Introduction

Adam Głaz, David S. Danaher, and Przemysław Łozowski

1. The Linguistic Worldview: a Brief Historical Survey

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

---

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

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

\(^3\) By using this spelling variant, rather than *world-view* or *world view*, we follow Bartmiński (2009/2012) in order to underscore the integrity of a speech community’s mental image of the world conditioned by linguistic and extralinguistic (experiential, cognitive, cultural) factors. For a discussion of other related terms, such as the *linguistic image/picture of the world* see Tabakowska and Łozowski (both in this volume).
Augmentis Scientiarum (1623): the philosopher claimed that the unique structure and certain idiosyncratic properties of languages provide access to what the communities using these languages feel and think. The progressive interest in psychological and sociological aspects of language was continued by the 18th-c. German thinkers Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Johann Georg Hamann and Johann Gottfried Herder. Hamann and Herder saw a connection between language and the spirit (psyche) of the community or nation that speaks it. These observations were soon afterwards developed by Wilhelm von Humboldt, who is usually credited with originating the idea of the linguistic worldview. Humboldt says:

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

---

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

7 “The form of our grammar compels us to select a few traits of thought we wish to express and suppresses many other aspects which the speaker has in mind and which the hearer supplies according to his fancy ... There is little doubt that thought is thus directed in various channels...” (Boas, 1942, quoted in Lucy, 1992, p. 15)

“Language and our thought-grooves are inextricably interwoven, are, in a sense, one and the same.” (Sapir, 1921, p. 232)

“...the best approach is through an exotic language, for in its study we are at long last pushed willy-nilly out of our ruts.” (Whorf, 1956 [1941], p. 138; in all quotes, the emphasis is ours, A.G., D.D., and PŁ.)

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

2. Jerzy Bartmiński’s Cognitive Ethnolinguistic Worldview

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

9 In some approaches (Maćkiewicz, 1999), worldview in the sense of an ideological, political, or religious outlook on the world is superordinate with regard to the linguistic worldview. There are two “modes of existence” of the worldview thus understood: mental (a component of people’s consciousness) and an objectification of this abstract mental construct in the form of “traces”: art, customs, rituals, gestures, mimicry, social organizations, relationships, and language. It is to the linguistic “trace” of what is in people’s minds that this book is devoted.
and yet it is the “Lublin ethnolinguistic LWV” initiative that functions as the volume’s conceptual axis.\textsuperscript{10}

Bartmiński defines the linguistic worldview as

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

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

\textsuperscript{10} According to Żuk (2010), the ideas of Polish scholars that later developed into the LWV can be traced back to 1930s. For example, Ajdukiewicz (1934) noted a dependence of one’s scientific worldview on the conceptual apparatus used for the explication of experience. Szober (1939), in turn, discussed the picture of a human being projected by Polish phraseology. However, the first explicit definition of the linguistic worldview in Polish linguistic literature came from Walery Pisarek four decades later: it is “the picture/view of the world reflected in a given national language” (Pisarek, 1978, p. 143; translation ours, A.G., D.D., and P.Ł.). As we will see, in Bartmiński’s approach, the view is not reflected, need not be inherent in a national language, and does not really relate to the world (in the sense of physical reality).
may have a universal appeal, cf. the many diverse contributions to the present volume.\textsuperscript{11}

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

3. Controversies Surrounding the LWV

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

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

\textsuperscript{11} Or James Underhill’s recent book *Ethnolinguistics and Cultural Concepts* (2012), concerned with contemporary journalistic discourse.

\textsuperscript{12} For a fuller account and exemplification, see Bartmiński (2009/2012) as well chapters in this volume by Bartmiński, Niebrzegowska-Bartmińska, and Prorok & Głaz.
2. Is the LWV program a pursuit of a linguistic or a textual picture? Again, Bartmiński sees no reason to isolate a distinct textual worldview or even a textual component of the LWV because “linguistic” subsumes both what is systemic and what is conventionalized (though not necessarily systemic in the structuralist understanding), as well as what is contained in specific texts that contain more or less predictable, individual concretizations of the system and norm, and even their violations or modifications – but always capitalize on both the system and the convention of social norms. (Bartmiński, 2001b, p. 32; translation ours)

The view is exemplified in several chapters in this volume.

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

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

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

---


14 Stereotyped texts are texts that are “reproduced many times and [are] in effect socially established, with the status of linguistic ‘plates’ or ‘matrices’” (Bartmiński, 2009/2012, p. 17), such as proverbs, anecdotes, fables, tales, etc.
linguistic” data,\textsuperscript{15} i.e. “conventionalized patterns of behavior” (Bartmiński, 2009/2012, p. 34), customs, social practices often with the use of artifacts, and these may or may not be accompanied by language (i.e. the practice of putting iron on one’s feet to make them hard – this corroborates iron’s hardness, its basic property entrenched in the Polish word \textit{żelazo}\textsuperscript{16}). This volume has the ambition to show that this kind of wide-ranging approach is fruitful and well-designed, with some chapters focusing on the system (e.g. Nowosad-Bakalarczyk or Piekarczyk), some others on the system-\textit{cum}-text (e.g. Filar, Wysocka) or text-vs.-system (e.g. Pajdzińska, Vaňková, Danaher), yet others on texts to a greater extent than on the system (Gicala, Vergara). Some make use of questionnaires (Brzozowska) and some also include co-linguistic data (Prorok & Głaz or Bielak).

4. This Volume

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

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

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

\textsuperscript{16} See Prorok & Głaz (this volume) or Głaz & Prorok (forthcoming) for details. Incidentally, the etymology of the English \textit{iron} shows similar traces: it comes from Old-English \textit{isærn} ‘holy metal’ or ‘strong metal,’ from Proto-Indo-European \textit{*is-(e)ro-} ‘powerful.’
role in that domain. The contributions in Part I, “The LWV and the Poetic Text,” deal with the linguistic worldview broadly understood. This part starts with Anna Pajdzińska’s useful historical survey of the linguistic worldview idea, followed by analyses of selected fragments of Wisława Szymborska’s poetry. The next chapter, by Angieszka Gicala, also takes Szymborska’s poetry as material for analysis. The next two chapters deal with Czech. Irena Vaňková is also concerned with poetry but additionally offers a theoretical discussion of the relationship between language, thinking, and reality. David Danaher investigates the Czech concept of svědomí ‘conscience’ in the writings of Václav Havel. The section is closed by José Vergara’s attempt to come to grips with the elusive cognitive and linguistic play in the works of the Russian experimental writer Daniil Kharms.

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

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

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

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

5. Envoi

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

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

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

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

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

Adam Głaz and Przemysław Łozowski, Lublin, Poland
David S. Danaher, Madison, WI, USA

February 25, 2013
References


References


Żuk, Grzegorz. (2010). Językowy obraz świata w polskiej lingwistycie przełomu wieków. In Małgorzata Karwatowska & Adam Siwiec (Eds.), *Przeobrażenia w języku i komunikacji medialnej na przełomie XX i XXI wieku* (pp. 239-257). Chełm: Wydawnictwo Drukarnia BEST PRINT.