also the quality of language communication. As soon as a child learns to speak and understands more, adults gradually introduce them to their world of values differentiated mentally and linguistically. There are many kind of adults, who represent towards the child various social roles and relations. The ways of valuing, which convey differ to a greater or lesser extent – notes Jadwiga Puzynina[9]. The language of an early school age child in the countryside is not accidentally infiltrated with the spelling errors along with the dialect or slang accretions, more-over, lexical, syntax or syntactic means reveal its habit of speaking in a fragmentary manner, associated with the traditional environmental idioms. And vice versa, in the city, children imitate words and phrases related to the commerce or social internet platforms and all kinds of speech of various celebrities[10].

Important is also the historical context of the language, understood as testi-monies of communication among children, especially in the significant historical moments. The problem is, however, that we obtain these testimonies indirectly, from a distance, on the basis of non-fiction or fiction, that depend on the adopted concept of the text's author. A typical example might be the famous book by Zo-fia Nałkowska *Medaliony* (*Medallions*, 1946), written shortly after World War II, where, on the basis of the collected documents, we find the evidence of the course of the German occupation and the Holocaust. For example, in the story *Dorośli i Dzieci w Oświęcimiu* (*Adults and Children in Oświęcim*), we encounter the ap-parent indifference of children towards the shocking dailiness:

> [...] Not yet having the complete set needed to fill up the gas chamber, about 600 children, intended for suffocation, were kept locked up. They knew what was going on. They ran around the camp and hid, but the SS drove them back to the block. You could hear them crying and asking for help.

---

[9] J. Puzynina, *Język wartości*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1992, s. 120–121.

[10] J. Bralczyk, *Mówi się. Porady językowe profesora Bralczyka*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2020.

– We don't want go to gas! We want to stay alive!

Someone knocked on the window of doctor's room. When he opened it, two boys came completely naked and frozen in the cold. One was twelve and the other fourteen years old. They managed to escape from the car while it drove close to the gas chamber. The doctor hid the boys at his place, gave them clothes and fed them. On a trusted man at the crematorium, he demanded that he confirm the reception of two more corpses over those, which he had received in fact. Exposing himself to danger at all times, he harbor the boys in his house until the moment, when they could reappear in the camp without arousing suspicion. Doctor Epstein, professor of Prague, walking down the street between the blocks of the Auschwitz camp on a sunny summer morning, saw two children still alive. They were sitting on the sand at the road and sliding some sticks over it.

He stopped by them and asked:

– What are you doing here, children?

And he received the answer:

– We play in burning Jews[11].

In this passage, we read reproduction of the children's speech from the perspective of memories of an adult witness. A similar problem in the following account is encountered in the novel by Henryk Grynberg, *Żydowska Wojna* (*Jewish War*, 1965)[12], in which the author applies an autobiographical point of view and writes about a little boy hiding together with his mother in a rural environment, where they have received assistance from people who were aware of their Jewish origin. The narrator tells the story in such a way that the reader gets the impression that he sees the world through eyes of the child. Expedient is also an intervention of a priest, who paraphrases children's speech during the subassembly of the mass. The names of Abraham, Isaac, and Moses are given, and the narrator suggests that the child takes their fate with emotion because he likes the melody of the words. At some point the boy naively asks his mother why Jesus was crucified and who did it? When he finds out that Jews did it, he asks: why? His mother explains that if He did not live among Jews, others would crucify Him. The third example is derived from Bohdan Wojdowski's documentary prose *Chleb rzucony umarłym* (*The Bread thrown to the dead*, 1971)[13]. Also in this case we look at daily life of the Warsaw Ghetto through the eyes of teenagers and young children who secretly smuggle eating and other necessities from the city. Although they do not describe specific situations, their conversations take on meaning depending on who they like or dislike. We also cannot ignore the image of postwar times in Tadeusz Nowak's novel *Dwunastu* (*The Twelve*, 1974). Childhood experiences refer to the area of Tarnów; in the Chapter VIII we find an example of a small boy's way of thinking, anchored in the highlander's imagination. When UB officers came to visit an old man who secretly hid

---

[11] Z. Nałkowska, *Medaliony*, Czytelnik, Warszawa 1946.

[12] H. Grynberg, *Żydowska wojna*, Czytelnik, Warszawa 1965.

[13] B. Wojdowski, *Chleb rzucony umarłym*, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1971.

partisans in his shed, they dismantled its construction and partly took its pieces to the police station, in order to unscramble the scribbled inscriptions on the wall. The children's commentary is: "they arrested the shed"[14].

However, the quoted differences seem to be well known, in fact, on their basis, hardly anyone pays attention to the false belief of the primary school children, that the speech is always spontaneous, unprepared and, in fact, informal. Some educators disregard the difficulties that children encounter at school, before they learn that speech is a subject to certain rules. When confronting with the teacher's requirements, a student suddenly faces the obligation to speak the complete sentences, together with the need of pronouncing sounds correctly, relating prepositions to nouns, emphasizing some syllables, etc. Only at the school time, students learn about construction of a sentence necessary in a communicative situation, mastering the creation of polite phrases, short questions, or formulating of the meaningful responses to the closing phrases. What's more, it is only in the framework of the elementary exercises of how to formulate thoughts, that they learn a specific phrases by heart and thus achieve the intended effect in establishing contacts: conative, emotional, and cognitive. The clash of the informal speech with the formal speech can be mitigated by introducing some game elements that follow the principle – first imitating the pattern, then changing the initial example. The development of these skills is facilitated by words that rhyme, and are rhythmic or modulated through intonation.

Emphasizing the sociocultural and historical context of speech, we do not overestimate the initial assumptions of the elementary communication. Even earlier experiences are gained by students when reading written or printed texts. Children are realizing that language can be a document of our thinking, experiencing and striving for something. Even previously prepared speech is always fleeting and snapshot, in contrary the written statement is characterized – according to the essence of the so called rule of illocution – by the perpetuation of content and continuation of the way of oneself expression. Thanks to writing, the language takes a material form and allows the user to return to the phrases that he enjoys the most, or vice versa – to those that bother him or her. The student, especially in the third grade, learns that the selection of the printed word can refer to the past, and occur again in the various periods of time and circumstances. Students notice differences between language as a medium of content, and language evaluating printed words and sentences. Children find themselves in a world of different opinions about the text they have read[15].

---

[14] T. Nowak, *Dwunastu*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 1974.

[15] A. Smuszkiewicz, *Literatura dla dzieci. Podręcznik dla studentów kierunków pedagogicznych*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2015, s. 117.

Let us recall an example from the initial stage of the reading skills: in any sentence taken from a primer such as "Ala has a daddy", a student is able to apply substitution, replace the subject with other words, or reverse their order by seeking an answer to the question how these sentences differ.

The same applies to replacement of a verb with the other words that describe how people behave towards each other. Easy to learn are also the introduced diminutive forms. By reading the text aloud, as part of a simple enumeration, students learn about the interrelationships between the meaning of the word and its sound. In addition, sound-like words can be also used for practical purposes: counting or describing, sometimes for prioritizing with no particular purpose, or to create rhymes that please in themselves.

Only after completing the mentioned stages of working with the language in the linguistic, psychological, sociocultural and historical contexts, educators appreciate the synthesizing knowledge of the cognitive education, being motivated by the paradigm of the gradual learning by the student[16]. It is important to shape the ability to "control attention", i.e. to focus on a stimulus, in the form of a topic, problem or question, and to reject content that is not related to the stimulus. The second level of shaping reflection is based on the "working bubble", i.e. the ability to remember and recall earlier information necessary to solve the problem. The third level are the "planning actions", i.e. the ability to combine already acquired content with the newly learned content, in other words a reasonable usage of expectations – anticipations. Such kind of researchers' attitude can be accepted, however, under condition that we do not limit ourselves during the education process exclusively to the rational behavior, but we do combine cognitive thinking with imagination and feelings of children, in order to acquire important values – patterns of human behavior to suit the needs of our times. In this case, it is necessary to use literature addressed to the young reader and its poetic function of the language. Referring to the opinion of American literary Mary Louise Pratt[17], nowadays it is no longer enough to define the poetic function of the language developed by Roman Jakobson and other structuralists, that within it, the writer and reader pay attention to the language as such, especially to its meaning and positive sound, created in a specific way. Pratt rightly emphasizes the relation of differences between "non-literary" and "literary" from the expectations of creators and readers related to the genre forms. The participants of the communication aspire to mutual understanding of style of the artistic utterances.

---

[16] Ľ. Liptáková, M. Klimovič, *Pupils Executive Functions Through Processes of Text Comprehension,* „O dieťati, jazyku, literatúre: časopis pre otázky rozvíjania komunikačnej a literárnej kompetencie" [On Child, Language and Literature] 2015, č. 2, s. 9–27.

[17] M.L. Pratt, *Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literaty Discourse*, Bloomington, London 1977.

If a small readers were to meet – at the educator's initiative – with the La Fontaine fairy tale developed by Krylov, Brzechwa, or any other of the contemporary authors, we should be aware of the fact, that the child had previously heard some fairy tales at home on the radio, TV, or other media. Its initial impressions are strengthened afterwards by looking through books with leporello drawings or loose pages dedicated to coloring together with the simple text in the verse form. In any case, the curiosity of a little recipient is born together with the aesthetic attitude of repeating, supplementing and developing a specific pattern. As an example can serve the fairy tale about the fox and crow, where both characters behave accordingly to the allegory, similarly to people (anthropomorphization) or even show the characteristics of a specific person (personification), not only because the author has created such a fictional situation, but because he used the form expected by the recipient and at the same time required by the reading. Allegory allows a novice reader to see a kind of conflict with a simultaneously arising idea of how to solve it. Too self-confident raven, looking at the world egoistically from the higher position, probably evokes in the fox an attitude that can be summarized in the following way: what cannot be done by force, can be achieved through cunning. Similarly, if a child encounters a classic tale, also in this case it is a matter of consolidating previous experiences with a type of narrative that allows recognizing a fantasy world based on the certain rules. The first signal constituting entrance to the world of fiction is a fantasy world frame, starting with the words: "long, long time ago", "behind seven mountains, behind seven rivers" and ending with the formula: "they lived happily ever after", "and I was there drinking honey and wine". The second signal are the traditional characters and the division of their roles: i.e. the king had three sons, one of whom is always an outsider and in order to win a prominent place in the hierarchy or the hand of the beloved, he has to overcome three tasks, while he encounters a helper or some sorcery object. It is the repetition of motifs and the formal definition of the character – as Władimir Propp already wrote in the 1930s, pointing out the key importance of the role, not only in the existing fairy tales[18].

Thanks to differences between the factual daily understandable reality and the world of fantasy, that creates extraordinary attitudes, two attitudes towards the language emerge as the function of the instrument of our learning, experiencing and choosing the type of human existence. Users of colloquial discourse are inclined to use mental shortcuts, succumbed to uncontrollable emotions and choose a path life in accordance with accepted social customs, as if they did not care about the individual thinking, but only about the collective thinking schemes. As long as the current language is accompanied by literal and thoughtless treat-

---

[18] V. Propp, *Morfologiâ volšebnoj skazki*, Labirint, Moskva 2005.

ment of speech, we are on the verge of being full of fears, suspicion and hostility. And vice versa – users of the literary discourse, apply various aspects of the language system, guided by metaphorical thinking. They are aware of the variations of communication between humans, and stick to the principle of alternatives – they perceive the world without prejudices and hostility[19].

The marked differences between these two attitudes towards language do not mean that we underestimate the "anchoring" of speech or writing in the "home" conditions of the world of the "little homelands"! However, it is only the multi-faceted system of the speech and its application during the process of developing of the Polish language, that leads us to the real, not only declared, use of the wealth of the national culture and to understanding of the foreign cultures.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Austin J.L., *How to Do Things with Words,* Oxford University Press, Oxford 1990.

Bralczyk J., *Mówi się. Porady językowe profesora Bralczyka*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2020.

Dorren G., *Babel: w dwadzieścia języków dookoła świat*a, przeł. A. Sak, Wydawnictwo Karakter, Kraków 2019.

Gadamer H.-G., *Wahrheit und Methode*, J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), Tübingen 1960.

Grynberg H., *Żydowska wojna*, Czytelnik, Warszawa 1965.

Hirsch E.D., *The Aims of Interpretation*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1976.

Kurcz I., *Psychologia języka i komunikacji*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa 2000.

Liptáková Ľ., Klimovič M., *Stimulating Pupils Executive Functions Through Processes of Text Comprehension,* „O dieťati, jazyku, literatúre: časopis pre otázky rozvíjania komunikačnej a literárnej kompetencie" [On Child, Language and Literature] 2015, č. 2, s. 9–27.

Nałkowska Z., *Medaliony*, Czytelnik, Warszawa 1946.

Nowak T., *Dwunastu*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 1974.

Porayski-Pomsta J., *O rozwoju mowy dziecka, dwa studia*, Dom Wydawniczy i Handlowy Elipsa, Warszawa 2015.

Poslední P., *Jiný Conrad*: *Eseje o literární kultuře*, Univerzita Pardubice, Pardubice 2016.

Pratt M.L., *Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literaty Discourse*, Bloomington, London 1977.

Propp V., *Morfologiâ volšebnoj skazki*, Labirint, Moskva 2005.

Puzynina J., *Język wartości*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 1992.

Ricoeur P., *La conflit des interprétations. Essais d'herméneutique*, Points, Paris 1969.

Smuszkiewicz A., *Literatura dla dzieci. Podręcznik dla studentów kierunków pedagogicznych*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2015.

Solter A., *Bez trestů a odměn. Výchova spokojeného dítěte ve věku 2–8 let*, Stanislav Juhaňák – Triton, Praha 2019.

Wittgenstein L., *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, Frankfurt am Main 1953.

Wojdowski B., *Chleb rzucony umarłym*, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1971.

---

[19] P. Poslední, *Jiný Conrad: Eseje o literární kultuře*, Univerzita Pardubice, Pardubice 2016.

Summary

The concept of the language as an instrument for children, that leads to their mutual understanding in the classes 1–3, depends on the comprehensive educators approach to the relations between linguistics and the philosophy of language, developmental psychology, sociology of culture, and the history of the Polish society. The child's undertaking of the school education imposes on the teacher the obligation to accompany it not only in mastering the elementary knowledge of the native language's grammar system, but also in creating situations that overcome students fear of making difficult decisions when solving interesting tasks. When using the functions of the language: fatic, communicative, informational, expressive or meta-linguistic, pupils go through the several stages from the incorrect speech to correct speech, and they master the elementary structure of the reading texts intended for the little recipients. The described process would be strengthened depending on the pupil's social background, and conditioned culturally and environmentally. This in turn affects the perception of the poetic language function and aesthetic attitude towards art.