

The polyglot self in the semiotic spheres of language and culture

Elżbieta Magdalena Wąsik

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan
Al. Niepodległości 4
61–874 Poznan, Poland
e-mail: wasik@wa.amu.edu.pl

Abstract. The article focuses on the human individual as a signifying and communicating self whose properties can be detected or assumed on the basis of its language in verbal communication through texts and text-processing activities or, more broadly, in both verbal and non-verbal communication through signs and sign-processing activities in the semiotics of culture. The point of departure is the distinction between the observable self and the inferable self, i.e., a concrete person who transmits and receives verbal and/or non-verbal messages, and a mental subject who is engaged in creating and comprehending them. As a consequence of this distinction, it can be stated that the communicative network of the human life-world consists of two types of collectivities. On the one hand, there are speakers and listeners of particular languages who form interpersonal collectivities of those transmitting and receiving perceivable meaning bearers through physical-acoustic sound waves in the communication channel; on the other hand, there are intersubjective collectivities of those who process and understand intelligible meaning bearers while referring them to an extra-linguistic reality through acts of reasoning and interpreting. Exposing the notion of polyglotism, this paper argues that a multiaspectual typology of selves is possible on the basis of the linguistic and cultural texts that characterize the social roles and pragmatic goals of communication participants in the various domains of the human life-world. Finally, it supports the conviction that interdependencies between language and culture must be primarily explained in terms of psychological, or rather, psycho-semiotic conditionings of humans. Since particular languages are products and components of social and cultural life, constantly being shaped and changed due to personal and subjective activities of human selves, polyglotism as both multilingualism and multiculturalism also implies an inquiry into their multicultural competence and multicultural identity.

Keywords: the self, polyglotism, semiotics, language, culture

1. From language to linguistic properties of signifying and communicating selves

In conformity with the “humanistic turn” of the post-structuralist period of the 1960s, we can now speak of the need to study human individuals as signifying and communicating selves whose properties can be detected or assumed on the basis of textual products and text-processing activities. In contrast to the “linguistic turn” of the first half of the 20th century, the attention of researchers has shifted from language regarded as a tool of communication to the linguistic properties of speaking and/or listening individuals as members of speech collectivities or communicative collectivities broadly understood.

Thus, an approach to human individuals as communicators when they are treated both as (1) observable selves, engaged as persons in the processes of transmitting and receiving verbal signs; and (2) inferable selves occupied as mental subjects with sign-production and sign-comprehension activities corresponds to the viewpoint adopted by representatives of linguistic and semiotic studies in the post-structuralist period dealing with humans as participants in communication. For practical reasons, researchers must take into account the distinction between the physical domain based on experiment and objective observation and the logical domain based on communication and subjective inference, formulated by Victor Huse Yngve, an American physicist and linguist, in his book *From Grammar to Science* from 1996. These domains belong, respectively, to the so-called “hard sciences” which rely on empirical evidence and to the “soft sciences” which depend upon rational thinking.

With reference to Yngve (1996: 93–106), some statements pertaining to significant and communicative properties of humans can be formulated. Firstly, observable and/or inferable semiotic properties of the signifying and communicating self are investigated in the so-called physical domain and/or in the logical domain. Secondly, speakers and listeners who engage in communication in (a) given language(s) form collectivities of two types. The first type comprises interpersonal collectivities of those who transmit and receive sensible bearers of meaning (which are observable, similarly to properties of human communicators, in the physical domain and describable in appropriate terms); and the second type includes intersubjective collectivities of those who understand or interpret the intelligible meaning bearers referring them to extra-linguistic reality (which are assumable in the logical domain). Following this approach, it has to be stressed that the properties of communicating individuals as members of interpersonal and intersubjective collectivities belong, on the one hand, to the investigative domain of the hard sciences, i.e., physics, chemistry, and biology, or, on the other hand, constitute the subject matter of the so-called soft sciences such as linguistics, psychology, sociology, logic, and philosophy. Additionally, what is not at all insignificant is the statement that the everyday reality of humans is a social construct resulting from the typical contents of communication among members of societies and social groups.

2. Dimensions of the concept of human self

In substantiating the need to associate the concept of human self to human communicative performances, Susan Petrilli's studies on the self (i.e., human being) as a sign (Petrilli 2013: 29, 59, 147; cf. also Petrilli 1988, 1990, 1998) should be borne in mind. Petrilli departs from Charles Sanders Peirce whose focus is on the self/sign in becoming in open-ended semiosis and semiotic processes (cf. CP). Also Norbert Wiley (1994) or John Pickering (1999) who have been dealing with the human self in terms of semiotic processes should be mentioned here. The notion of the self has been elaborated in philosophy and psychology, and applied in communicology. From the point of view of the present author, works of scholars such as William James, George Herbert Mead as well as Edmund Husserl are of vital importance here (cf. James 1890, 2001[1892]; Mead 1913, 1934; Husserl 1970[1956]).

Nowadays, the concept of the human self appears to be essential for the domain of linguistic studies, whenever issues of meaning and understanding are under consideration. Its application presupposes the statement that each speaking or communicating individual is both an exceptional and irreplaceable experiencing subject as well as an object of his or her own experience which may be characterized in terms of individual motivation, emotions, and beliefs. If the aim is to estimate the reliability of data coming from discourse studies oriented toward individual expression with reference to individual consciousness, it is indispensable to investigate what the notion of the self connotes with regard to the psychological dimension of human consciousness and mental processes, subjective experiencing of human sensations, feelings and emotions, and reasoning an individual is able to conduct. There is a need, then, to realize that mental processes taking place within the mind of an individual, which involve verbal signs, proceed with or without participation of consciousness.

Referring to James 1890; 2001[1892] and Mead 1934, one has to suppose that thinking processes of an individual are streams of thoughts, internal intellectual procedures, internal conversations or interactions in which the *I* (i.e., the self as a subject) responds to the *Me* (i.e., the self as an object). These processes reflect mental experiences of individuals, their encounters within a society, and thus processes within a society. It should be added that it was James (cf., e.g., 2001: 43–83) who focused on two aspects of the self: (1) the self as an object that is known, or the *Me*; and (2) the self as a subjective knower, or the *I*; and who subsequently distinguished three components of the self as an object – the material, the social and the spiritual selves. James' ascertainment pertaining to the self must be recognized as still valid and useful; however, the line of his reasoning about the existence mode of the self was, in spite of all, one of the distinguishing characteristics of the philosophy of St. Augustine and his followers, as demonstrated, for example, by Marguerite Witmer Kehr in her article "The doctrine of the self in St. Augustine and in Descartes" (Kehr 1916).

In general, the notion of the self means the knowledge of an individual about him- or herself acquired in the processes of socialization on the basis of what has been thematized in biosemiotics as human primary modelling systems (cf. Sebeok, Danesi 2000). In contemporary approaches, the fact that the self is a biological organism is regarded as a prerequisite for its mental development emerging through existential experiences in the reality of everyday life, made possible, precisely, on the basis of species-specific modelling devices. Thanks to these experiences, human beings as organisms go beyond their biological conditionings. As a matter of fact, perceptions, beliefs, and thoughts of an individual, for example, on self-assessment, or evaluations of him- or herself in relation to others are metasemiosic processes favoured by the syntactic nature of human modelling and occupy a significant place in his/her mental life.

Because the self is a personal and subjective phenomenon, the identity of an individual as a unique and independent human being is formed as a result of one's sensory and conscious experiences in relation with the other. Except for differences between individuals, the impact of culture on the self-concept causes it to take shape in relation, *inter alia*, to cultural surroundings. At any rate, the self, in other words, the structure and contents of the emotional-intellectual experiences of an individual, emerges from interpersonal communication in changeable social and cultural contexts. One can thus say that the unique single self develops and is in becoming in relation with the other and its environment. As stated, among others, by Clifford Geertz (1973: 52), humans as particular individuals are beings who give form, order, purpose and direction to their lives in terms of cultural patterns and systems of meaning which are created historically. Thus, while most of the self's properties develop in communicative interactions with the other, only some of them can be recognized as universal. In the light of arguments presented from the point of view of social and cultural psychology, for example, by Hasel Rose Markus and Shinobu Kitayama (Markus, Kitayama 1991: 225–231), it can be clearly concluded that different shapes of the self are considered to be characteristic of different cultures.

The psychic properties of the human self embedded in culture and society do not only cause particular individuals to understand other individuals through messages dependent upon communicative situations or circumstances that accompany them. As a matter of fact, humans also possess a disposition to take appropriate action towards objects about which they have some knowledge. Therefore, representatives of social psychology, e.g., Douglas T. Kenrick, Steven L. Neuberg, and Robert B. Cialdini (1999), who devote their attention to problems of social cognition and motivation determining the behaviour of humans, do not dispense with the notion of the self. They analyse and explain cases of mutual encounters among unique individual selves, which consist in influencing others, for example, by persuasion and manipulation, leading to social affiliation, friendship and cooperation, or by prejudice and stereotypes, amounting to conflicts, discrimination, aggression, violence, etc. Moreover, based on the practice of

everyday life social psychologists uncover a large differentiation among individuals at the levels of both their psyche and behaviour. Their observations also point to the existence of inconsistencies in what participants in social interaction believe and say, as well as what they ultimately do.

Assuming that the interpretation of meaning ascribed to communicative means by some communicating individuals is performed in the logical domain by other individuals as communication participants or by researchers as external observers studying human communication, it would be appropriate to explain the psychological mechanisms which accompany the formation of linguistic expressions. At this point, the depiction of the human self as described by a Polish representative of linguistic pragmatics and sociolinguistics Roman Kopytko (2002: 117–121) is worthy of attention of specialists who deal with meaning, understanding and interpretative activities of humans (cf. also Kopytko 2003). Having summarized the previous knowledge of mental aspects of man for the needs of linguistic-pragmatic studies, Kopytko emphasizes that the self is responsible for the organization of data coming from experiences, for the maintenance of self-esteem, and for striking the balance between pleasure and pain in the life of an individual. Kopytko's primary conclusion, drawn in compliance with Tory E. Higgins' understanding of the self (cf. Higgins 1987), is that an individual's self-awareness, which determines his or her current linguistic performances, constitutes in qualitative terms, at each instance, the result of how the cognitive-affective-conative system works. Strictly speaking, awareness of the self and others is dependent on the mutual interaction between the three domains of the self: (1) the actual self, primarily governed by the cognitive system, constituting in fact the conceptual awareness of the self; (2) the ought self; and (3) the ideal self. Both the ought self and the ideal self influence the actual self which, however, is governed by the affective and conative systems as well. This is because all three parts of the self, the actual, the ought and the ideal, appear together in different combinations and at different levels in any instance and are responsible for the cognitive processes and communicative activity of the individual. These parts or components of the self jointly contribute to the development of the human ability to think by means of internal signs processed in intrapersonal communication and, in the same measure, they determine the process of using their external counterparts transmitted and received in interpersonal communication.

In reference to the foregoing discussion, being assured that knowledge, emotions, and will take part in the selection of linguistic and semiotic signs for the creation of communicatively relevant meanings, special importance has to be attached to the distinction between the observable self and the inferable self. As stated earlier, this distinction suggests that the communicating self is engaged as a person in the experiential acts of transmitting and receiving verbal signs in the physical domain, and, at the same time, is occupied as a mental subject with the intellectual acts of processing and interpreting the meanings of verbal and non-verbal signs in the logical domain.

3. Observable and inferable properties of the self in the physical and logical domains of the human life-world

The life-world of humans, a world that the individual selves must experience collectively, was defined by creators and advocates of the idea of the phenomenological notion of intersubjectivity, in particular, by Edmund Husserl (cf. mainly his position expressed in *The Crisis of European Sciences*, Husserl 1970: 108–109, 133, 142; unfinished in German and published in an English translation after the author's death). Alluding to Husserl's concept of the human life-world (*Lebenswelt*) – “In whatever way we may be conscious of the world as universal horizon, as coherent universe of existing objects, we, each ‘I-the-man’ and all of us together, belong to the world as living with one another in the world; and the world is our world, valid for our consciousness as existing precisely through this ‘living together’” (Husserl 1970: 108) – one has to agree with the assumption of mundane phenomenology that, in the life history of individuals, there must be a shared background for experiencing all things and states of affair which occur in reality. Moreover, one has to notice that this background must continuously change as a consequence of an ongoing communication between individuals; it must, however, be different from the objective reality assumed to exist outside or around individuals.

There can be no doubt that the human life-world, interpreted as the reality of everyday by social constructivists Peter Ludwig Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966), comes into being as a result of the communicative activity of humans, which is based, on the one hand, on the concrete transmission or exchange of material meaning bearers and, on the other hand, on the mental attainment or achievement of commonalities of meanings, pertaining to shared views, beliefs, ideas, knowledge, attitudes and/or values, etc., inferred from conceptual and propositional contents of interpreted and understood meaning bearers. This particular statement brings to mind or is tantamount to the already mentioned distinctions between the observable and inferable properties of the selves as communication participants as well as between the interpersonal and intersubjective collectivities in human communication.

To continue this course of reasoning, it is necessary to explain the postulates addressed by Yngve (1996) to linguists, namely, that the object of empirical study should constitute not language but linguistic properties of individuals, who communicate with other individuals through the physical-acoustic communication channel, being available in the physical domain. However, despite Yngve's claim, one has to endorse the assertion that interpersonal communication takes place both in the physical and the logical domains.

Rectifying the idea put forward by Yngve (1996) that communication should be investigated exclusively in the physical domain within the framework of hard sciences, the view that people not only talk but also understand each other needs to be put forward. While the production of verbal means is a concrete act, comprehending them on the basis of concluded reality is a mental act. Thus, the physical domain unites speakers and

listeners who communicate with each other through sound waves and other observable objects as parts of their surroundings which are relevant for the realization of their tasks. Hence, if communication consists in both an exchange of material meaning bearers and their interpretation by people, it must be studied along with the facts which belong both to the physical and the logical domains of human life-worlds. In these worlds of observable and inferable reality mediated by verbal signs, the human being as a bearer or user of language lives and reaches an agreement with others.

Bearing in mind the need for theoretical separation of two kinds of properties of the communicating selves, analogously to the two pairs of detached dimensions in the study of human communication, one has to speak in favour of investigating verbal and nonverbal signs as cognizable and associated phenomena which take place on two mutually concatenated planes, namely, the objective plane of expression and the objective, if observed, or subjective, if concluded, plane of reference. Hence, the products of verbal behaviour and the accompanying nonverbal behaviour appear as observable in the physical domain, when realized or codified in such sensorially perceivable meaning bearers as speech-sound waves or their surrogates functioning in the context of paralinguistic and non-linguistic signs. Theoreticians of communication, Michael Burgoon and Michael Ruffner (1978: 130–146) have classified such signs into movement, posture, gesture, facial expressions, eye contact, physical appearance (especially body shape, skin colour, texture, hair, clothing accessories, and cosmetics), touch, smell, artifacts, interpersonal distance, timing and sequencing of activities and statements. However, while being displaced in time and space, i.e., directly not observable here and now, the communicated objects of reference, along with the communicative aims, intentions or tasks realized by communicating individuals, belong to the logical domain as far as they can be only inferred on the basis of human conduct or its products. They are only ascribed to particular communication participants by other communication participants. In the same manner, subjective mental states cannot be described in terms of physical phenomena even though conscious activity operates within the brain that is a physical organ. Thus, when examining the properties of communicating selves, the researcher is faced with the necessity to account for data which are accessible to empirical observations with the aim to assess interpersonal relationships as well as to cognize and to interpret the meaning of verbal messages in an attempt to infer about intersubjective relationships linking participants of communication (on the investigative consequences of the distinction between the physical and logical domains of communication, see Wąsik 2010 against the background of Yngve 1996).

4. The polyglot individual in a text- and role-oriented typology of the human selves

If the capacity of acquiring natural languages is the first and most basic among human aptitudes responsible for the significative and communicative activity of human individuals, communicating selves are to be considered as polyglot selves. Humans as communicators, who possess the ability to know many languages as one of their heteronomous dependences, should be considered in accordance with the assumption that, becoming or being polyglot, they make choices between languages and language varieties in encounters with others, taking into account the social and situational communication circumstances.

The term *polyglot* (derived from the Greek *polyglôtos* ‘many-tongued’, combining the stems *polys* ‘much’ or ‘many’ and *glôtos* ‘tongued’, which is an adnominal adjective of *glôtta* ‘tongue’) refers to a human individual who speaks, writes, or reads several languages (cf. Random House 1997[1992]). It remains in close semantic relations with the notion of multilingualism (or also bilingualism) used with reference to individuals being proficient in more than only one language, and defined in the first place by linguists, researchers of language contacts or anthropologists, as Leonard Bloomfield (1933: 55–56), Uriel Weinreich (1953: 1), Einar Ingvald Haugen (1953: 6–7), and A. Richard Diebold, Jr. (1961: 99). However, the use of notions such as bilingualism and multilingualism, or bilingual and multilingual, as applied currently in foreign language teaching, is not restricted to referring to individuals characterized by a perfect fluency in (a) foreign language(s). On the contrary, different kinds of polyglottism or multilingualism, dependent on the degree individuals master particular languages and the extent to which they use them, are distinguished by, e.g., Hugo Baetens Beardsmore (1982: 1–36), Josiane F. Hamers and Michel H. A. Blanc (2000[1983]: 6–27), Bee Chin Ng and Gillian Wigglesworth (2007: 6–17); works of these authors give a certain idea of linguistic conditionings of human individuals as selves communicating in natural languages.

First of all, as one might conclude from descriptions of multilinguals, formulated mainly for the needs of foreign language instructors who are interested in developing the linguistic competences of their students, humans really neither learn particular languages simultaneously since early childhood nor use them as entirely equivalent means of communication. They rather acquire particular languages in different periods of their life, in different environmental conditions, with different motivation, which, in turn, results in different cognitive effects, non-equal competence in particular language skills, and thus in a non-uniform deployment of languages in different situations. In addition, individuals rarely master and use languages of equal status, that is, they often speak dialects or other non-standard varieties. What is important, an acquisition of each language leads to the adoption of a new cultural identity, so that multilingual individuals

seldom appear to be monocultural. As it follows from investigations pertaining to the acquisition, knowledge and use of two or more languages, there are both quantitative and qualitative differences between linguistic performances of particular individuals. In general, the regularity can be observed that the more complex the mechanisms involved in language learning, the more compound the cognitive processes taking place in the mind of an individual turn out to be. A linguist who deals with texts spoken and written by bi- or multilingual individuals pays attention to tendencies of their producers toward code-switching and interlingual borrowings, as well as language transfers and cross-linguistic interferences.

According to some researchers of multilingualism, multilingual and multicultural competence (see, e.g., Cook 2002), the acquisition of two or many languages is discussed in terms of the development of language competence which is not twofold or multiple, but rather multidimensional. For instance, in the opinion of Francois Grosjean, a Swiss psycholinguist, bilinguals always blend competencies in two languages. Therefore, these kind of communicators must be characterized as speakers and listeners who in no case can be treated as the sum of two monolinguals but rather, or most of all, as exclusively integrated wholes consisting of unique and specific persons and subjects of communication (cf. especially Grosjean 2008: 13–14).

Observations pertaining to psychological and societal reasons of multilingualism as a widespread property of human individuals and to different forms and ways of its manifestation may constitute a point of reference for reflections about the self in communication in general. At this point, for example, Grosjean's arguments presented in his books with characteristic titles, such as *Life with Two Languages* (1982) and *Bilingual: Life and Reality* (2010), turn out to be useful. He is convinced that it is an understatement or an oversimplification to maintain that bilinguals are distinguished just by the fact that they regularly use two or more languages in their everyday life. As a psychologist, Grosjean proves empirically that bilinguals speak two languages which for them constitute a certain linguistic continuum, together or separately, depending on their goals and aims realized in encounters with different people in different domains of life.

The notion of the language mode introduced by Grosjean in his article "The bilingual's language modes" (2001) is also important. The article aims to show that it is the specificity of social situations in the everyday life of bilingual individuals, understood by them subjectively, which induces them to undertake particular manners of verbal behaviour. Literally, Grosjean (e.g., 2008: 36) has defined the language mode as the state of activation of the bilingual's languages and language processing mechanisms at a given point in time. In his opinion, it has a decisive impact on the everyday behaviour of the bilingual. In particular, interferences may occur in the monolingual language mode, while the bilingual mode is characterized by the appearance of such forms of mixing as code-switching and borrowing. The concept of language mode indicates unconscious and

conscious mixing of languages resulting in interference, code-switching, borrowing, etc. It allows assessing bilingual individuals according to whether they are acquiring a new language or losing one, or whether their bilingualism remains stable or not, etc. In sum, since different aspects of life of an individual require different languages, his or her linguistic knowledge, including the knowledge of vocabulary, does change over time, but probably not at the same pace for the so-called stable and unstable bilinguals. Being aware of the psychological aspects of language processing mechanisms, one has to conclude that, from a sociological point of view, the choice of a language by communicators (i.e., a particular natural language or a language variety) depends on the need for that language and is, in sociolinguistic terms, domain specific.

Human individuals are not infrequently bi- or multilingual in the literal sense. In everyday life, knowers and users of natural languages, language varieties, and also of a number of other semiotic codes may be considered as polyglot selves. All communicative performances of humans could be considered as governed by communication modes between which they must move as external conditionings and states of their mind change. As one might suppose, principles according to which participants in interpersonal communication switch into modes directing their verbal and nonverbal behaviour when they adjust to situations and persons with whom they interact must be similar to mechanisms directing the language modes of bi- or multilinguals. It can be even assumed that motives as well as goals and intentions of human individuals can be deduced by their conversation partners being aware of the changeability of the mental states of others which cause them not only to use different languages or language varieties, i.e., dialects, stylistic or functional varieties, jargons or slangs, etc., but also to choose between modes of speaking and/or to resort to varied means of signification and communication. And finally, the communicative properties of the selves manifested, for example, in code-switching come under scrutiny in the physical domain, while, for example, the identity of an individual expressed by switching between two or more languages or language varieties should be investigated and described in the logical domain.

As far as the communicative repertoires of particular individuals are concerned, verbal and nonverbal means which are internalized by particular individuals in their cultures and used depending on with whom, when, and why they communicate, e.g., words and phrases, set expressions in natural languages they prefer, etc., change over time, because the social environment as well as needs and values of individuals change. Exposing the notion of the polyglot self in the context of semiotic and cultural studies, one has to highlight the impossibility of describing the total communicative repertoire of an individual. In addition, attention should be paid to the idea of cultural polyglotism with reference to the notion of 'cultural text' introduced by Juri Lotman, the founder of the Tartu–Moscow School of Semiotics, inaugurated in 1964 (for details see Kull *et al.* 2011), which became famous after the translation into several languages of "Theses

on the semiotic study of cultures (as applied to Slavic texts)” (Uspensky *et al.* 1973), and his further related articles (cf. Lotman 1973, as well as Lotman 1974, 1988[1981], 1994[1981]).

In view of the fact that the communicating selves who have at their disposal cultural languages as sign systems are the true agents in human communication, and that their communicative properties constantly change depending on multifarious social and cultural conditionings, the importance of the context(s) in which verbal texts are produced and interpreted should be recognized. Nevertheless, being aware of the psychological mechanisms according to which signs arise in the minds of human individuals, researchers who investigate linguistic texts as products of the sign-communicational activity of the human selves can never be sure whether their knowledge of the (external) context is sufficient.

However, if language is treated as a human-related semiotic fact belonging to the phenomenal life-world, its individual speakers and listeners can be considered as manifestations of various types of the selves. As communication participants, they act verbally and nonverbally throughout their lives, presumably depending on how their cognitive-affective-conative systems operate within their minds because they are able to create utterances according to patterns delivered by their languages and cultures from which they make choices individually. In order to create a typology of the selves that might be deduced from spoken and written texts which characterize the social roles and pragmatic goals of communication participants in various domains of the human life-world, researchers must accept temporary and long-lasting psychological and cultural conditionings of humans as classificatory criteria. Moreover, assuming that the communicating selves act as persons and subjects in both interpersonal and intersubjective collectivities, they could eventually prove or infer which parts of their inner selves become manifested, in a linguistic and non-linguistic manner, at a particular moment. As stated above, it is possible to demonstrate empirically how individuals, communicating with each other, are bound by sound waves and other surrogate codes transmitted and received via communication channels, and that it is a matter of assumption how they interpret meaning bearers while making reference to a commonly known extra-linguistic reality in a similar way. Thus, the existence of linkages between the minds of individual communication participants is deducible from presupposition, intuition, reasoning and/or imagination.

Consequently, the following statements should be taken into consideration. It is thanks to the processes of interpersonal communication that the transition from self-awareness to identity takes place. The subjective mental image someone has of him- or herself as a person affects the ways he or she produces and understands verbal signs as meaning bearers. If the identity of individuals finds expression in externalized verbal texts (in lexical elements and grammatical forms, characteristic of languages they speak)

similarly to other products of their activity, parts of the cognitive self can be read from the properties of the communicating individual (from the preferred words and expressions he or she utters or writes and the presumed ways of their interpretation). Thereby, the process of identification must proceed at the level of the individual's cognitive system. The individual's knowledge pertaining to him- or herself and others comes from sensory experience and must be conscious, which means that, before expressing it verbally, people must first know or be convinced which information they gain from their senses, whether they have positive or negative sensations and feelings, whether they act or have desires, wills, or wishes. In a typological survey of selves, all components of the human self in general, such as the material self, the social self, the spiritual self, the remembering self and the imaginative self, as well as the emotional self in particular, must be subsumed under the capacities of the cognitive self. It is so, because the cognitive self is the knower of its body, its properties and states, its possessions and other persons, such as its near relatives, its states of mind and thoughts. It has views, ideas, beliefs, attitudes, etc., of the self and others and toward the self and others; moreover, it is the knower of facts, views, beliefs, and attitudes that the others possess. As a matter of fact, when humans talk about feelings or acts of will, they are really talking about their own thoughts, about their feelings and acts of will. Since semiotic systems available to human individuals impose certain categories on the world perceived by them, the notion of the categorical self must be equal to that of the cognitive self. Furthermore, feelings and inclinations, which are not verbalized, remain unconscious, but they are driving forces of the self as well. Hence, the understanding of the cognitive self must be supplemented with the affective and the conative parts of the self, if impulses coming, for example, from body language are translated into natural language(s).

Among different parts of the cognitive self, the concept of the social self (understood as the interpersonal or collective self) deserves closer attention. The self in general develops when a human individual is appreciated, recognized or respected by others. The social self thus reflects the membership of an individual in social groups. Communication participants, owing to social encounters, usually learn to feel solidarity with groups or believe in their particular status. Examples of the social selves, the number of which can be practically unlimited, may be derived from the sense of their belonging to ethnic, professional or age groups, groups of people who are bound together by their place of origin or residence, or by common interests, gender groups, etc.

However, humans as beings endowed with reason (*homo animal rationale*) can be above all estimated and understood in terms of the true or rational selves responsible for resolute endeavours to improve their personalities by striving for their moral improvement. Their dilemmas come down to finding a middle road between bodily needs and pleasures on the one hand, and values and commitments resulting from the fact of belonging to groups of different kind and cultural requirements on the other

hand. In connection with the questions of self-esteem, self-acceptance or self-affirmation bothering individuals, the notions of the real self, the ideal self, the normative self, the deceptive self, the pragmatic self, the ironic self must also be added.

In sum, however, aspects and constituents of the self in general can be deduced from the verbal and non-verbal behaviour of human communicators who, while sharing their life-world with others, undoubtedly exhibit the properties of polyglotism. These properties can be revealed under the condition that, each time, suitable criterions will be elaborated with reference to the social and cultural contexts. One has to recognize the importance of the situational and cultural context(s) in which verbal texts are produced and interpreted. Texts reflect various types of interpersonal relationships ascertainable in social reality.

Researchers who look for linguistic-communicational properties of people in the domain of task-and-means-oriented dialogical texts, usually start from the properties of the communicating selves, go through the observable elements making up various kinds of temporary and long-lasting collectivities, and end with the aggregation of the chains of communication participants in the structure of human society. With a view to the self engaged in communication, using natural languages and other systems of signification to convey meanings to others, it has to be stated that different individuals, having the same verbal devices at their disposal, do not use them in exactly the same way because of specific, internal, or psychological contexts which constitute the source, i.e., an underlying cause of changes in the universe of meaning.

5. The semiotic existence mode of the intraorganismic self

By way of conclusion, subjectivity of verbal signs which come into being in the minds of human individuals should be exposed against the background of research on language as a property of communicating individuals. As a matter of fact, language-, culture- and organism-oriented studies in the post-structuralist period of linguistics and semiotics concentrate essentially on issues of multilingualism, multidiscursivism and multiculturalism in the context of interpersonal and global communication, mutual understanding and misunderstanding. Ultimately, it is the texts embedded in the social and cultural relations, discursive practices, speech acts, speech genres, on a par with communicative events, dialogical utterances, conversations, etc., which have become the object of linguistic studies.

In fact, contemporary scholars who search for communication patterns of groups derive their methodology from the domain of the ethnography of communication, whose basic terms, concepts and issues have been defined by Muriel Saville-Troike

(1982: 12–50). In her work, linguists are seen in the broadest sense as language- and culture-oriented researchers who are faced with the need to interpret multi-layered utterances which depend on personal, social and historical experiences of communication participants. In another field of study, those who utilize the achievements of cognitive linguistics tend to present the individual's knowledge of the world in the form of mental reflections of concepts included in propositional contents of verbal utterances, and preserved in the social meanings of linguistic entities, units and constructions. In this way, scholars who, unlike the supporters of mentalist constructivism, see the cause of cognitive processes in the ability of an organism to interact with its environment, tend to follow the idea of enactionism having its roots in the biological conceptions of Humberto R. Maturana, Francisco J. Varela (cf., e.g., Maturana, Varela 1980, 1987), Evan Thomson, and Eleanor Rosch, and developed, *inter alia*, in *Anthropological Linguistics* by William A. Foley (1997: 8–11). With regard to theoretical foundations of embodied semantics, they claim that human individuals as biological organisms cognize the reality through their senses only; hence, there is no objective meaning, but the meaning is rather embedded in their lived histories.

Currently, language is studied, following the postmodern trends, alongside with issues of ideology, values, ethics, and subjective needs realized through verbal understanding in spoken and written communication. Therefore, further reflections pertaining to human individuals as signifying and communicating subjects in their personal and cultural conditionings come to the fore. Particularly, the semiotic nature of the human self deserves special attention of contemporary practitioners of language sciences. This postulate entails detaching the mental subject whose intellectual properties are assumed only from the concrete, real person who is observed in the communication “theatre” of everyday life. The inner self as a mental subject is engaged in activities of sign-processing and sign-understanding, yet the outer self as a concrete person is the transmitter and receiver of signs.

In relation to the concepts of the self and subjectivity, the investigative framework of existential semiotics elaborated by Eero Tarasti is worth separate mentioning. Inspired by idealistic philosophers who dealt with the alterity of the ego or otherness in terms of transcendence, the Finnish semiotician and philosopher considers the human body to be the carrier of personal properties and the material basis for semiotic processes of the mental subject who copes with his or her being in the world through rational acts in the consciousness. He formulated his human centered conception of the object of neosemiotics at the 9th Congress of the IASS/AIS (Helsinki-Imatra, 11–17 June 2007), and thoroughly extended it in an entry to *The Oxford Handbook of Culture and Psychology* (cf. Tarasti 2009: 1755–1772, 2011: 316–343).

Having developed the foundations of his theory, Eero Tarasti departs from two existential categories of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1910[1807]), namely, *an-*

sich-sein 'being-in-itself' and *für-sich-sein* 'being-for-itself', enriching them with two additional distinctions, *an-mir-sein* 'being-in-myself' and *für-mich-sein* 'being-for-myself', after the terminological modification in French (*être-en-moi* – *être-en-soi* vs. *être-pour-moi* – *être-pour-soi*) proposed by Jacques Fontanille (2004: 22–23), while listing such four forms of being, in other words, the existence modes of the self in consistency with the understanding specified above, as (1) being-in-myself – *an-mir-sein* – *être-en-moi* – the bodily ego of the self manifested in its appearance and performance; (2) being-for-myself – *für-mich-sein* – *être-pour-moi* – the awareness of the self as an observer shifting to possible acts of transcendence; (3) being-in-itself – *an-sich-sein* – *être-en-soi* – the cultural-normative potentialities of the self; and (4) being-for-itself – *für-sich-sein* – *être-pour-soi* – the role-oriented realization of the self in society and culture.

Against the background of experiential states of the self, known from communication theory, such as: 'the real self', 'the self's self', 'the other's self', and 'the self's' other's self' (cf. Burgoon, Ruffner 1978), the acts of transcendence distinguished by Tarasti, in which the individual subject is not satisfied with his or her universe of being, can be analysed in the following order – firstly, the inner pressure of movement; secondly, the possibility of acting; thirdly, the inner determination to act; and finally, the power of intellectual effort of being acquainted with. These four existence modes, expressed through particular verbs, such as 'will', 'can', 'must', and 'know', may run or pass through the mental operations of individual and social parts of human individuals as well (cf. Tarasti 2009: 1763–1766, and 2011: 328–329).

It is obvious therefore that the contents of the individual part of the self are transformed within the organism into the social part of the self as soon as he or she starts to interact with others. External observers may notice here that human beings as private selves do not communicate with one another directly, but it is rather their social part determined by group affiliation and cultural experiences which is engaged in communication. Hence, a conclusion can be drawn that the existence of human beings – who are active in various pragmatic spheres of language- and culture-in-use and who thus become polyglot in their life-worlds – is enabled through the semiotic means, which facilitate their individual thinking and reasoning as well as their mutual understanding in society. While paraphrasing the metaphor of polyglotism, applied to culture as a system of "texts", one could finally state that the communicating self as a "cultural polyglot" must be able to cope with texts coming from different cultures, i.e., he or she must know how to communicate in and understand the multiplicity of cultural languages. All in all, the knowers of different languages and cultures might be described as possessing interlingual and intercultural competences.

References

- Baetens Beardsmore, Hugo 1982. *Bilingualism: Basic Principles*. Clevedon, Avon: Tieto.
- Berger, Peter Ludwig; Luckmann, Thomas 1966. *The Social Construction of Reality*. Garden City: Doubleday.
- Bloomfield, Leonard 1933. *Language*. New York: Henry Holt and Co.
- Burgoon, Michael; Ruffner, Michael 1978. *Human Communication. A Revision of Approaching Speech/Communication*. New York, etc.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Cook, Vivian J. 2002. Background to the L2 user. In: Cook, Vivian J. (ed.), *Portraits of the L2 User*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1–28.
- CP = Peirce, Charles S. 1931–1958. Collected papers of Charles Sanders Peirce. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. [Hartshorne, Charles; Weiss, Paul, eds., 1931–1935; Burks, Arthur W., ed., 1958. In-text references are to CP, followed by volume and paragraph numbers].
- Diebold, A. Richard Jr. 1961. Incipient bilingualism. *Language* 37(1): 97–112.
- Foley, William A. 1997. *Anthropological Linguistics*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Fontanille, Jacques 2004. *Soma et séma. Figures du corps*. Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose.
- Geertz, Clifford 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.
- Grosjean, François 1982. *Life with Two Languages: An Introduction to Bilingualism*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- 2001. The bilingual’s language modes, In: Nicol, Janet (ed.), *One Mind, Two Languages: Bilingual Language Processing*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1–22.
 - 2008. *Studying Bilinguals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 - 2010. *Bilingual: Life and Reality*. Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press.
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich 1910[1807]. *Phenomenology of Mind*. [Baillie, James Black, trans., intr., notes] London: George Allen & Unwin; London: Swan Sonnenschein and Co.; New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Hamers, Josiane F; Blanc, Michel H. A. 2000[1983]. *Bilinguality and Bilingualism*. (2nd ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Haugen, Einar Ingvald 1953. *The Norwegian Language in America: A Study in Bilingual Behavior*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Higgins, Tory E. 1987. Self-discrepancy. A theory relating self and affect. *Psychological Review* 3: 319–349.
- Husserl, Edmund 1970[1956]. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*. [Carr, David, trans.] Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- James, William 1890. *Principles of Psychology*. New York: Henry Holt and Co.
- 2001[1892]. *Psychology. The Briefer Course*. Mineola: Dover Publications.
- Kehr, Marguerite Witmer 1916. The doctrine of the self in St. Augustine and in Descartes. *The Philosophical Review* 25(4): 587–615.
- Kenrick, Douglas T.; Neuberg; Steven L.; Cialdini, Robert B. 1999. *Social Psychology: Unraveling the Mystery*. Boston, Toronto: Allyn and Bacon.
- Kopytko, Roman 2002. *The Mental Aspects of Pragmatic Theory: An Integrative View*. Poznań: Motiwex.
- 2003. The idea of “Self” and modern pragmatics. *Scripta Neophilologica Posnaniensia* V: 85–105.

- Kull, Kalevi; Salupere, Silvi; Torop, Peeter; Lotman, Mihhail 2011. The institution of semiotics in Estonia. *Sign Systems Studies* 39(2/4): 314–342.
- Lotman, Juri 1974. The sign mechanism of culture. *Semiotica* 12(4): 301–305.
- 1988[1981]. The semiotics of culture and the concept of a text. *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology* 26(3): 52–58.
 - 1994[1981]. The text within the text. *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 109(3): 377–384.
- Markus, Hasel Rose; Kitayama, Shinobu 1991. Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review* 98(2): 224–253.
- Maturana, Humberto R.; Varela, Francisco J. 1980. *Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living*. Boston: D. Reidel.
- 1987. *The Tree of Knowledge: The Biological Roots of Understanding*. Boston: New Science Library.
- Mead, George Herbert 1913. The social self. *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods* 10(14): 374–380.
- 1934. *Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*. [Morris, Charles William, ed., intr.] Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Ng, Bee Chin; Wigglesworth, Gillian 2007. *Bilingualism: An Advanced Resource Book*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Petrilli, Susan 1988. *Significs, semiotica, significazione*. [Sebeok, Thomas A., intr.] Bari: Adriatica.
- 1990. Introduction. In: Ponzio, Augusto. *Man as a Sign. Essays on the Philosophy of Language*. [Petrilli, Susan, trans., ed.] Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1–13.
 - 1998. *Teoria dei segni e del linguaggio*. Bari: Graphis.
 - 2013. *The Self as a Sign, the World, and the Other. Living Semiotics*. [Ponzio, Augusto, intr.] New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.
- Pickering, John 1999. The self is a semiotic process. *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 6(4): 31–47.
- Random House 1997[1992]. *Webster's College Dictionary*. [2nd ed., rev. and updated] New York: Random House.
- Saville-Troike, Muriel 1982. *The Ethnography of Communication. An Introduction*. Oxford, New York: Basil Blackwell.
- Sebeok, Thomas A.; Danesi, Marcel 2000. *The Forms of Meaning. Modeling Systems Theory and Semiotics*. Berlin, New York: Mouton De Gruyter.
- Tarasti, Eero 2009. What is existential semiotics? From theory to application, In: Tarasti, Eero (ed.), *Communication: Understanding / Misunderstanding. Proceedings of the 9th Congress of the IASS/AIS. Helsinki – Imatra: 11–17 June, 2007* (Acta Semiotica Fennica XXXIV). Imatra: International Semiotics Institute at Imatra and Helsinki, Semiotic Society of Finland, 1755–1772.
- 2011. Existential semiotics and cultural psychology. In: Valsiner, Jaan (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Culture and Psychology*. Part. III, 15. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 316–343.
- Uspensky, Boris Andreyevich; Ivanov, Vyacheslav Vsevolodovich; Toporov, Vladimir Nikolayevich; Piatigorsky, Alexander Moiseevich; Lotman, Yuri Mikhailovich 1973. Theses on the semiotic study of cultures (as applied to Slavic texts). In: Van der Eng, Jan; Grygar, Mojmir (eds.), *Structure of Texts and Semiotics of Culture*. The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1–28.
- Wąsik, Elżbieta Magdalena 2010. *Coping with an Idea of Ecological Grammar*. Frankfurt am Main, etc.: Peter Lang.

- Weinreich, Uriel 1953. *Languages in Contact. Findings and Problems*. New York, The Hague, Paris: Mouton.
- Wiley, Norbert 1994. *The Semiotic Self*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Yngve, Victor Huse 1996. *From Grammar to Science: New Foundations for General Linguistics*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Полиглотизм *Self* в семиотических сферах языка и культуры

В статье рассматривается индивид как коммуницирующий и продуцирующий значения *Self*. Его характеристики можно определить (или предположить) на основе текстов, вербального языка, а также шире – на основе использования и обработки знаков как в вербальном, так и невербальном общении. Отправным пунктом является различие между наблюдаемым (*observable*) и возможным в качестве вывода (*inferable*) *Self*, т.е. между конкретным человеком, принимающим и передающим вербальные или невербальные сообщения и ментальным субъектом, который создает и интерпретирует эти сообщения. Такое различие позволяет утверждать, что коммуникативная сеть жизненного мира людей состоит из коллективов двух типов. Первый тип – это коллектив разговаривающих на конкретном языке индивидов, которые передают и принимают сообщения посредством физико-акустических звуковых волн. Второй тип – коллектив субъектов, которые обрабатывают понятных им носителей значения, соотнося их с внеязыковой реальностью посредством актов интерпретации. В статье исследуется возможность многоаспектной типологии *Self* на основе языковых и культурных текстов, которые характеризуют социальные роли и прагматические цели участников коммуникации в разных областях жизненного мира человека. Автор статьи придерживается убеждения, что взаимозависимость языка и культуры целесообразно объяснять в терминах психологической, вернее, психосемиотической обусловленности человека. Так как конкретные языки являются составными частями общественной и культурной жизни, которая благодаря личной и субъективной деятельности человека находится в постоянном движении и изменении, полиглотизм (как многоязыковой, так и многокультурный) указывает на необходимость изучать мультикультурную компетенцию и мультикультурный идентитет.

Ise polüglotism keele ja kultuuri semiootilistes sfäärides

Artikkel keskendub inimindiviidile kui tähendustloovale ja suhtlevale Isele (*self*), kelle omadusi võib tuvastada või nende kohta oletusi teha tekstide ja tekstitöötustegevuste kaudu selle põhjal, milline on tema verbaalses suhtluses avalduv keel, või, laiemas tähenduses, nii verbaalses kui ka mitteverbaalses suhtluses märkide ja märgitöötlemise kaudu kultuurisemiootikas. Lähtekohaks on eristus vaadeldava (*observable*) ja tuletatava (*inferable*) Ise vahel, s.t verbaalseid ja/või mitteverbaalseid sõnumeid edastava ja vastu võtva konkreetse inimese ning nende loomise ja mõistmisega tegeleva mentaalse subjekti vahel. Selle eristuse tulemusena võib väita, et inimeste elumaailma kommunikatiivne võrgustik koosneb kaht tüüpi kollektiividest. Ühest küljest on olemas konkreetsete keelte kuulajad ja kõnelejad, kes moodustavad isikute kollektiive, millesse kuuluvad need, kes edastavad ja võtavad kommunikatsioonikanalis vastu meelelisi tähenduskandjaid füüsikalis-akustiliste helilainete kaudu. Teisalt on olemas subjektide kollektiivid, mille moodustavad

need, kes töötlevad ja mõistavad arusaadavaid tähendus kandjaid, seostades neid keelevälise tegelikkusega arutlemis- ja tõlgendamisaktide kaudu. Vaadeldes polüglotismi mõistet, väidab artikkel, et on võimalik Isede mitmeaspektiline tüpologia keeleliste ja kultuuriliste tekstide põhjal, mis iseloomustavad kommunikatsioon osalejate sotsiaalseid rolle ja pragmaatilisi eesmärke inimeste elumaailma erinevates valdkondades. Lõpus toetab artikkel veendumust, et keele ja kultuuri vahelist vastastiksõltuvust tuleb peamiselt seletada inimeste psühholoogilise või pigem psühho-semiootilise tingituse terminites. Et konkreetsed keeled on ühiskondliku ja kultuurilise elu saadused ja koostisosad, mis on tänu inimeste isiklikule ja subjektiivsele tegevusele pidevalt kujunemises ja muutumises, viitab polüglotism nii mitmekeelsuse kui ka mitmekultuursusena vajadusele uurida nende multikultuurset kompetentsi ja multikultuurset identiteeti.