Communication as a Life Process Volume Two

Studies in Ecolinguistics
Volume 2

Communication as a Life Process Volume Two:

The Holistic Paradigm in Language Sciences

Edited by

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and Małgorzata Haładewicz-Grzelak

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part Two: Mainstream Interdisciplinary Language Studies: Discourse Analysis, Neostructuralism, Cultural Linguistics

PREFACE

The philosophical and methodological perspective we set in this volume for consideration and contemplation is both new and renewed. On the one hand, there is a tradition of process-orientation and interrelatedness started by Ch. S. Peirce and A. N. Whitehead, in the philosophical and semiotic fields of the mid-twentieth century, which makes the present book proposal a particular resurrection or revival of those research perspectives. On the other hand, though, in the vast, multimodal research ground of modern mainstream language and communicational studies, scholars have not identified themselves with Peircean or Whiteheadean philosophical pathways. It was Ferdinand de Saussure and Roman Jakobson and their formal/structural approach to human language that paved the way for modern linguistic work. As a result, contemporary linguistics has been confined into the (neo)structuralist, cognitive, or neo-Darwinian philosophical frames. In this sense, the dynamic, ecological perspective delineated in the present volume will indeed be novel and fresh, sometimes maybe too futuristic - although we hope still worth considering - for the majority of linguistic scholars today.

Communication as a life process. The holistic paradigm in language sciences is a continuation of the project initiated with the first volume in 2017. Our aim was to continue explorations of the ecological aspects of communication processes. As in the previous volume, the range of topics, perspectives and domains covers a wide array of analytical categories and modalities (e.g. music, visual discourse, religious discourse). However, the overall focus on harmonious and fulfilling communication binds this multifariousness.

We can notice paradoxical complementarities in our vision of this volume. To build the science of language and communication on the most recent philosophical and methodological proposals, which seems a logical thing to do as we are to account for communicational phenomena from the most advanced scientific perspective obtainable today, we propose to implement into the scientific method the two alleys of scientifically accessing reality, that is, the third-person observation-experiment-algorithm method being the traditional method of doing science; and the inner, first-person insights of contemplative science, in a sense of phenomenological *flaneurie* through explored cultural landscapes being, again both a renewal

and a progressive, avant-garde scholarly approach. After all, before new scientific models and theories come into being and incite scientific experimentation and validation phase, it is the insight or intuition of a singular thinker that starts the process. And, throughout the process, the collective effort of the scientific community becomes continually complemented by the individual effort of the thinker. Why not, finally, grant this essential contemplative phase of scientific work a stable scientific status?

In order to model theoretically the process of communication within the living system and between living systems, we need the interdisciplinary, grid approach of ecolinguistics. Such complementarities as the structure-approach and the process-approach build up the methodology proposed hereby. The pre-supposed and inertia-driven dominance of cognicentrism of Western humanistic and social sciences is complemented in the volume by emerging and growing in strength ecologism. And the two models of the world that sciences discuss today – the Newtonian model and the post-Newtonian model – become for us the two complementary scientific plateaus to investigate human communication.

The present volume contains chapters grouped in two categories: studies crossing the boundaries of modern mainstream linguistics towards language and communication research in the eco-holistic paradigm (Part One); and texts exploring the interdisciplinary plane of mainstream cognitive linguistics, (neo)structural linguistics, discourse analysis, religious discourse and cultural linguistics (Part Two).

Marta Bogusławska-Tafelska undertakes a discussion how to approach the problem of teaching Western people the precepts of the holistic paradigmatic framework; what type of discourse to apply in communicating the recent scientific findings which, after all, violate most of the intuitions and belief systems Westerners have about life processes and themselves. Dr Bogusławska-Tafelska looks at two discourse planes reached for this purpose today, namely the spiritual discourse and the discourse of ecologism. Both conceptual-terminological types of intellectual exposition are used currently in scientific debates and academic didactics to promote and teach the emerging now, collective communicational/relational space of ‘the culture of consciousness’.

The chapter authored by **Katarzyna Mazur-Kajta** describes the challenges and importance of harmony in interpersonal communication. Based on the interviews performed in 2017 with young Polish people living in Opole Silesia, and the literature review, the author approaches the different sides of harmony from the Polish and Chinese points of view.

Wenjuan Zhou in her text discusses Chinese ecolinguistics as a new harmonious life paradigm in which harmonious discourse analysis can be a new agenda. The author maintains that ecolinguistics in the global context should go beyond the dualistic Newtonian-Cartesian thinking. Chinese ecological wisdom embodied in the tenets of Chinese ecoliguistics can offer valuable insights for the future linguistic research.

The holistic paradigm has been replacing today a more constricted, materialistic framework of Descartes, Newton or Darwin, to mention but three well-recognised of its builders.

The chapter authored by **Alina Andreea Dragoescu Urlica** explores the role of language in the life-sustaining interactions between species and the environment. It calls into question the linguistic-cultural superstructures and paradigmatic constructs which underpin communication processes. The discussion proposes an eco-holistic re-consideration of communication as the process of meaning co-construction.

Aleksandra Włodarczak, Agnieszka Kossowska and Małgorzata Haładewicz-Grzelak in their chapter raise the topic of the ecology of classroom instruction in the education of children with hearing disabilities. The study reports a classroom investigation carried out in two special schools for deaf and hard of hearing children, cast against the tenets of the ecology of communication (cf. e.g. Puppel, 2014; Bogusławska-Tafelska, 2016) and with the use of the concept for a communicative community introduced by Ludwik Zabrocki (1963). The results of the pilot study point to the rift between the two educational resources of this community, ensuing from the lack of a uniform educational strategy. The education of children with hearing impairments in Poland is shown to be a total refutation of ecology of mind. Bilingualism is proposed as a remedial strategy.

Julia Kim looks at the interfaces between language/communication and cultural belief systems within the realm of religious discourse. Her study comparatively analyzes a Korean text and an English text on women's ordination written by Baptist scholars to examine what role culture might play in advancing religious views. Some of the unique features found in the Korean text include repeated parallelisms and rhetorical questions as well as emphasis on group identity, while the English text resorts to lexico-semantic ploys.

Ioan Milică's research aim is to put in the extended perspective the structural, typological, functional and cultural study of proverbs by adding comprehensive historical frames to the model. The author in his study goes beyond a mere systemic analysis of proverbs and argues that 'the variation of proverbs across time, space, social structure and style should not be

regarded as a monolithic process but as a lively competition among discursive traditions. The history of each text-type presents itself as the background against which the life of proverbs should be observed'.

Hee Sook Lee-Niinioja, a designer, artist and explorer of spiritual horizons, looks at semiotic processes, the layers of meaning and the text-image dynamics in literary writings. To illustrate her theoretical perspectives, the author puts to analysis Umberto Eco's 1980 historical novel *The Name of the Rose.* Her explorations of a mediaeval soul are illustrated with her own artwork, relating to the psychology of colors.

Aneta Smolińska's chapter is a continuation of her multimodality research on fragrance advertising within the context of high and low context cultures. The study evolves at the conflux of sociolinguistics and anthropolinguistics, focussing on intertextuality and graphology in advertising messages. The results show that the choice of typeface and layout used in perfume advertisements is not fortuitous and it does not only focus on the product but also on the potential buyer. Particular taxonomies (low versus high context) emphasize different kinds of emotional bonds to make the audience involved in the advertising communication process.

Artistic expression, being a communication process itself, also breaks off the reliance on convention in its semiotic processes of meaning making. According to **Anna Granat-Janki**, the upcoming trend in the poetics of modern music has it that clear-cut interpretation of its sense and meaning is no longer possible. The music of contemporary sur-conventional composers is a testimony to the time when intertextuality became the fundamental feature of art. The composers juggle with music of the past so that the semantic field of their music is unclear and ambiguous. Sur-conventional works provoke multiple and diverse associations and this is where their artistic value lies.

The next chapter analyses various displays of gender asymmetry in Polish sports language. The major part is dedicated to feminatives, i.e. female names for sports competitors. **Brygida Sawicka-Stępińska** describes word-formation mechanisms and verifies the presence of sports feminatives in the most popular Polish online dictionaries in relation to their masculine equivalents.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Last but not least, when it comes to acknowledgments, I have noticed that no matter how many names we include in our thanks giving address, we can hardly embrace all the dear people who have been participating in the process, at some point, in some way; and we can hardly put into linguistic forms the depth and value of the fondness we cherish for them. Nevertheless, hereby I express my heartfelt gratitude to all my friends, scholars and students around me who, throughout a decade or more, have been open to the ecological and holistic ideas in modern language/communicational studies, and who helped me to put the ecolinguistic message across to the linguistic community.

When I think about it, I feel deeply grateful to peculiar, pulsating, ever-living life everywhere. My ecolinguistic volumes written or co-written so far are the reflection of my regard and appreciation for all-that-is.

Marta Bogusławska-Tafelska
March 2018

PART ONE:

FROM COGNITIVISM TO ECOLOGISM IN MODERN SCIENCE: COOPERATION, FLOW, AND HARMONY EMERGING

‘A CULTURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS’: TOWARDS FUNCTIONAL EDUCATIONAL MODELS TO IMPLEMENT IT

MARTA BOGUSŁAWSKA-TAFELSKA

Abstract

A modern holistic paradigm, the framework of which is based on the findings of the 20th c. physics and the research within new sciences (the systems theory, epigenetics, new biology, CAM research in Western medicine, to mention but these), enters the mainstream Western science and non-academic domain of the collective consciousness. The social/cultural result of this process is the emergence of ‘the culture of consciousness’ (cf. Walach, 2015 a; 2015 b). In the present chapter, we look at this paradigmatic shift; we provide a concise characterisation of the process; and we put to debate the optimal conceptual-terminological set of tools to think, talk and educate about the new paradigm which is in the process of coming into being. The ecological metaphor in (i) discourse and in (ii) ecological thinking seems particularly useful here, as it allows to express and consider the new paradigm in a relatively neutral, light and nonbiased way.

Key terms: the culture of consciousness, the holistic paradigm, ecolinguistics, the conceptual-terminological plane, paradigmatic shift

1. Introduction

The mainstream cognitivist paradigm dominating present-day Western sciences, among them being modern linguistics, educational science; the paradigm which is the framework of thought and reaction models of the public (non)consciousness of the West, is not equipped philosophically or methodologically to study creative behaviours of humans. While it can be

attested today that all life systems are creative systems, that is, they are emergent on different layers of the systemic grid, at the same time the mainstream scientific tools we use in the research today allow for exploring re-creative life mechanisms, rooted in the material realm of objects, forms and conventional behaviours. Moreover, while we know today that life processes are local and nonlocal, material and non-material, chaotic and open (cf. Walach von Stillfried, 2011; Goli, 2016; Walleczek, 2000; Penrose, 2005), the cognitivist paradigm which is surpassing the scholarly work of the Western mainstream science, is not able to study life systems in their complexity and to embrace this processual and structural complementarity. And, it fails to offer good applicational proposals of how to effectively and successfully navigate one’s own self within and in relation to life systems (cf. Bogusławska-Tafelska, 2016). So, in order to attempt systematic studies and applicational studies to build useful models for education, (self) therapeutic programs, for holistic models of health and well-being, or for undisturbed and constructive communication processes among people, we need to step onto another conceptual-terminological platform, distinct from the mainstream cognitivist one. We need to shift the paradigm within which we consider and study life systems. That is, we need to construct our thinking styles and locate the research methodology within the holistic/post-Newtonian paradigm. When we step into the post-Newtonian, holistic paradigm, an entirely different and expanded understanding of ourselves and our reality around is possible (cf. Bogusławska-Tafelska, 2013; 2016). Scholars have come up with the concept of ‘the culture of consciousness’ to convey the image of what starts to emerge in our social life once we change our paradigmatic reference platform (Walach, 2015 a; 2015 b). The culture of consciousness, in the holistic paradigm, starts to replace the darwinism and cognicentrism of the Newtonian, materialistic life plane. In order to propose such a change of the reference platform and start teaching it – scholars need to consider the conceptual-terminological plane they will use. Towards this thought pathway is the present text heading. We point to an alternative conceptual-terminological departure point, namely to the ‘eco’ proposals in the Western science. What we put to debate here is that the ecological discourse in the research and the ecological thinking may work better in theory building and applications than the ‘spiritual’ conceptual-terminological framework or the discourse of theoretical physics used today in the philosophy of science and in the research within the holistic paradigm (Walach, 2005 a, 2005 b; Walach and Römer, 2011; Schmidt and Walach, 2014).

2. Collective (non)consciousness, individual mind and collective mind (culture)

The human mind in the cognitivist paradigm of the mainstream science today, taken as both the individual mental representation of reality (i.e. the mind of an individual person) and as the collective mental representation (i.e. culture), has developed not for creative/innovative behaviour but for the conservative behaviour. Professor of biology and physics A. Wróbel says that the main part of the incoming sensory information is used by the neuronal net in the automatized processes of recognition or is skipped out altogether in the preliminary selection process. Human perceptions represent a subjective derivative of the objective reality; this subjective picture is conditioned by the imperative to survive, not by inner constructing of the 'true' (objective) picture of this reality (cf. Wróbel, 2014). Hence, the primary task of the human brain (in cognitivism often regarded as a physiological basis of the abstract mental representation) is to react dynamically to what presents itself and protect the organism (cf. ibid.). Complex scrutiny of the situation is left to be done in the further organismic processing. The mind/brain is primarily focused on allowing relatively quick action/reaction.

Self-preservation of the individual or the collective self is in this meta-mechanism based on recursion and the presumption of the re-emergence of patterns in life processes endogenically and exogenically. What it means in simple terms is that the complex structure and processes of the mind (again: we talk about both the individual and the collective minds) have been developed evolutionarily:

(i) to receive neurocognitively the incoming data about life phenomena;
(ii) to filter the incoming wealth of data through a number of natural filters (i.e. neurobiological systems like the sensory systems, the filter of the human language, the filter of the older mental data already stored in the mental representation, to mention but these);
(iii) to absorb the selected data into the already existing mental data. This requires a continual process of re-structuring the mental representation.
(iv) As a result, to produce a very complex, dynamic and nonlinear mental filter to navigate a person's or a community's behavioural life.

This quick look at the anatomy and function of the human mental representation, through the lens of the classical computational model of the mind, allows us to notice that:

a. so many filters are active in the process of the data intake that the intake itself is very individualised and mind-specific;
b. new data get selected, filtered and then get internalised into the mental representation under fixed, determined conditions of the already existing mental texture of the receiver’s mind;
c. in consequence, all the work of the (individual or collective) mental representation is based on re-creative processes where the network of already internalised data and processes actively decides what will be allowed into the mental structures, how it will get interpreted and used in the future as a filter;
d. this re-organisational mechanism allows novel mental stuff to get through as well; however, the process is very obstructed, proceeds slowly; one can assume that it is not adjusted to the creativity/nonlinearity/chaos/nonlocality of life processes and life systems as such.

So, from this sketchy picture one can infer that the analysis of human cognition will not offer a scholar an insight into how humans co-create in the creative, never repeating itself reality of life on Earth. Cognitive models do not give us opportunity to perceive, understand, study and then teach the complex life machinery which is actually in operation when we are living our lives in the Earth’s ecosystem. In the mainstream, cognitivist paradigm of Western culture we do not have good (that is, explanatory and functional) theories and models of how to support and regulate the health of our organisms; we do not have functional models of how to relate to others successfully, how to communicate and move beyond relational conflicts, i.e. communication manipulation; we do not know how to organise a sustainable educational process for younger generations, education which would be harmonious, cooperative and bring stable learning effects. If we want to grasp with our intellect the inner structure and function of life processes and life systems which are open systems (a human being is an open system as well, cf. Walleczek, 2000), we need to seriously consider expanding our paradigmatic perspective and moving beyond the cognitivist paradigm towards the holistic/post-Newtonian paradigm (cf. diagram 1 below). The former can be described as materialistic, atomistic and deterministic, with the focus on closed systems; while the latter is characterised as unifying, probabilistic, open and nonlinear; this paradigm embraces chaotic systems which are

emergent in their nature. Walleczek (2000:16) writes about nonlinear phenomena and their common occurrence in life processes; these interactions are today studied by mechanics, hydrodynamics, electronics, nonlinear optics, acoustics, biochemistry or biodynamic models in the medical sciences, or other.

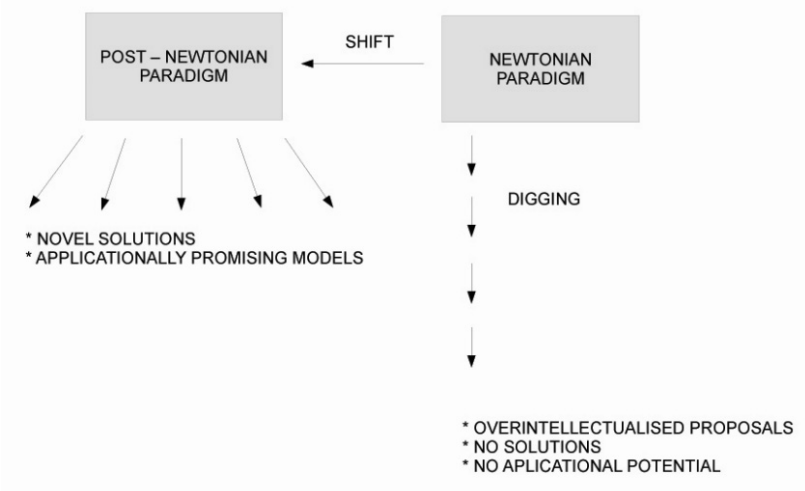

Diagram 1. A paradigmatic shift in modern Western sciences (Bogusławska-Tafelska, forthcoming, 2018).

In the subsequent section we present a brief characterisation of both paradigms as possible reference planes in science and in non-scientific domains of life.

3. The Newtonian paradigm

A paradigm is a coherent world view (cf. Patton, 2002: 71). It is defined as ‘a patterned set of assumptions concerning reality (ontology), knowledge of that reality (epistemology), and the particular ways of knowing that reality (methodology) (cit. Guba in Sale, et al., 2002: 44; cf. Cibangu, 2010). The term was introduced into the philosophy of science by Thomas Kuhn (1970). Paradigms are underlying research methodologies of the scientific research, they are the basis on which the styles of thinking emerge (cf. Fleck, 2007 a, 2007 b, 2007 c), and they start particular modes of reasoning, comprehending, and/or mediating reality (cit. Bogusławska-Tafelska, 2013: 30).

In classical thinking, used in the Newtonian paradigm, the reality we live in has the subsequent internal nature:

1. its structure is materialistic and atomistic (i.e. constructed out of separate elements such as atoms, molecules, physical parts);
2. deterministic (we can predict their behaviour using proper algorithms and linear, cause-effect thinking);
3. dualistic (our world is composed out of two types of substance: the mental substance, and the tangible, detectable by the senses material substance); the material structure can be scrutinized scientifically; mental substance, if ever, can be hypothesized about by philosophers;
4. reductionist in the sense of thinking and research heuristics having it that complex systems are analyzable through the process of breaking them down to simple constituent elements (cf. ibid.),
5. local, in the sense of all material objects being related to each other by means of material signals within the framework of the speed of light (cf. ibid.),
6. binary logic (Walach and von Stillfried, 2011: 190) according to which only one solution or description of a phenomenon is correct, the other options must be wrong.

4. The holistic paradigm

The holistic paradigm, to which we also refer in our publications as the post-Newtonian paradigm, has the following delineating characteristics:

a. **entanglement** is the basic ontology of reality we live in, with another class of relations between objects named **non-local relations**; there are effects but no classical cause; as H. Walach writes: 'entanglement refers to the correlated behaviour of elements of a system without interchange of energy or matter (...)' (2005: 554);
b. hence, there is **complementarity** between global and local variables; there are two planes of analysis, the material and quantum; though mutually exclusive, both are necessary to describe the totality of the system; while on the material, Newtonian plane there may be an illusion of separateness, binary oppositions, objectiveness, etc. In the underlying, micro-plane of life processes the post-Newtonian models describe the interconnected reality in which the paradox of unity and individuality is realized;

c. **holism/unity** of all life processes, indeterminism and an energy-based nature of the world, with matter being some form of condensed, slowed down, or 'frozen' energy; living systems lose their rigid boundaries, being analysed in context of other living systems; the connection between them is maintained yet there may be no physical cause for it;
d. the intracellular mechanisms (i.e. R. Penrose talks about the cell's microtubules, cf. Penrose, 1995) seem the best candidate to be **the meeting ground** of matter and the non-material reality of the field of consciousness/primary substance of all-that-is; this meeting point allows the human system (body and self) to be linked to the pulsating, **multidimensional grid of all life processes**, again both material and non-material; in the post-Newtonian model of reality the mind-body dilemma is addressed again (Bogusławska-Tafelska, 2013; 2015).

One can ask at this point, why we opt for a shift of a paradigm – why shall we replace one framework and one style of thinking for another? The basic reasons are twofold:

1. in our everyday lives and in the mainstream scientific work we have been experiencing a growing uneasiness while having to cope with 'anomalies' from the models what are supposed to explain life phenomena but turn out to be leaving much outside their scope. The Newtonian paradigm is tight and Western people have been experiencing this restriction for some time now; often this is experienced as some form of a crisis – inner/personal, social or collective; it was T. Kuhn who noticed this mechanism (cf. Chemero, 2009: 14; Bogusławska-Tafelska, forthcoming);
2. actually, the post-Newtonian paradigm we opt for here – offers an expansion, not an alternative. In other words, the holistic perspective embraces the material, Newtonian reality and adds a complementary non-material reality to the model of reality. What is more, the holistic paradigm proposes both realms - the material realm and the non-material realm of life - the co-primary status in the scheme of systems (Walach, 2005 a; 2015 a, b).

5. Functional and ideologically unbiased ‘ecological’ metaphor at the basis on ‘the ecological’ discourse and ‘ecological’ thinking in humanistic, social and life sciences

There are scholars who already work to adopt the holistic paradigm, consider its theoretical potential, and test the limits of the scientific method when applied to nonlocal and multidimensional living systems. There are academic courses which offer insight into these new proposals. Scholars have been testing the three conceptual – terminological fields with respect to their general usefulness in the research and academic teaching:

1. there are scholars who orient their research towards modern physics – use the concepts and terms from quantum physics, quantum theory and the related fields of present-day physics (cf. Jibu and Yasue, 1995; Vitiello, 2001; Plotnitsky, 2004; Walach and von Stillfried, 2011; Kitto et al. 2011);
2. there are scholars who have been adopting the ‘spiritual’ conceptual-terminological framework to study phenomena in the holistic perspective (cf. Walach, Schmidt and Jonas, 2011; Walach 2015a; 2015 b);
3. and there is an ‘ecological’ pathway in the modern scientific research across disciplines, which seems especially potent theoretically and applicationally (i.e. in the educational domain), because it does not carry with itself a heavy historiosophical and ideological bias (cf. Bogusławska-Tafelska, 2013; 2016).

Below, we will present the ‘eco’ road in sciences on the example of ecolinguistics - the interdisciplinary and applicationally promising paradigm within modern language and communication studies.

5.1 Ecolinguistics as new linguistics within the holistic paradigm

Human language is not only a system of forms and bodily or cognitive processes. This mainstream linguistic stance gets expanded by the ecolinguistic meta-theory, in which human language belongs to the category of life processes.

The conceptualisation of human language as a living organism, the idea which paved the way for treating language as a part of an ecosystem, was proposed by the German linguist August Schleicher (Drogosz, 2010: 64). The metaphor of the ecology of language and the language ecosystem were introduced into linguistics by the Norwegian-American linguist Einar

Haugen in the 1970s. Since Haugenian first publications, the ecology of language as a scholarly program split into several more or less connected linguistic pathways.

Today, ecolinguistics as being proposed in our research, re-defines several basic parameters of human language, i.e.:

1. the deeply underlying philosophical position is different, as ecolinguistics proposes a change of the paradigmatic plane to think about and study human language/communication. The ecological meta-theory of language shifts thinking and research procedures from the Newtonian, materialistic - deterministic - atomistic paradigm, to the post-Newtonian holistic paradigm.
2. The context within which scholars study human language is extended as well; ecolinguistics locates human language being a life process within the reality which is a multilayer grid of material-nonmaterial pulsation. This pulsation happens on the axis: potentiality – realisation.
3. So, the human language can be regarded and studied on a number of levels of analysis. These levels fall into two main categories: the levels of analysis which require classical thinking, as they reside within the Newtonian paradigm. And, the layers of analysis which require non-classical thinking as they are located in the post-Newtonian paradigm. The levels of analysis where classical thinking can be applied: formal linguistics, descriptive linguistics, cognitive linguistics, neurolinguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis.

The levels of analysis of human language which require non-classical thinking: ecolinguistics defined as the linguistic meta theory within the holistic paradigm (Bogusławska-Tafelska, 2013; 2016), biosemiotics, where the meaning-making processes are intervened with communication processes and biological functions of the living system (cf. Goli, 2016).

Furthermore, the ecolinguistic meta theory investigates communication phenomena on several planes of analysis:

1. interpersonal and group/mass communication, the primary goal of which is to get the intended message across to the individual or collective interlocutor;
2. fundamentally non-cognitive, organic communication on the level of intracellular, cellular and lager-system organismic communication, the chief aim of which is to build communities of cooperating units and together adapt the system to the larger-level life system;

3. communication at the very basic, supposedly at the intracellular level, which connects the world of matter with the world of non-matter (here we use a handy metaphor to characterise the process, namely that of communication happening 'at the seam of life' cf. Bogusławska-Tafelska, 2016).

6. Concluding remarks: the ecological paradigmatic framework to help to install 'the culture of consciousness'

In this chapter, we look at the upcoming holistic paradigm in the Western science and collective consciousness, with the main focus placed on the ecological framework of handy concepts and linguistic terms adjusted to them, as the functional referential platform to teach and promote 21st century holism. At this point, this is a theoretical consideration. We have done the pilot study to check the present reaction of Polish university students towards accessible today conceptual-terminological sets to teach the holistic paradigm, towards building the culture of consciousness. The results the study brought and the discussion are presented elsewhere (Bogusławska-Tafelska, forthcoming). The present chapter introduces the very topic and directs one's attention to the importance of a well-chosen terminological and conceptual package in which the holistic paradigm is to be proposed by educators and scientists to students, scholars and the general receiver. Currently, in the Western world we observe a paradigmatic shift in the domain of sciences as well as in the collective consciousness of Western societies (cf. Bogusławska-Tafelska, 2013; 2016). However slow the very process is, we do notice the upcoming change.

We also notice the importance to consider not only *what* we as scholars and educators are to teach to our students, but also *how* we shall formulate and present the content to be taught. The 'ecological' metaphor seems especially useful in this respect as it remains relatively fresh and without the unnecessary load of ideologies or denominational aspects attached to it. In the discipline of linguistics, ecolinguistics has been proposed to do exactly this: to introduce modern holism into the studies on human language and communication.

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PERCEPTION OF HARMONY AS A KEY ELEMENT IN INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION: POLISH AND CHINESE POINT OF VIEW

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Abstract

Within the perspective of intercultural dialogue, there is constant need to interrogate and to redefine mutual ground of understanding, by plotting dimensions of possible divergences even within semantic areas that at first blush seem deprived of polysemy. In this chapter an attempt is made to approach the ecology of intercultural communication through the pragmatic analysis of the concept of 'harmony' respectively in Polish and Chinese cultural environments. The focus of the analytical thrust is twofold. On the one hand, the study aims to point to the importance of harmony in communication with representatives of the People's Republic of China and on the other, to raise awareness of the differences and similarities in the attitudes of the people of the Republic of Poland and those of the people of the PRC. This is done through excerpting lexical contexts of harmony and regrouping them into larger pragmatic categories for both cultures, as well by plotting Polish stereotypes regarding the Chinese view. The final part is devoted to reporting a survey conducted among students of Opole Technical University in 2017. The results show that among the Polish young adults (the cohort of respondents) harmony is perceived mainly as balance and order. This is different from the connotations of traditional Chinese concept, which combines harmony with the complement of adversity.

Key terms: harmony, interpersonal communication, social communication, Poland, China

1. Introduction

Poland and China are some 7 000 kilometers apart. In spite of this distance, and the widespread perception of the substantial cultural differences, there are nevertheless some important similarities between them. By comparing the six dimensions of culture as proposed by Geert Hofstede (e.g. 1984, 2000) for example, it can be seen that half of these dimensions are characterized by similar indicators shared between the two countries (cf. Compare countries, Hofstede Insights):

- *masculinity*-focus on success versus dedication to other areas of life (indicators: Poland–64, China–66).
- *restraint* – the degree of control over one's own desires and the approach to the pursuit of joy of life, the tendency towards cynicism and pessimism, less importance given to free time and control over the fulfillment of one's own desires (Poland – 29, China–24).
- *power distance* – the acceptance of the established social hierarchy and one's own place in it (Poland–68, China–80).

However, differences are noted among other indices (cf. Compare countries, Hofstede Insights):

- *individualism / collectivism* – different treatment of members of one's own group and people outside of it. In China to a greater degree than in Poland, relationships [关系[1]], are considered as significant and people from one's own group are more often treated preferentially (Poland–60, China–20).
- *uncertainty avoidance* reflected in caring about what might happen in the future, e.g. in the approach to obeying laws and regulations. In China, this approach is much more flexible and pragmatic than in Poland (Poland–93, China–30).
- *short-term/long-term orientation* in adapting traditions to changing conditions, in the degree of developed of the need for saving and investing, and the expectations of immediate/deferred results (Poland–38, China–87).

The greater the number of similarities or the smaller the number of differences between the cultures of two countries indicates that a cultural

[1] All translations in the text are mine - K.M.-K.