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REVIEW / RECENZJA

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The publication mentioned in the title, published by Brill in 2025, examines linguistic strategies involved in the construction of otherness. The contributors analyse how public discourse – particularly political and media narratives – shapes and reinforces an 'us versus them' mentality. They investigate words and expressions used to denigrate or marginalise particular groups in Polish, German, Czech, Slovak, and Croatian contexts, while also observing how certain communities reclaim terms that were once considered offensive.

As the 'Introduction' states, "the book explores how language is used to create division and discrimination in diverse European societies by emphasizing differences in ethnicity, race, national identity, beliefs, or appearance". The volume forms part of Brill's *Studies in Language, Cognition and Culture* series (Vol. 44).

The co-editors of the volume are Polish scholars specialising in language and rhetoric. Marta Falkowska's primary research interests include lexical semantics and cognitive grammar. Jadwiga Linde-Usiekniewicz, Professor of Linguistics, conducts research on the interaction between semantics, syntax, and pragmatics, particularly in relation to hate speech and non-discriminatory (inclusive) language. Both scholars are affiliated with the University of Warsaw.

The structure of the volume comprises four thematic parts, each approaching the phenomena of otherness and strangeness from a different perspective. The publication contains ten chapters preceded by an "Introduction" written by the editors, as well as preliminary materials including a list of figures and tables and notes on contributors.

In the "Introduction", the editors present the volume as the outcome of collaboration between linguists from three universities – the University of Warsaw (Poland), Charles University in Prague (Czech Republic), and the University of

Heidelberg (Germany) – within the 4EU+ Alliance seed4eu+ programme. They emphasise that "the themes and conclusions of individual papers respond to the current European challenges concerning the formation of a European identity in public discourse and upholding the 'us'–'them' dichotomy that often leads to delegitimizing certain social actors". This section also outlines the book's theoretical background and situates it within current scholarship.

Part One, "Naming for Othering in a Diachronic Perspective", opens with Jadranka Gvozdanović's article 'Othering Construed and Maintained in Discourse'. The author conducts a quantitative study examining interpretations of otherness in discourse, focusing particularly on two disadvantaged groups: women and migrants.

The second chapter in this section, entitled "We are my 'Us' and They Are *migranti* 'Migrants', *emigranti* 'Emigrants', *přistěhovalci* 'Immigrants', *uprchlíci* 'Refugees', and Others. Othering in the Context of Migration in Czech", by Lucie Saicová Římalová, Marie Kopřivová, and Jiří Rejzek, draws on data from multiple linguistic corpora. The authors address, among others, the following questions: How do speakers of Czech perceive and conceptualise migration and migrants, particularly those arriving in the Czech region? What linguistic means are used when referring to them? What denotative and connotative meanings are associated with these lexical units?

Part Two, "Naming for Othering in an Identity Debate", also consists of two chapters. Iva Petrak's contribution, "Naming the Other in Croatian Purist Discourse: A Study of Croatian Online Forum Debates", explores the landscape of purist language debates in contemporary Croatian discourse. It further analyses how 'the other' is delineated in discourse and what labels are employed for this purpose.

The second chapter in this section, written by Dagmara Banasiak and Łukasz Wnuk, is entitled "Polish Neologisms *cebulak* 'Onioner' and *fajnopolak* 'cool-o-Pole' as Signs of Othering within the Polish National Community'. The article focuses on polarising tendencies in Polish identity discourse and national self-stereotyping.

The third and most extensive section of the volume, "Naming for Othering as a Strategy of Stigmatization", comprises four chapters. The first, Marek Łaziński's "Ethnic Names in Translation as a Measure of Their Stigmatizing Potential in the Target Language", attempts to identify objective indicators of stigma attached to selected Polish lexical items referring to ethnicity and race.

The following chapter, "Teachers (on Strike) as 'the Others' in Polish Media Discourse", presents Agnieszka Mikołajczuk's pilot study on representations of teachers in Polish media narratives.

Anna Kołos and Agnieszka Karlińska, in "Linguistic Strategies of Ethnic Othering and Exclusion on the Polish Social Networking Service Wykop.pl", investigate linguistic patterns and grammatical structures employed by Wykop.pl users in online communication. The authors focus particularly on hate rhetoric involving racism and xenophobia.

The final chapter in this section, Marta Falkowska's "Troubled Neighborhood: Ethnophaulisms Referring to Ukrainian People in Contemporary Polish", traces lexical items used to refer to Ukrainians in selected Polish texts.

The final section of the volume, "Naming for In-Group Purposes", contains three chapters. The first, written by Jadwiga Linde-Usiekniewicz and entitled "Marking a Difference vs. Naming for Othering: Marginalized Groups' Terms for Dominant Majorities", presents a case study of Polish Deaf writing about hearing people. The author analyses terms used by members of the Polish Deaf community to refer to the hearing majority.

In the following article, "I'm Not Obese, I'm Fat! Reclamation of Words as a Strategy for Building Group Identity in the Polish Fat People Discourse", Magdalena Zawisławska and Marta Chojnacka-Kuraś examine the Polish words *gruby* ('fat') and *otyły* ('obese') in the context of Polish fat activism, body positivity, and body neutrality movements.

The final chapter, Milena Hebal-Jezierska's "Naming the Sides of the Israel–Hamas Conflict in Czech, Slovak, and Polish Texts", offers a linguistic analysis of the terminology used to describe the sides involved in the Israel–Hamas war within the broader Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

The volume concludes with an "Afterword" by the editors, Jadwiga Linde-Usiekniewicz and Marta Falkowska, in which they succinctly summarise the contents of the volume, formulate several general conclusions, and indicate directions for future research.

The Language of Othering in a Diverse Europe forms part of a broader scholarly reflection on otherness, inclusiveness, and exclusion – topics of particular relevance in the context of the current geopolitical and social situation in Europe. In addition to the works cited by the editors, it is worth mentioning Amalendu Misra's *The Othering* (Springer Nature, 2022), *Belonging without Othering: How We Save Ourselves and the World* by john a. powell and Stephen Menendian (Stanford University Press, 2024), and *On Othering: Processes and Politics of Unpeace* by Yasmin Saikia and Chad Haines (AU Press, 2024).

This book constitutes an important and comprehensive contribution to contemporary debates on otherness and diversity in multicultural Europe. It approaches diversity and its narratives from an inclusive perspective and is

grounded in the assumption that diversity itself represents a social and cultural value, despite the communicative difficulties and cognitive stereotypes that may constrain individuals and groups.

All sections focus on naming, labelling, and categorising ‘others’ and ‘otherness’. It would also be worthwhile to investigate forms of constructing the ‘us–them’ opposition that are not explicitly based on naming practices. The titular ‘language of othering’ appears particularly interesting in those areas where linguistic behaviour functions indirectly to include, exclude, or alienate through rhetorical strategies serving conscious or unconscious persuasive goals.

Another limitation resulting from the adopted perspective is the exclusive focus on linguistic practices, with less attention paid to broader cultural or socio-economic dimensions of constructing the ‘us–them’ divide. The editors themselves appear aware of this disciplinary narrowing, as they acknowledge it in the “Afterword”. Nevertheless, there remains considerable scope for further exploration of the topic. Despite these limitations, the multifaceted treatment offered in *The Language of Othering in a Diverse Europe* represents an important step towards understanding the mechanisms and intentions underlying the construction of otherness, as well as towards fostering greater familiarity with and acceptance of diversity.

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