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"Europejskie źródła teorii językowych w Polsce na przełomie XVIII i XIX wieku. Studia z dziejów teorii języka i gramatyki", Zofia Florczak, Wrocław 1978 : [recenzja]

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Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

atteindre ce but, l'auteur a mis à profit — tout comme c'était le cas d'autres oeuvres appartenant au rococo polonais — des éléments de stylisation fondant dans un même creuset motifs orientaux et les motifs courants de l'épopée européenne. Recherchant des formes nouvelles d'expression pour des attitudes philosophiques et des visions du monde absentes de la littérature sentimentale et classique, le rococo a fortement contribué à transformer et développer la littérature des Lumières polonaises. Après avoir résumé ses considérations relatives au rococo, l'auteur justifie le besoin d'élargir le sens de ce terme qui devrait désigner tous les phénomènes littéraires des Lumières polonaises qui ne trouvent pas de place dans les sphères du classicisme et du sentimentalisme.

Rés. par l'auteur

Trad. par *Lucjan Grobelak*

Zofia Florczak, Europejskie źródła teorii językowych w Polsce na przełomie XVIII i XIX wieku. Studia z dziejów teorii języka i gramatyki (European Sources of the Linguistic Theories in Poland at the Turn of the 18th Century. Studies from the History of the Theory of Language and Grammar), Ossolineum, Wrocław 1978, 250 pp.

The book is divided into three parts, of which the first presents various opinions on the general theory of human speech, the second reviews opinions prevailing during the period of the Enlightenment, and the third touches upon the then formulated language axiology.

Differentiated within the individual parts are two sets of scientific opinion — one comparative, containing predominantly French, English and German material, and the other dealing with Polish achievements in this sphere during the second half of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century as seen against the background of the European thought about language and grammar. The book is thus written in a strictly synchronic manner as regards both the chronology of the works discussed and the views and theories contained therein. The author presents them consistently as a separate and describable group, without making any references to the earlier traditions of thinking about the language.

But rather frequent are references to the contemporary linguistic thought, chiefly structuralist and semiotic, which serves as the point of reference for the linguistic theories of the men of letters from the turn of the 18th century and as the criterion of their scientific relevance.

The linguistic problems of that period are inseparably connected with many prevailing ideas in culture and science. The author herself points this out in the introduction and takes it into account in the classification and description of the attitudes of various writers concerned *ex professo* with the problem of language or else dealing with them on the occasion of other studies and research—philosophical, historiographic, literary and even economic and mathematical.

Discussed in the first part are the most representative theories of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th cent., linked by a universally held (and rather old) conviction that the origin of a phenomenon predestines its objective and its nature. Consequently, the problem of the beginnings of human speech is the point of departure for the presented theories, and the forms of its interpretation constitute the fundamental criterion for the classification of the material dealt with in that part. Thus, the author discusses, in the first place, two theories—contradictory in details, the only connection between them being the common thesis that the creator of human speech is God, either as its “donor,” or as the “creator” of a spiritual creature which *homo loquens* is. The theories in question are the early Enlightenment concepts of J. P. Suessmilch and the pre-Romantic theory of L. C. de Saint-Martin. Presented next are: the theory of N. Beauzée, rooted in Cartesianism and influenced by Grammar of Port Royal, the theories originated on the basis of Locke’s empirical thought and represented in France chiefly by works of Ch. de Brosses and E. B. de Condillac, and in England by the naturalist theories of B. Mandeville, A. Smith and J. Burnet, lord Monboddo. Reviewed also are the theories of philosophers of history who approached the problem of the beginnings of human speech either in the spirit of monogenesis or polygenesis, or else consciously rejected it in favour of the search not for the “first” but for possibly the “oldest” historical language (authors: A. Court de Gébelin, J. S. Vater, A. Fabre d’Olivet). Finally, there are the theories which approach the problem of the

origin and functions of languages in the spirit of pre-Romantic, irrationalist anthropology with its stress on human imagination and gift for empathy (J. G. Herder, J. J. Rousseau).

The above-listed theories explicate in different ways concepts which are mutually contradictory, though occasionally reconciled through peculiar compromises: of nature and convention (or culture), deprivation and development of the language, mono- and polygenesis, inter-human social communication or emotional expression, cognitive realism and naturalism, objective and subjective meanings of linguistic signs (the problem of the "truth" of the language). Accompanying these concepts are specific anthropological assumptions of which the most important is the egalitarian notion that all human beings possess the same ability to think and to express their thought in speech; hence, that language is a universal property of man. In connection with this thesis, a frequently appearing motif, underlying 19th-century statements, is that of comparisons of man and animal, based not only on an analysis of intellectual capabilities but also of moral predispositions. Another widely accepted premise was the recognition that no mental operations could take place without signs. In specific cases this instrumental conception of the language was modified with the view to ascertaining an active influence of linguistic signs upon the process of thinking.

A common feature of the theories presented in the second part of the book is the conviction that

the limited number of rules makes it possible to construct statements expressing the whole wealth of human thinking (p. 229).

This is the foundation of the so-called universal grammars seeking to find philosophical principles in the virtue of which all existing tongues are capable of expressing the basic mental operations, common to all people, though with the help of different concrete procedures, these being peculiar to a given language. Thus, the idea of language universalia was consistently tied up with the recognition and studies of the grammars of national languages—different systems performing the same supreme function of the language which was investigated by philosophical grammar. The author strongly emphasizes the systemic understanding of the language in the studied period. In this part of the book she discusses

the Grammar of Port Royal as well as works remaining in its sphere of influence, or stemming from the same premises, written by C. Ch. du Marsais, N. Beauzée, J. Harris, U. Domergue, and others. Outlined also is the field of interest of “universal” grammarians, extending from semantic-inflexional and syntactic functions to phonological ones, and from laying out logical-linguistic universalia to comparative studies of contemporary languages.

In the part devoted to national languages, the author presents notions which served as the basis for investigating ethnic languages. Studies of the grammars of individual languages, prompted initially by the desire to extricate from them general principles of speech, have subsequently led to ever more pronounced consideration not so much of their similarities, as of their differences. The leading exponents of this trend were J. Ch. Adelung and J. Ch. Gottsched. Conducted simultaneously were comparative studies, which resulted in the narrowing of linguistic pluralism in favour of recognizing several European groups of languages and, in the longer perspective, led to the hypothesis of the Proto-Indo-European language.

In the third part of the book the author deals with statements which accentuated perfection and ways of improving speech in general as well as specific ethnic languages and various speech styles—scientific, literary and colloquial. The ideal criteria for evaluating a language are its following attributes: analogy, i.e. internal order and cohesion of the system, economy and precision combined with multi-functionality and the extent of its vocabulary, capability of logical analyses and of expressing abstract notions, and, finally, its clarity and beauty. A disputed problem was that of the “truth” of the language, considered either as an immanent feature of the language or as an instrument of thought, to which only this feature may be ascribed.

This set of ideal attributes of the “language in general” could be further augmented by values formulated in relation to the national language, such as its participation in the development of national culture and faithfulness to its own national “spirit.” In this case the evaluating criteria were: lexical wealth and the possibility of its continued enrichment, purity and elegance of the speech (in France carried to purism), word-order consistent with the logic of thinking and of feeling, and also intonation, phonic

and "pictorial" values of the language. Thus, among the most controversial issues discussed from different angles were neologism and metaphor.

Against the background of thus outlined problems of the language in that period, the author presents the concepts of Polish linguisticians, stating, among other things, that:

The Polish views on the origin, development and nature of the language are close to the opinions of Condillac and Rousseau, and relatively close to those of Gëbelin who stressed the value of certain ideas of the philosophy of language and of linguistics for historiography (p. 69).

Therefore she presents the arguments expounded by theoreticians of history—Jan Potocki and Hugo Kołłątaj, by anthropologist Stanisław Staszic, lexicographer and theoretician of scientific etymology, Samuel B. Linde, as well as by theoreticians of literature—S. K. Potocki, Jan Śniadecki, the poet F. Karpiński, and two outstanding Polish grammarians—O. Kopczyński and J. Mroziński.

In Poland of the Age of Enlightenment and of the first years of national subjugation, the question of perfecting the language was a specific variant of the all-European trend, but of special importance for the nation which sought to make up for the cultural negligence of the past period, and which placed in the language the hope of preserving the unity of a society forcibly partitioned between the three neighbouring powers. The whole problem has been extensively documented in the anthology of texts with a dictionary of stylistic evaluations, published in 1958 under the title *Ludzie Oświecenia o języku i stylu (The Enlightened about the Language and Style)* by Z. Florczak and L. Pszczołowska. The author refers the reader to that work for a fuller insight into the question, confining herself in the book under discussion only to an analysis of the opinions of Onufry Kopczyński—the most prominent representative of the Polish "battle for the language," combined with a detailed study of the language itself.

A particular achievement of the author is also the presentation and the high evaluation of the works of Józef Mroziński, who in a most thorough manner, based on an imposing selection of reading matter, explored the synchronic "mechanism" of Polish grammar, starting from its phonetic foundations.

