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WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT THE SOCIETY FROM THE EXAMPLES OF USAGE IN DICTIONARIES? ON (NON-) STEREOTYPICAL ROLES OF MEN AND WOMEN IN ENGLISH AND POLISH MONOLINGUAL GENERAL DICTIONARIES: A CONTRASTIVE STUDY

Keywords Gender roles in society; English lexicography; Polish lexicography; examples of usage in dictionaries

In the past, television commercials, movies, school textbooks, dictionaries, etc., often presented traditional and oversimplified gender roles. For instance, women were far more frequently portrayed as parents, homemakers, etc., than men (cf. e.g. McArthur/Resko 1974; Fullerton/Kendrick 2000; Arabski 2010; Karwatowska/Szpyra-Kozłowska 2010).

Nowadays the situation pictured above appears to have been slowly, yet consistently, changing. Dictionaries are one of the areas in which the portrayal of men and women is of great importance since dictionaries are often perceived as a model for a good language use. Thus, the aim of the present paper is to investigate gender differences in dictionaries. More specifically, the paper examines to what extent English and Polish monolingual dictionaries stick to the stereotypical (and thus oversimplified) view of the roles of men and women in society. This will be done through the analysis of the use of pronouns *he/she*, *him/her*, etc., and other gender-specific nouns, in the examples provided by the dictionaries of English and Polish.

The procedure is as follows: certain words have been chosen, connected with the stereotypical (and oversimplified at the same time) roles of men and women in the society. Three main semantic areas have been taken into consideration: activities done at home, such as cleaning, activities denoting addiction or not accepted in the society, such as smoking, and activities connected with the career and earning money.

To be more precise, the study includes verbs connected with household activities, traditionally and stereotypically connected with women (*cook, bake, fry, wash, clean, iron, Hoover, sweep*, plus, naturally, their Polish equivalents) as well as verbs describing the engagement in certain behaviours, stereotypically connected with men (*smoke, drink, fight*). In addition, certain nouns have also been taken into consideration; these denote the concepts connected with earning money and are thus stereotypically connected with men (*career, job, money, salary, courage*). The study focuses not on the definitions themselves, but on the examples of usage provided by the dictionaries; specifically, the contexts have been analyzed in detail, and it has been counted how many examples for each word given above refer to men, how many to women, and how many are gender-neutral. The procedure has been done separately for English and Polish dictionaries.

The study aims at providing answers to the following questions:

Do the examples provided by the English and Polish dictionaries stick to the traditional and oversimplified gender roles in the society or not? To what extent are the examples provided (non-)stereotypical? Are there differences in this respect between English and Polish dictionaries?

The study is based on the following English and Polish monolingual dictionaries: *Oxford English Dictionary* (online edition), *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (online edition), *Lexico Dictionary* (online edition), *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (online edition), *Collins Dictionary* (online edition), *Wielki słownik języka polskiego* [A Great Polish Dictionary] (online edition), *Wielki słownik języka polskiego PWN* [A Great PWN Polish Dictionary] (print edition, 2018), *Inny słownik języka polskiego* [A Different Dictionary of Polish] (print edition, 2017). Some of the English dictionaries enumerated above are intended for language learners, but it does not seem to have any effect on the final conclusions.

The study is, in general, synchronic in nature (all the dictionaries upon which the study is based are from 2017 onwards), but there is also a diachronic component, as the results of the present study are going to be compared with the results of a similar study done by the author in the past (Zabawa 2012). The study in question was a small one and published only locally in Polish. It was connected with dictionaries published in the years 2000–2010. The results of the study indicated that the dictionaries of Polish were far more stereotypical with respect to traditional and oversimplified gender roles in the society: for instance, the examples provided by the Polish dictionaries for the verb *zarabiać* 'to earn (money)' were in the majority connected with men rather than women; in the case of the verb *earn* and the English dictionaries, however, there was a far more balanced proportion between men and women.

The present study (dictionaries 2017 onwards) indicates that the contrast between English and Polish dictionaries is not as evident as it used to be. In fact, many examples in today's dictionaries (both English and Polish) are gender-neutral, i. e. they do not specify a particular sex; instead, dictionaries tend to provide examples in the plural, use the passive voice, use subjectless constructions, etc. This, while a continuation of the practices seen in the case of English dictionaries, is a novelty in Polish.

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