

Summary

Ameliorative lexis in parenting blogs
(based on the material in Polish and Slovak)

"It is not by way of language that I shall transmit what is within me; for it is inexpressible in words"* wrote Antoine de Saint-Exupéry in his last, unfinished novel *Citadelle*. In this sentence, he summarized the essence of emotions. For they are something that is experienced, felt, and although they cannot be materialized or described, they have a significant impact on the language we use. People under the influence of emotions consciously or unconsciously choose such linguistic means that show their mental state. The strong expressive character of the utterances of mothers and fathers who run parenting blogs inspired the research on the emotional lexis used in them. Although the scholarly output concerning the category of expressivity is extensive, this paper presents the issue from a different perspective – through the prism of parenting blogs in the Polish-Slovak comparative approach.

The discussion undertaken here is devoted to ameliorative lexis in parenting blogs which are online diaries usually written by parents and for parents. The research was conducted in the structuralist stream and is systemic in nature. Its aim was to describe the concept of *amelioration* and ameliorative words in language, as well as a general comparison of the tendency to use positively valued expressive words by the authors of selected blogs. This was done by developing a typology of ameliorative words on the basis of a comparative description of Polish and Slovak softening lexemes used by the authors of parenting blogs.

The work consists of two main theoretical and practical parts which include successive chapters and subchapters. The first chapter presents the state of research on expressive lexis in Western and Eastern Slavic countries, as well as the most important linguistic theories which provided the methodological basis for this research.

* A. de Saint-Exupéry, *The wisdom of sands (Citadelle)*, translated by S. Gilberg, Hollis&Carter, London 1952, s. 185.

The second chapter entitled *The blog and the language of blogs*, contains a discussion of blogs, their types, as well as the popularity of online diaries in Poland and Slovakia. The blog was also characterized as a distinct type of text which provides a basis for extracting exemplifications of ameliorative lexis for the analysis. A blog is a specific form of linguistic communication, a hybrid genre, combining features of both spoken and written language. The language used in texts published on blogs was also characterized. The second chapter deals with the blog, as a modern web log, which has recently clearly gained popularity and is a tool for sharing knowledge and experience, expressing opinions and evaluations.

The third chapter, entitled *Expressivity versus expressive lexis*, provides the theoretical background for the methodological concept adopted. It defines the most important notions of expressivity in language and presents the typologies of expressive words which function in Polish and Slovak linguistics, on the basis of which an own classification proposal has been suggested. In this chapter, the issue of expressivity in relation to colloquial and occasional expressions has been emphasized, and an attempt is made to characterize the hitherto unseparated category of amelioration.

The considerations presented in the first three chapters form the theoretical basis for the *Analysis of ameliorative words in parenting blogs*, which is divided into a part devoted to Polish blogs and a part describing ameliorative words extracted from Slovak blogs. In the lexical-semantic analysis, for which selected dictionaries of Polish and Slovak language were used, lexical material exemplified by different types of ameliorative words was shown. The examples that were questionable were provided with comments and sentences from language corpora. Moreover, examples of bloggers' use of diminutives, hypocorisms, familiarisms, humorous words, euphemisms, children's lexis as well as ameliorative colloquial words and occasionalisms were presented. A total of 63 fragments of Polish texts and 68 fragments of Slovak texts were quoted, with some sentences specifying more than one ameliorative. In the end of the chapter, there are the conclusions of the analysis, summarizing the research conducted.

The results of the analysis show that there are different types of expressive words in parenting blog texts. The most numerous group of ameliorative words are formally motivated expressions with explicative expressivity, formed with ameliorative-diminutive modifying formants, and are usually expressed with hypocorisms and diminutives. The most numerous groups of semantically ameliorative words in both Polish and Slovak are expressive words naming children and the names of children's body parts.

Other numerous semantic groups are the names of objects used by children or in child care and the names of people close to children.

The overall degree of expressive character of the Polish and Slovak texts is similar, although selected Polish blogs often performed also an advertising function, which entailed also a greater linguistic care, as well as less frequent use of colloquial and expressive words by their authors. The Slovak blogs used in the analysis were more like personal electronic diaries in which the authors showed a willingness to express themselves by using emotionally charged lexis to express their opinions and experiences.

The research presented in this dissertation will contribute to filling the existing gap in the scope of studies on expressive lexis in the comparative Polish-Slovak perspective, based on the corpus built from parenting blog texts. It may constitute interesting sample material for further comparative studies, covering not only the semantic and lexical plane, but also other linguistic planes, including, above all, the stylistic system of both languages.