

Editors' Introduction

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Towards a History of Linguistics in Poland: From the early beginnings to the end of the 20th century

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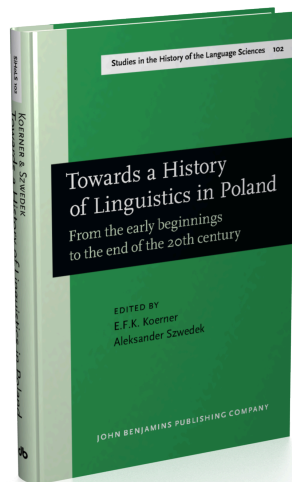
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EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

Looking at previous Polish scholarship devoted to the History of Linguistics during the 20th century in general, not to mention the historiography of linguistic scholarship in Poland specifically, one comes up with a rather meagre crop. Having left hardly any stone unturned to dig up whatever may have been written that touches upon or is in fact devoted to the history of linguistic work in Poland during the past two or more centuries (see the bibliography appended to this introduction), we believe it is not unfair to say that most of it is essentially textbook history written for the general reader in linguistics, more often than not addressed to neophytes and, quite typically, derivative and unoriginal.

Still, it would be unfair not to acknowledge the particular political situations Poland has had to endure in its at times rather tormented history and, on the other hand, not to take notice of the fact that at least in recent years good progress has been made in linguistic historiography, if we scan the publications in this area of interest between 1901 (an essay by Baudouin de Courtenay, followed by a much larger account in 1909) and 1999 (the volume edited by Andrzej Śródka, which was conceived as part of an overall stock-taking of the sciences in Poland). However, if we look at this volume more closely, we realize that we should have been forewarned that the subject reads “Nauki filologiczne [Philological sciences]”, not linguistics. As a result, the bulk of the contributions is devoted to literature, not the science of language. It's true that the chapters on “Classical philology” (by Marian Plezia), “Oriental studies” (by Jan Reychman), “Polish studies in linguistics” (by Irena Bajerowa), or “Slavistic linguistics” (by Janusz Rieger) are of distinct interest to the historian of linguistics insofar as they deal with language study, though mainly Zdzisław Wąsik on “General Linguistics” remains central to the subject of our present undertaking.

It appears that only the late Adam Heinz's (1914–1984) 518-page *Dzieje językoznawstwa w zarysie* [A history of linguistics in outline] of 1978 provided a broad survey of the methodology of linguistic thought and practice from antiquity to the mid-20th century which would compare to accounts undertaken in the West (cf. Koerner 1978 for a ‘tour d'horizon’ of the scholarship between 1822 and 1976). As it is, Heinz's work remained in the conventional format; it reminds us, also in the addition of pictures of scholars and

other illustrations, of Holger Pedersen's popular book (Pedersen 1931), though it is true that the scope of the Danish Indo-Europeanist's book was less broad. However, the various scholarly efforts in this direction by others, notably Stanisław Urbańczyk (e.g., 1993 and 1994[1978]), should not be overlooked. But by the 1990s, the situation generally appears to have improved from fairly superficial listings of names, works and problems to more in-depth, truly historiographic studies, for instance when we take note of Joanna Williams Radwańska's 1993 monograph on Kruszewski and Arleta Adamska-Sałaciak's study on the historical work of the latter as well as Baudouin de Courtenay, and Rozwadowski.

Yet, with all due respect to our colleagues and predecessors, we believe that the present volume attempts to go a bit farther and start to lay the ground work for a History of Polish Linguistics still to be written. In 1998, we published, in a double issue of *Historiographia Linguistica* a series of articles covering such fields as dialectology, lexicography, general and — if we take Jan Safarewicz's piece on Kuryłowicz as an Indo-Europeanist (*HL* 25.147-152) also into account — historical linguistics, and so we were in a position to retake a larger number of them here and mould them, together with several additional articles (by Franciszek Grucza, Jerzy Bańcerowski, and Wojciech Smoczyński) plus the survey of general linguistics by Zdzisław Wąsik, which had previously been published in *Historiographia Linguistica* 26.149-198 (1999) into a fairly coherent volume of altogether ten chapters of almost equal length.

Given the focus of the present volume on matters related to Linguistics, both theoretical and applied, we have decided not to reprint Jerzy Pelc's "Logic of Language and Philosophy of Language in 20th-Century Poland" (which previously appeared in *Historiographia Linguistica* 25:1/2.163-220 [1998]), although we certainly would want to draw attention to this almost monograph-length piece of work that has no rival in this area of interest. Indeed, the contribution of Polish logicians to modern language philosophy is immense, and so at least a summary of this article is offered in the next paragraph.

According to Pelc's study, the logic of language and the philosophy of language in 20th-century Poland ran in two mainstreams, the so-called Lvov-Warsaw school and that of phenomenological thought. The former was dominant, the latter was represented mainly by the work of Roman Ingarden (1903–1970). Among works of the Lvov-Warsaw school, this essay considers the most important achievements of its founder, Kazimierz Twardowski (1866–1938), and the oldest generation of his disciples: Stanisław Leśniewski

(1886–1939), Tadeusz Kotarbiński (1886–1981), Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz (1890–1963), and Izydora Dąmbska (1904–1983), as well as Alfred Tarski (1902–1983) who, in philosophy, was a disciple of Jan Łukasiewicz (1878–1956), Leśniewski and Kotarbiński. The paper is limited to the discussion of the most important of their reflections on natural language, in particular to what is most characteristic of them: elaborated and deep analyses of semantic sections connected with epistemological ones, and pragmatic sections connected with psychological ones, all presented with great attention to clarity, precision and comprehensibility of formulations. Major semantic conceptions of Ingarden were also mentioned: the theory of meaning as a relation between an intending object and an intentional object, as well as semantic differences between a name, verb and sentence. (The article also carries photographs of Twardowski, Leśniewski, Ajdukiewicz, Tarski, and Ingarden.)

The present volume has been organized under two major headings. The first five chapters deal with historical accounts of the development of the various linguistic subfields whereas the following five chapters focus on the legacy of one major linguistic thinker.

Chapter One, authored by Zdzisław Wąsik, “The Development of General Linguistics within the History of the Language Sciences in Poland: Late 1860s – late 1960s”, is about the longest of them all, covering more or less exactly the one hundred years between 1868 and 1968. It offers an overview of the contribution of Polish linguists to the development of general linguistics during the period between Baudouin de Courtenay’s celebrated doctoral work on analogy conducted under the guidance of Schleicher at the University of Jena and Leon Zawadowski’s departure for North America. It analyzes, within an epistemological perspective, the heritage of academic teachers of the period who developed their own proposals to the theory of language against the scientific legacy which characterized European linguistics of the time. The division into periods of development considers not only historical-political circumstances contributing to the formation of linguistic centers, but also professional turning points in the careers of individual linguists illustrated by the nature and dates of particular publications as well as at times by changes in university appointments.

Chapter Two, drafted by Franciszek Grucza, “Origins and Development of Applied Linguistics in Poland”, argues that, although applied aspects of language science have been pursued for many centuries, the history of any conscious separation of applied linguistics from supposedly pure linguistics and its objects is barely two hundred years old. This division was first introduced by a German scholar August Friedrich Bernhardt (1769–1820) in 1801,

and made much later again by the Pole Baudouin de Courtenay (1870). In the second half of the 20th century Applied Linguistics has become a rather complex — and important — part of the language sciences. First, it divided into such subdisciplines as glottodidactics, translation studies, and contrastive analyses of various kinds; secondly, within each of these research dimensions there have developed basic (pure) and applied strands. The chapter presents the main developments in Poland in many of those areas.

Chapter Three, written by Tadeusz Piotrowski, “Lexicography in Poland: From the early beginnings to the present”, sketches the history of research in Polish lexicography and of the most important dictionaries of Polish from the beginnings in the late Middle Ages until the end of the 20th century. Its focus is on monolingual dictionaries, while bi- and multilingual publications are touched upon only insofar as they constitute significant contributions to the development of monolingual dictionaries. This chapter stresses the continuity of some solutions which relate above all to what may be called the opposition between prescriptivism and liberalism. Individual dictionaries are discussed against a wide cultural background, and the evolution of lexicographic methods and techniques is treated at some length as well. Ample space has been given to the discussion of the situation after 1990, the year when Poland regained its full sovereignty, and when dictionary publishers, like other entrepreneurs, endeavoured to adjust to new market conditions.

Chapter Four, by Stanisław Gogolewski, “Dialectology in Poland, 1873–1997”, is devoted to the development of dialectology in Poland. Its author sees the first stage of development dialect geography in connection with what he terms ‘the neogrammarian trend’, but which in fact goes back to work of the teachers of the *Junggrammatiker*, specifically August Schleicher (1821–1868). In 1873, Lucjan Malinowski (1839–1898), a student of Schleicher, published in Leipzig the first scientific description of a Polish dialect. In turn, his student, Kazimierz Nitsch (1874–1958), included in his research the entire territory of the Polish language, and in 1915 published the first synthesis *Dialekty języka polskiego* [Dialects of the Polish language]. In the inter-war period and later, there appeared a number of descriptions of dialects of individual villages and larger regions. A new, synthesizing discussion of the subject, in Karol Dejna’s (b.1911) *Dialekty polskie* [Polish dialects], was published in 1973. Geolinguistic atlases of particular dialects were produced, as well as *Mały atlas gwar polskich* (Little atlas of Polish dialects) comprising the whole country. A number of dialectal dictionaries were issued; work on the voluminous *Słownik gwar polskich* [A dictionary of Polish dialects] is in progress. Gogolewski concludes his account by stating that a new area of re-

search is developing: historical dialectology, concerned with the issues of the participation of particular dialects in the formation of literary Polish.

Chapter Five, penned by Sławomir Gala, “Onomastics in Poland: From 19th-century beginnings to the present”, deals with the particular area of linguistic investigation called *onomastics* “the study of names”. It discusses its scope of research, methodology, and relation to other branches of linguistics, such as language history, dialectology, as well as other fields outside of linguistics such as history. The central part of the chapter presents particular periods of onomastic research. A systematic development of the discipline is shown through a discussion of the relevant literature and mention of the most important scientific organizations and institutions. According to the author, the essence of the qualitative development of Polish onomastics consists in undertaking ever new problems which attest to the broadening of the scope of research to include new classes of speech signs recognized as *nomina propria*. Gala also regards it as essential to grapple with theoretical issues, such as defining the place and function of proper names within the system of language.

The second part of the volume is devoted to the life and work of arguably the most prominent Polish linguists of the 19th and 20th centuries, but the work of others, some may say of equal importance, is treated in various places in the present book as well, notably in Chapter One. We are thinking of personages like Jan Rozwadowski, Witold Doroszewski, Adam Heinz, Tadeusz Milewski, and others.

Chapter Six, written by Arleta Adamska-Sałaciak, “Jan Baudouin de Courtenay’s Contribution to General Linguistics”, is devoted to the 60-year career of the internationally best known Polish scholar who spanned the last third of the 19th and almost the entire first third of the 20th century. The extent of Jan Baudouin de Courtenay’s (1845–1929) contribution to general linguistic theory, she argues, is still hard to assess. He never wrote a major synthetic work, nor has the bulk of his production ever been translated into English. Thanks primarily to Roman Jakobson (1896–1982), at least his formative influence on modern phonology is generally acknowledged. Fewer linguists, the author holds, are aware of the relevance of Baudouin’s teachings devoted to the study of language change. His conceptualisation of the nature of change, its causes and goals, and the role played in it by the language system, all seem of more than merely historical interest to the theoretically-minded diachronic linguist.

Chapter Seven, “Mikołaj Kruszewski and 20th-Century Linguistics”, has been authored by the only non-Polish contributor and the most distinguished

Russian historian of linguistics during the last third of the 20th century, Fedor M. Berezin of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow. The chapter deals with important issues in general linguistic theory discussed by Mikołaj Habdank Kruszewski (1851–1887), who, in the author's view, is an unjustly forgotten linguist of genius of the late 19th century. Berezin argues that Kruszewski could be seen as standing at the roots of the 20th-century structuralism, long before the appearance of Ferdinand de Saussure's lectures on general linguistics. In his major book *Očerki nauki o jazyke* [An outline of the science of language] of 1883,¹ Kruszewski conceived of language as a system of signs, laying stress on the semiotic function of language. His understanding of sound alternation is in many ways close to modern principles of phonology and morphonology. His hypothesis of the universal character of the sound laws too, Berezin holds, anticipated the discovery of language universals in the 20th century. As a result, the author agrees with Radwańska Williams' (1993) characterization of Kruszewski's theory as 'a lost paradigm' in the history of linguistics. Well-known linguists of the 20th century such as Jakobson, Kuryłowicz, and others rightly have argued that Kruszewski was one of the founders of modern linguistic theory.

In Chapter Eight, by Jerzy Bańczerowski, "Mikołaj Rudnicki's General Linguistic Conceptions", the author interprets Rudnicki's (1881–1978) views in terms of current linguistic knowledge, without necessarily being presentist. Language, in Rudnicki's view, is a form of consciousness, understood as language knowledge — essentially a form of cognition. This language consciousness is a consciousness of a given language community which is reflected in the language consciousness of the individual. Fundamental in such a conception are reproduced and reproductive images. The reproduced images are individual, concrete language objects in articulatory and acoustic forms. The reproductive images are the entities which exist within language consciousness. Language performance is a set of countless acts of language reproduction characterized by a certain psycho-physiological parallelism — a chain of images makes its way through the consciousness, and correspondingly there is a chain of movements of the speech organs. Language is susceptible to historical change comprehended as a mutability of the language consciousness. Rudnicki formulated a series of general laws of such phenomena as assimilation, dissimilation, metathesis, and palatalization which are merely various manifestations of the identification-differentiation forces op-

¹ Cf. Koerner (1995), which contains the first English translation of Kruszewski's major work, which until then had only been available in German (and barely accessible, one may add).

erating as *causa movens* in the space of language images. Rudnicki developed two types of structural phonetics: articulatory and auditory, as well as a theory of diacrisis and phonology in quite an advanced form.

Chapter Nine, by Wojciech Smoczyński, “Jerzy Kuryłowicz as Indo-Europeanist and Theorist of Language”, affirms, quite rightly we believe, that Kuryłowicz (1895–1978) was one of the greatest Polish linguists ever. A polyglot (speaking English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Arabic, Persian, and a few other languages), he was primarily interested in language structure and its mechanisms. Having studied with renowned linguists in Paris early in the 20th century, notably with Antoine Meillet (1866–1936), by also with Joseph Vendryes (1875–1960), Marcel Cohen (1884–1974), among others, he worked out his own methodology and theories. His main achievements were in Indo-European and the theory of language, and, moreover, in all areas of language structure — phonology, morphology, and syntax. One of his major work according to Smoczyński, *Études indo-européennes* of 1935, once described by a contemporary as ‘a theoretical outline of the structural basis of Indo-European grammar’, contains *in nuce* his main ideas about language and linguistics. Still, it is true that his theory of laryngeals brought him the most enduring recognition and lasting fame.

Finally, in the concluding Chapter Ten, “Aspects of Ludwik Zabrocki’s Linguistic World”, Jerzy Bańcerowski tries to give full justice to Zabrocki’s (1907–1977) wide scholarly interests which included general linguistics, comparative (historical, typological, contrastive, confrontative) linguistics, psycho- and sociolinguistics, cybernetic linguistics, Indo-European linguistics, and applied linguistics (glottodidactics). His original contributions were in linguistic codematics, synchronic and diachronic structural phonetics, diacritology, communicative and language communities, aspects of language comparison, cybernetic systems of language communication. The concept of code allowed Zabrocki to capture the dynamic aspect of language and language communication. He viewed sound processes as purely phonetic (universal) or initiated and controlled by a particular phonological system. It deserves to be pointed out that Zabrocki was the first to work out a comprehensive theory of communicative and language communities. As Bańcerowski puts it, a language community is a communicative community, which makes use of a fairly uniform means of communication, that is, a shared, common language. Hence, each language community is a communicative community, but not conversely. Cybernetics was defined by Zabrocki as the science of abstract optimal information systems. In linguistics his work is still relevant

to general linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and indeed to glottodidactics and language teaching methodology as well.

It remains true that the present volume constitutes little else than a dedicated attempt at a stock-taking of Polish scholarship in various areas of linguistic science as well as of the contribution of Poland to world linguistics. The emphasis of our endeavours has been on *accounting* for the development of these subfields and the theoretical advances made over the past two hundred and more years rather than on *explaining* them within their respective historical, political, and intellectual settings. However, at least for the moment we will be satisfied if we have succeeded in reaching what has since Noam Chomsky's work of the 1960s (actually building on ideas developed by Louis Hjelmslev during the 1940s) been called the level of 'descriptive adequacy'. It would then be the next step to develop the kind of methodological and epistemological bases for a true historiography of the sciences of language in Poland, and this we could call the stage of 'explanatory adequacy', a level which even within linguistics *tout court* has thus far not yet been reached to everyone's satisfaction.

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