

SEMANTIC ARTICULATION OF REALITY IN DIACHRONY*

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While a language is alive as the means of communication of a community, the process of the articulation of the surrounding world takes place without cessation, not only because any articulation relies on the trial-and-error method requiring occasional deductive adjustment, but also because the reality itself is changing just as the needs of the community itself. While the lexical mapping of our environment undergoes expansion as well as diversification and the new lexemes are usually derived from the available substance, a comparison of two different synchronous sections may be expected to prove the existence of some shifts after some time. Evidence of this kind is furnished by the appearance of the terminology of internal organs and of expressions referring to mind and emotions in various languages. Semantic articulation is a property of both lexical and grammatical categories. Grammar and especially morphology is a very conservative stratum of language structure and we find within it traces of more archaic motivation as well as evidence of subsequent reinterpretations and interference of diverse categories.

LOCALIZATION OF MIND AND EMOTIONS IN THE HUMAN BODY

Knowledge of the human body was long restricted to its surface that is easily accessible to the human senses and especially to our sight. The internal configuration of the human body, both anatomical and mental, has remained mysterious in almost the same sense as the sky above our heads. The need to localize emotions, mental faculties and vitality as well as to incorporate them into a coherent system or image of the surrounding world confronted early men with considerable difficulties (Krupa 1995). This early cognitive phase has left quite a few semantic traces accessible to etymology. (Perhaps only the cannibals had the advantage of knowing better the internal anatomy of human beings and to some extent hunters and breeders of animals as well.) Indirect evidence of the existence of early elementary knowledge of the entrails of human body is supplied for example by the so-called X-ray art of Australian Aborigines (see Jelinek 1989: 477-478).

This vague primeval idea of the inside of the human body, of its organs as well as differences in the interpretation of emotional and mental processes is

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perceptible in the lexicon and sometimes turns out to be a source of problems when translating from languages distant culturally and linguistically, distant both in space and time. We are often confronted with semantic shifts, with toggling from hyperonyms to hyponyms or vice versa as well as with metaphor operating in the process of lexical expansion, the motivation of which may change along both the temporal and spatial axes. Let us take as an example the issue of where the seat of reason versus that of emotions is localized within the human body. The seat of the mind was sometimes looked for not only within the head but also in the liver as proved by comparison of Greek and Latin terms with modern European languages, with Austronesian languages or for example with Japanese.

Sometimes it is the extralinguistic data that help us to unveil the supposed functions of body organs. Ancient Egyptians used to throw the brain away as useless when mummifying their deceased while Polynesians, on the other hand, believed that eating the enemy's brain was tantamount to acquiring his mental faculties (perhaps even his mana). Their guess as to the role of the brain was correct even if the belief in the favourable consequences of its consumption was wrong. In Classical Greek *kardía* representing heart as an important bodily organ was viewed as the seat of the mind, emotions and passions. Its Latin cognate *cord-* is likewise to be translated as heart, emotions, mind, soul, ratio (and even stomach). Thus the heart was a central bodily organ responsible for the human mind just as for emotions. We ought not to ignore that the word *srdce* in Slovak just as in other Slavic languages might have originally denoted what is in the middle of the body; the Slovak word *stred* means centre and the consonant /t/ within it is a later insertion as proved by its equivalents in other Slavic languages (Machek 1957: 468, 479). In Lusatian we can observe a reverse process. The Lusatian word *wutroba* (cf. Slovak *útroby* "entrails") also refers to heart. Words with the meaning "centre, inside" (Slovak *srd-ce*, Latin *venter*, Japanese *o-naka*, etc.) are usually part of the oldest lexical stratum and their original meaning might gradually have undergone semantic constriction to one or another part of the whole. Thus Japanese *naka* with the polite prefix *o-*, that is *o-naka*, is used as an equivalent of "stomach". Semantic expansion took place in the case of Hawaiian *loko* used not only in the original meaning "inside" but also in the meaning "internal organs" (Pukui – Elbert 1957: 193). Likewise Mangarevan *roto* refers both to internal organs or bowels and Aniwan to heart.

In the two classical European languages (see Lepař s. a.; Wžentek 1929) the seat of passions and emotions was looked for in the liver, for example the Greek *hépar* ("seat of passion and anger"), the Latin *iecur*, *iocur* ("seat of life and passion"). In Latin, the heart was the seat both of (a) mind, soul and (b) feelings, stomach. Malay (Indonesian) *hati* refers to liver and heart (the latter in a metaphorical meaning) while heart as an anatomical organ is *jantung* (without any associated psychical functions).

Interestingly enough, modern European languages do not link the liver either with reason or the life principle and emotions. Polynesian languages, Indonesian/Malay (*hati*) and Japanese (*kimo*) go with Greek and Latin. At the same

time, Japanese *kokoro* is defined as the mind, the heart, spirit, a thought, will, care, attention, a mood (Kenkyusha's New School Dictionary 1968: 498-499; 533). This situation is quite modern in the sense that it underlines the deep and organic link connecting reason with emotion and thus human experience is perceived as an essentially homogeneous whole. And phrases like *Bolí ma srdce* ("My heart is aching") are frequently to be interpreted metaphorically.

THE GRAMMATICAL CATEGORY OF DUAL

The existence of dual in various languages confirms the special treatment of a relatively small but important set of referents typical of human anatomy: Slovak and Czech *oči* (eyes), *uši* (ears), modern Czech *ruce* (in Slovak the old Slovak dual disappeared and we have regular plural *ruky*) interpreted today as an irregular plural. They are marked for duality by a specific suffix different from plural suffixes. In all instances we have to do with a fixed, inseparable organic whole, a pair. Obviously the Czech *plíce* (lung) may be included here. This feature of organic appurtenance was perceived as relevant and the absence of one element of the pair was felt to be defective. Alison Ruyker in her remarkable treatise of the nominal dual (Rukeyser 1997) explains the importance of duality in thought and links it with the inclination of humans to pay attention to the binary nature of quite a few key phenomena such as male – female, day – night, heaven – earth, black – white, right – left, life – death, and so on) and subsequently sketches a more detailed semantic analysis of the various types of duality.

The existence of dual is known from quite a few geographically distant regions. It seems that in many languages the dual has been gradually disappearing. In Europe it has survived so to say upon the periphery, for example in Lithuanian, Lusatian, Slovenian and Breton. On the other hand, it was alive in Ancient Greek and Sanskrit and still seems to be vigorous in Australian languages and is not unknown in classical Arabic.

It is hard to explain the decline of dual in so many modern European languages. In the Indo-European family the distinction of true dual (or paral) from mechanical or chance dual seems to have been morphologically marked only in Tokharian. Maybe the chance co-occurrence of any two entities ceased to be distinguished in speech from the organic duality; grammatically both were treated alike but subsequently when the category of number was reduced to the binary opposition singular – plural, a few traces of the once productive dual number have survived where the duality had been organic (cf. Slovak *oči* "eyes", *uši* "ears") and their former dual forms were redefined as irregular plural endings"; in the instance of *oko* "eye" the regular plural would be *oká* while *ucho* "ear" would have the regular plural *uchá*. These two regular plurals are now used only in a metaphorical sense.

Interestingly enough, the extinct Tokharian language distinguished the so-called paral reserved for the double organs, that is, as a rule lexemes referring to body parts such as eyes, ears, hands, feet (supplied with the marker *-am* in

Tokharian A and with the marker *-ane* in Tokharian B) and in West Tokharian also the personal pronouns *wene* "we two" and *yene* "you two". On the other hand, the chance pairs of entities were treated in a different way, being declined for what is termed as dual, for example *pracar* "brother" – *pratři* "brothers, dual" – *pracre* "brothers, plural". In West Tokharian the dual forms occurred more frequently than in East Tokharian (Tocharskije jazyki 1959: 55-57).

The need to differentiate organic or permanent duality from chance or co-occurrence duality may be perceived as logical and useful, but its grammaticalization succumbed in many languages to the tendency to organize grammatical categories in accordance with the dichotomy.

In Polynesian languages the limbs are often referred to by reduplicated lexemes, cf. Maori *waewae* "feet" (meaning also "a foot"), *ringaringa* "hands" (also "a hand"), which, however, is not the case of all pair organs such as *mata* "eye, eyes" and likewise *taringa* "ear, ears" and *paparinga* "cheek, cheeks". However, since *mata* does not refer only to the organ of seeing but also to face as such, the term seems to preferably include both eyes not only one. Dual forms have been fully preserved especially with the personal pronouns, for example inclusive *taua* "we two including you" and exclusive *maua* "we two excluding you". Thus the dual is marked by the suffix *-ua* derived from the numeral *rua* "two" by the reduction. The present-day plural suffix of personal pronouns is derived from *toru* ("three") and in the reduced form *-tou* marks not the trial but the plural.

A specific instance of the articulation of reality is manifested by the presence of a trivially ordered (structured) multiplicity of similar objects bound together perhaps only by the co-occurrence of its elements, for example Slovak *listie* (usually "fallen leaves under a tree or trees"), *ihličie* ("needles fallen from coniferous trees"), *kamenie* ("pebbles or gravel by a river or brook").

On the other hand, however, we can also think of ordered multiplicity or rather complexity and in Slovak this idea is realized in the category of pluralia tantum: Slovak *sane* "sledge", *nohavice* "trousers", *topánky* "shoes", *nožnice* "shears", *okuliare* "spectacles", *Vianoce* "Christmas", *Turíce* "Pentecost", Czech *Velikonoce* "Easter" (this unlike Slovak singular *Velká noc*). How come, however, that this class includes *meniny* "nameday" and *narodeniny* "birthday", *hody* "country fair, wake of a saint", *fašiangy* German "Fasching"? Is it because these may be characterized as regularly repeated events? The just mentioned group of nouns includes several nouns that may be characterized as semantic dual but were swallowed up by the pluralia tantum.

GENDER AND THE CATEGORY OF ANIMATE – INANIMATE NOUNS

Semantic motivation is hidden behind the system of nominal affixes traditionally known as nominal declination. They bear traces of centuries of restructurations at least partly stimulated by the continuous process of reclassifying the nominal referents. The two main selective classificatory criteria are gender and animateness. The original semantic motivation behind the classes of nouns has

been subsequently made opaque by the tendency to apply purely formal classificatory criteria. This is the situation we witness in Slovak and in other Slavic languages.

The results of advancing formalization in the Slovak nominal declination may be very approximately summed up as follows:

- (1) Substantives ending (in the nominative singular) in a consonant are with a great probability masculine.
- (2) Substantives ending in *-a* are as a rule feminine.
- (3) Substantives ending in either *-o* or *-e* (including *-ie*) are predominantly neuter.

Exceptions to these rules are motivated upon non-formal grounds:

- (1) Substantives ending in *-a* are masculine if they refer to males (e. g. *sudca* "judge", *sluha* "servant", *patriarcha* "patriarch").
- (2) Substantives ending in *-a* are neuter when referring to young and immature living beings (e. g. *psička* "doggie", *dieťa* "child", *strídža* "little witch", *holúbä* "young pigeon") very occasionally including plants (*kvietä* "small flower").
- (3) There is a set of feminine substantives ending in a consonant; they can be enumerated as declinable after *dlaň* "palm of a hand" and *kosť* "bone" including, however, a very productive and open set of (chiefly abstract) substantives derived from adjectives by means of the suffix *-osť* (*márnosť* "vanity", *prednosť* "advantage, preference", *obojakosť* "double-dealing, ambiguity", etc.).
- (4) Substantives ending in *-o* are masculine if they refer to human beings – usually names (*Jano*, *Fero*, *Botto*, *Krasko*), kinship terms (*strýko* "uncle", *dedo* "grandfather", *ujo* "uncle", neologism *brácho* "brother"), pejoratives (*truľo*, *chmuľo*, *chruňo*, *lalo* "all the three meaning simpleton, ninny", *sralo* "scare-baby") and other hypocoristic words (*maco* "Teddy", *bábo* "little baby", *zajko* "little hare").

In the declination of masculine nouns four patterns ("vzory") are distinguished – namely *chlap* "man", *hrdina* "hero", *dub* "oak", *meč* "sword". Two of them are defined as animate (*chlap* and *hrdina*) and another two as inanimate (*dub* and *meč*). The difference between *dub* and *meč* is purely formal; *dub* is a hard pattern while *meč* is its soft (palatalized) pendant. The other two patterns, namely *chlap* and *hrdina* are motivated semantically because the referents of the substantives declined in accordance with them are living beings of male sex. The chief grammatical markers of the animate nouns are the nominative plural endings and the coincidence of the accusative and genitive markers of singular and plural. The patterns *chlap* and *hrdina* are likewise distinguished formally (in nominative, genitive, accusative and instrumental).

The contrast animate – inanimate is non-functional within the class of feminine. The respective patterns *žena* ("woman, wife") and *ulica* ("street") are distinguished from each other only phonetically ("hard" versus "soft" patterns) and the two remaining patterns *dlaň* ("palm") and *kosť* ("bone") deviate from each other in the genitive singular and nominative plural (in both cases *-e* versus *-i*).

In Russian, however, the contrast animate – inanimate has expanded to cover the feminine gender as well; here the accusative plural coincides with the genitive, for example *Ja vižu ženščin* (“I see women”) versus *Ja vižu ulicy* (“I see streets”).

The two prototypical neuter patterns are *mesto* (“town”) and *srdce* (“heart”); the former is hard while the latter soft. The third neuter pattern is *vysvedčenie* (“diploma”) covering only deverbatives. All of them are determined formally (hard ending *-o*, soft ending *-e* and deverbative ending *-ie*). Neuter (like feminine) is outside the category of animateness and if a substantive ending in *-o* refers to persons or animals of male sex, the semantic criterion prevails and they are classified as masculine animate. The fourth pattern *dievča* (“girl”) excludes formal criteria and includes only nouns of which the referents are immature humans and animals including hypocoristica (see above). A special case is *knieža* (“duke”) where we have to do with a conflict of form with motivation; this is indicated by alternative types of agreement: *mladý* (“young duke”) *knieža* (agreement according to sex) versus *mladá knieža* (agreement according to gender). In a somewhat analogous way, if *dievča* “girl” is perceived as a young woman, its attributes may agree with it in terms of the sex and instead of *dievča* one may use the personal pronoun *ona* (“she”); however, if we use the word in the sense of a female child, the adjectival attribute takes up the neuter form and the personal pronoun *ono* (“it”) is considered adequate.

The extralinguistic motivation in the grammatical category of gender seems to be restricted to substantives referring to human beings and to higher animals. This is often the case of domestic animals or higher animals relevant for our environment. And often we have at our disposal three lexemes, for example *kôň*: *žrebec* – *kobyła* (“horse – stallion – mare”); *statok*: *býk (vôl)* – *krava* (“cattle – bull /ox/ – cow”). The representative or most abstract lexeme is sometimes masculine, for example *páv* (“peacock”), and sometimes feminine, for example *hus* (“goose”) or *mačka* (“cat”) not *kocúr* (“male cat”), *sliepka* (“hen”) but not *kohút* (“cock”). These instances seem to indicate the existence of gender in Slovak as a modulative (not a selective) category; the former examples might be characterized as cases of suppletivism while in many instances we have to do with a set of suffixes that enable the language speakers to modify their utterances in accordance with the reality: *moríak* (“he-turkey”) – *morka* (“she-turkey”), *páv* (“peacock”) – *pávica* (“pea-hen”), *holub* (“pigeon”) – *holubica* (“hen-pigeon”, “dove”), *medveď* (“bear”) – *m**. This paper was supported by Grant agency: VEGA No. 2/7182/22.edvedica (“she-bear”), *srnec* (“roe-buck”) – *srnka* (“roe”).

In numerous instances we have to do with just one term: *sova* (“owl”), *výr* (“eagle-owl”), *lastovička* (“swallow”), *škrečok* (“hamster”), especially with the species of fish, amphibians; a remarkable exception is *žaba* (“frog” or “she-frog”) versus *žabiak* (“he-frog”) and reptiles.

Andrew Pawley points to an interesting reinterpretation of the category of nominal gender in English after the loss of the formal markers of gender while the system of personal pronouns *he* – *she* – *it* has remained intact. He concludes that the uses of pronouns mark intimacy and informality, conveying some sort

of affective information while with some inanimate referents both *he* and *she* are used while, finally, the nonstandard uses of pronouns are most strongly maintained by men (Pawley 1996: 14). Pawley is discussing the motivated use of the pronouns *he* – *she* – *it* (this so-called animation linked with affectivity is known in various languages including Slovak cf. varying uses of *dievča* “girl”, *knieža* “prince”).

The category of animateness is present both upon the lexical and grammatical levels and may reappear in substantives and verbs as well. It may be hidden (covert) and overlap with the category of gender. In the academic work *Morfológia slovenského jazyka* (Morfológia 1966) it is briefly dealt with in passages devoted to the declination without being treated in a separate chapter. It existed in Indo-European (perhaps once a language of the active type) and has been preserved especially in the Slavic branch of the family (Čermák 1997: 174).

Why does modern Slovak not distinguish animate – inanimate in the feminine gender? Does this absence reflect a restricted sovereignty or inferiority of women? It is no doubt one of the traces of the past social order pointing to the status of women in society as well as to that of children within it. Those who are trying to reform this state of affairs tend to ignore the notorious fact that the gradual erosion and final loss of the motivation of grammatical categories make their efforts vain, since the speakers tend to relegate the original motivation into the depths of their subconscious.

In present-day standard Slovak it is only the human beings of the masculine gender in both singular and plural and animals of the same gender in the singular (not in the plural; with the exception of *psi* “dogs”, *vlci* “wolves”, *vtáci* “birds”, *býci* “bulls”) which may be classified either as animate or inanimate. Is it because of a higher individualization of the singular substantives? We are well aware that not all masculine substantives referring to human beings are classified as animate; a certain degree of individualization is required and that is why the masculine substantives of the type *ľud* “folk”, *národ* “nation”, *armádny zbor* “army corps”, *policajný zbor* “police corps”, *výbor* “committee”, etc., are not declined as animate.

Thus impairment of some grammatical semantic categories seems to be linked to the degree of individualization of their referents. The distinction of three genders in Slovak is clearly present in the singular. In the plural, however the contrast of gender seems to be weaker and in Russian it is completely neutralized. In fact the adjectives in Slovak do not agree with the gender of the plural nouns determined by them but with the opposition animate – inanimate (*malí muži* “little men” – *malé duby* “little oaks” – *malé ženy* “little women” – *malé deti* “little children”). The line separating animate from inanimate is not entirely stable in Slovak. In many dialects the class of animate includes masculine animals not only in the singular, but also in the plural and, besides names of trees and mushrooms at least in affective utterances, it may display genitive endings in the plural as typical of animate substantives (*Našiel som dubáka* /instead of neutral *Našiel som dubák/* “I found a boletus”). Another innovation in the same

category concerns its expansion into the feminine gender, as witnessed in Russian (see above).

In his article on Grice's maxims in relation to the principles of language planning, Hartmut Traunmüller discusses the question of why some typological features survive despite the fact that they possess features incompatible with Grice's maxims of conversation (Traunmüller 1991: 25). The expansion of animateness into the domain of animals and partly to that of plants (provided they are masculine) in Slovak is one example of a solution to this dilemma. There are others with which Traunmüller is dealing too.

PARTS OF A WHOLE AND THEIR AUTONOMY

The degree of cohesion of wholes and its linguistic treatment is another cognitively interesting issue. Does the cohesion of the perception of the human being find a reflection in language? It seems to be the case and historical changes in the degree of cohesion are projected into synchrony as local variations. Is the will of the individual so pervasive as to completely control his or her behaviour? A confrontation of various languages does not confirm such an assumption. All the diverse activities of the human beings are not treated identically in the various languages of the world. One such issue is that of the participation of the individual will in the actions expressed by verbs versus their spontaneity. In many languages there is a subclass of *verba sentiendi* which are not compatible with the experiencer role in the nominative. Instead *verba sentiendi* often govern an indirect case of the substantive, in order to underline that the experiencer differs from the prototypical actor, who deserves the nominative slot within the active verbal predication, without being fit to take only the role of the patient or target of a passive construction. And thus it is the dative that is often considered appropriate to fulfil the role of the experiencer or recipient of action, cf. Slovak examples (where *mi* "to me" is dative of *ja* "I, me"): *Chce sa mi* "I feel like"; *Páči sa mi* "I like"; *Protiví sa mi* "I do not like", *Hnusí sa mi* "I feel disgusted with". Dative constructions of this kind are very common in Russian, less so in German (e. g. *Es gefällt mir* "I like it") and not very frequent in English as if the English speakers would prefer representing the experiencer as a more cohesive and active person (cf. *I like, I hate, I do not like*). The specific marking of experiencer seems to represent the human beings as not completely responsible for their acting, which seems to be a realistic assumption and solution for our emotions only too frequently resist our personal will.

Some cognitively interesting restrictions in individual cohesion are hinted at by the linguistic usage in New Zealand Maori. In accordance with this the speaker addresses his commands to the parts of the human body directly. Compare the Maori example: *Hamama tou mangai* "Open your mouth"; the essence of this phenomenon is explained by Williams and Williams in their handbook: "In speaking of movements of different parts of the body, the member spoken of in each case is regarded as the agent, and is spoken of, or addressed, as if it were capable of independent action, the verb being, of course, intransitive"

(Williams – Williams 1950: 45). Further examples are quoted from W. H. Wills: *Hupeke tou waewae* “Bend your leg”, *Totoro tou ringaringa* “Stretch out your arm”, *Whetero tou arero* “Put out your tongue”, *Hapai tou mahunga* “Lift up your hand”, *Titiro ou kanohi* “Open your eyes” (Wills 1956: 75). The grammatical marker of this is the absence of the accusative particle *i* (**Hapai i tou mahunga*, **Titiro i ou kanohi*, etc.).

SPACE AND TIME

An evolutionary dynamism binds together the semantic categories of space and time.

Space in which the ancient man moved about was accessible to his senses, especially to his sight. Both the objects and living being were dispersed all around him whether close to him or farther from him, and space is the stage upon which all sorts of movements and activities take place in many directions. From the standpoint of ego, these objects or beings may be either approaching or withdrawing from him or returning to their original point of departure.

While the perception of space is accessible to sight and obviously inherited from our animal ancestors, the perception of time is incomparably more complicated and at the same time modelled after the domain of space; the basis for this abstraction probably consists in the fact that each movement as a change of location inevitably does not occur immediately but requires a certain delay or takes some time. Likewise the present state may be viewed as implying an activity that took place before it. Thus the movement in space was used as a model for the movement in time and it is confirmed by the frequent if not universal utilization of spatial adverbs, prepositions and other markers in a temporal sense. The verbal category of tense derives to some extent from the just mentioned observation that any state may be preceded by an appropriate action. And truly enough we are often witnessing that the past tense is derived from a participial form denoting a state; the German perfect tense consists of a participle plus the auxiliary verb *sein* or *haben*, for example *Er ist verschwunden* “He disappeared, he has disappeared”, *Sie hat geschrieben* “she wrote, has written”. Neither is the genealogy of the Slovak past tense different from the above procedure (*Písal som* “I wrote”).

Was the cyclical conception of time inspired by the possibility of moving through space in all directions (including the return to the original position)? Could the ancient man be sure that the movement backward in time was impossible? The movement through time in both directions is well known from the mythology of many peoples just as from science fiction and even modern physics is considering it. Our pragmatics, however, excludes it.

In language we are confronted with two pragmatic conceptions of time. Either we are moving through it from the past through the present into the future, or time is flowing in the opposite direction bringing us the future, robbing us of the present and gradually depriving us even of the reliable memories of past events. And while the future is uncertain, the present is elusive and the past increasingly unknown.

The application of originally spatial markers (prepositions, verbs, locative nouns etc.) of the subsequent and preceding events may be ambiguous. Let us compare instances such as *predkovia* ("ancestors", literally those who were before us) – with the occasional characterization of future as if it were in front of us; this concerns utterances *Pred nami je ťažké obdobie* ("A difficult period is in front of us" versus *Ťažké roky sú za nami* (literally "Difficult years are behind us" and *To najhoršie príde po nás* ("The worst will come after us"). In a word, *Pred nami je to, čo príde po nás* "Before us is what will come after us". *Pred* "before" is in its temporal usage past and in the spatial sense something within my sight and before my eyes. Unlike this, *za* ("after") is in the spatial sense behind me (not within my sight in the spatial sense); however, in the temporal sense it is future – "whither we are heading to".

The perception of space around us is prelinguistic and present obviously in all living creatures and so is our position in space. The latter is defined along three axes, namely *above – below*, *front – behind* and *right – left*.

The contrast *above – below* is no doubt prehominid; in the living world *above* means life, health, victory, strength while its opposite *below* goes with death, disease, defeat.

The contrast *front – behind* is likewise prehominid and relevant since the era when a certain section of the living organism became specialized in monitoring what is going on in front of it. Front is the direction in which any organism moves within its environment. The senses of an animal are located upon its head and forward-oriented. It is easier to notice one's enemy if he is moving in front of us. The presence of an unknown or unnoticed person or animal behind us may be threatening.

The model *path → goal* (achievement of something) – to be more precise, *intention > starting point > movement forward > goal* is closely linked with the axis *front – behind*, in fact with the movement forward. The movement itself has no satisfactory explanatory force without the intention or goal as expressed by the Slovak phraseme *ísť za nosom* (literally "to follow one's nose"), *ide tá, kam ho nos vedie* (literally "he is going where his nose is leading him").

The axis *right – left* is generally symmetrical with some exceptions (cf. human heart). As far as this axis is concerned it is the cultural considerations that definitely prevail among its connotations. Etymology proves that in many European languages right is equivalent to correct, true, honorable, straight, etc. while left is awkward, revolutionary (leftist), disturbing, crooked. A most exhaustive documentation and analysis of the cultural asymmetry of *right – left* has been prepared by Jiřina van Leeuwen-Turnovcová in her book *Rechts und Links in Europa* (van Leeuwen-Turnovcová 1990).

PARALLELISM OF SEMANTIC CRITERIA IN PRAGMATICS

The orientation in the macro-environment is so complicated that it may require more than one cardinal axis. In Slovakia one such traditional criterion has been the contrast *hore – dolu* ("up – down") probably derived from the contrast

of mountainous regions and the lowlands (cf. *Horniaky* versus *Dolniaky* "High country – Low country"), between the upper versus lower courses of rivers. This contrast is paralleled by the opposition of north and south; the mountainous northern part of Slovakia was forested (*hora* means in Slovak both mountain and forest) while the lowlands in the south were largely deforested. In addition to this we might add the relative ethnic purity of the northern regions and the presence of a Hungarian minority along the southern border with Hungary. The opposition *up – down* functions in Germany as well (Oberdeutschland versus Niederdeutschland) which, however, does not coincide with the contrast *north – south*. Likewise an ancient Egyptian who visited in Mesopotamia was astonished that the river Euphrates unlike the Nile flows "in the wrong direction" (Tallquist, Knut 1928: 105-185). While for ancient Egyptians the basis of orientation was the putative source of Nile, the Slavs preferred the east as the location of the sunrise. When facing the rising sun, the north (*sever*) is to the left (confirmed by Machek's etymological dictionary, Machek 1957: 443). And yet the word for south (*juh, jug*) was not derived from right, right-handed (*pravý*); in its form **ugá* it referred to that direction from which heat, warmth comes (Machek 1957: 179).

ALIENABLE AND INALIENABLE POSSESSION AND SOCIETY

This category occurs in quite a few languages and perhaps is a remnant of the so-called active typology described thoroughly by G. A. Klimov (Klimov 1977). We shall confine our attention to its description and explanation in the Polynesian group of languages. The contrast of alienable – inalienable possession is notable for its obvious motivation by extralinguistic reality. Being not a kind of gender it reflects the attitude of the possessor to an object or action; the dominance in this relation is either upon the side of the owned objects or upon that of the owner. From this point of view all persons somehow related to us may be divided into 2 classes: (1) those whom we have conceived, borne, brought up, acquired or who are subordinate to us or (2) those whom we were unable to choose, who were in a way given to us, such as our parents, ancestors, brothers, sisters, chiefs, rulers, etc.

The realm of inanimate objects may be divided in very much the same way; things we have produced or acquired, which we may get rid of without damage to our integrity, things we may use without the consent or participation of other persons represent one class while things that do not meet these demands represent another class: such as land, double canoes, house, parts of a body just as parts of a boat or a house and also actions concerning oneself (thinking, wishing something, moving, sleeping etc.).

The owner is somehow responsible for his/her own children. Humans are active towards (a) their children and possibly other acquired relatives, (b) their acquired friends, (c) their personal property, (d) their actions targeting some objects, (e) transitive actions, (f) food but not water or beverages. Perhaps this ought to be formulated "from the opposite end":

(1) Children, friends, personal property, actions targeting objects and food are inactive toward the humans.

(2) On the other hand, land, houses, boats, chiefs (and government), parents, siblings, beverages, intransitive actions behave as active.

The social motivation of the contrast alienable – inalienable is obvious and productive in the traditional Polynesian society. However, if we admit its reflexive nature, we must be prepared to answer to what extent this has changed after the restructuration of the Polynesian societies. This seems to concern the contrast between daughters and sons in the domain of kin terminology. Further in the field of ownership land may be owned privately as well and the motivational basis for distinguishing *o-* from *a-* markers seems to have been losing its relevance just as the difference between individual and private property. And thus instead of communal and individual ownership we have to do with the contrast of private versus communal property. What has survived, however, is the contrast *part – whole* where it is hard to talk of “ownership” (Do I own my head?; Does a house own its roof?). Instead we are confronted here with the question of the integrity of objects or social units. This need not result in the impairment of the category alienable – inalienable but rather in its motivational reinterpretation similar in a way to the repeated reinterpretation of animate – inanimate in some Indo-European languages.

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