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**DISTANCE**  
**IN ENGLISH AND POLISH**

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I bear the sole responsibility for any errors and omissions in this dissertation.

## INTRODUCTION

I became first interested in distance when analysing Kazuo Ishiguro's *Remains of the Day* and its Polish translation for purposes of my MA thesis. In this novel, the main protagonist was very skilful at keeping his interlocutors at a considerable linguistic distance, which was much shorter in the Polish translation. One of the reasons which prompted me into further research was my curiosity to analyse the English and Polish conceptualisation of distance in a wider perspective which goes beyond the idiolect of a specific author. Furthermore, the parameter of distance is frequently applied in linguistic studies; however, there is no extensive or holistic research devoted to this parameter only. Distance is treated as self-explanatory and is rarely defined, which causes large inconsistencies in how this term is used within linguistics. For this reason, the comparison of communicative distance in Polish and English should be preceded by an in-depth analysis of the concept itself.

### 1. OBJECTIVES

The aim of my project is to analyse communicative distance in two different cultural and linguistic contexts: a Polish one and an English<sup>1</sup> one, within the framework of Cognitive Linguistics. Two main objectives are as follows:

#### **Objective 1: Concept of Communicative Distance**

- to define the concept of communicative distance (Part I);
- to identify and examine factors that impact its conceptualisation (Part II).

#### **Objective 2: Contrastive Analysis of Communicative Distance in English and Polish**

- to compare communicative distance in Polish and English at different levels of language production (Part III).

Since communication occurs on various channels, the analysis requires an interdisciplinary and holistic approach that will comprise both verbal and nonverbal communication, as well as social, psychological and cultural factors which impact the conceptualisation of distance. Nevertheless, the analysis will be necessarily selective and will be limited only to face-to-face dyadic conversations.

The research was conducted on the basis of examples noted down from real face-to-face conversations. In some cases examples were taken from radio conversations (LBC London, RMF FM, Radio Zet) and TV interviews (BBC Prime, BBC World, TVP1, TVP2, TVN). Linguistic material was also provided by dictionaries, a list of which is attached at the end of the dissertation.

**Synopsis.** The Introduction presents methodology selected for the analysis of distance - Cognitive Linguistics. **Part I** and **Part II** address Objective 1. Firstly, previous conceptions of and applications of distance in linguistic research are discussed. Next, an in-depth analysis of the concept of communicative distance is conducted with the use of dictionary definitions of distance, the network model, the preconceptual image schema NEAR\_FAR, and relationship metaphors where distance functions as a source domain. It is postulated that communicative distance is a function of physical, psychological and social distance. **Part II** describes psychological, social and cultural factors that impact the conceptualisation of communicative distance. **Part III** addresses Objective 2 and contains a contrastive English-Polish analysis of communicative distance. English and Polish are compared at various levels of communication, including proxemic and other nonverbal behaviour, paralanguage, registers, forms of address, selected speech acts, and conversational atmosphere. Special attention will be paid to recent cultural, social and

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<sup>1</sup> English means Standard British English (excluding Scottish, Welsh, rural and urban dialects, etc.) except when stated otherwise. Similarly, Polish means Standard Polish.

linguistic changes which pertain to communicative distance. The final chapter presents research conclusions.

## **2. METHODOLOGY: COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS**

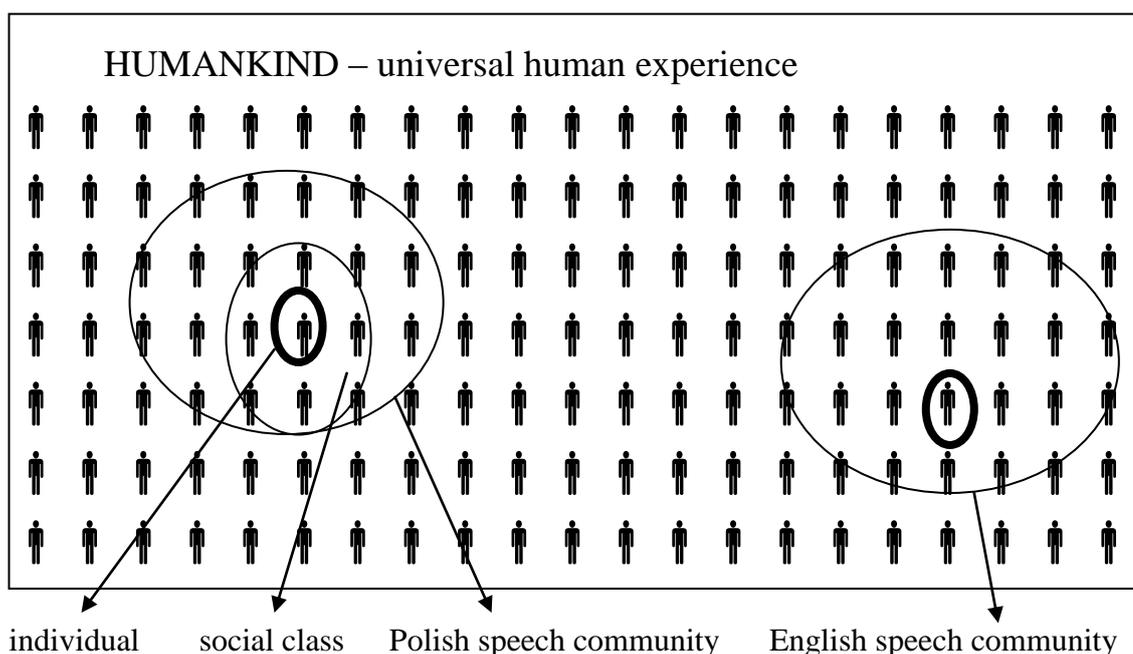
### **2.1 Basic Methodological Assumptions and the Nature of Meaning**

The methodology selected for this research is **Cognitive Linguistics** (CL). It is a **functionalist** approach to language, which is primarily concerned with the study of language in the context of its use by interlocutors (Kalisz 2001:15). One of CL basic assumptions is that language is a direct reflection of cognitive processes and is an integral part of human cognition and understanding of the world (Langacker 1987:12); language is “a window on cognitive structures” (Harder 1999:196). CL adopted a cognitive commitment that the study of language is not autonomous and should be integrated with neuroscience, psychology, anthropology, sociology and other branches of knowledge related to the nature of the brain (G. Lakoff 1990:40-41). The CL methodology was chosen due to its interdisciplinary and functionalist approach, which allows for a holistic analysis of communicative distance.

Cognitive Linguistics is a relatively new method of language studies which is based on different philosophical assumptions concerning meaning, language and linguistics. It is referred to as the phenomenological approach / **embodied realism**: “all individuals have an intentional relationship to the world and their access to the world or their consciousness is realized by their bodily experiences of that world” (Dirven 2000:1; see also Rohrer 2000). **Embodiment** is an important concept in CL: it is claimed that language is grounded in and motivated by the nature of human body and the brain, as well as interactions with physical, social and cultural environments (M. Johnson 1992:346).

CL rejects objectivism, a priori universalism and radical relativism, but it also goes beyond the simple objective/subjective dichotomy (M. Johnson 1992:353-4). Meaning is seen as a result of universal, collective, conventional and idiosyncratic features. The speaker is both an individual, a member of a unique set of speech communities and a human being (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. The speaker as an individual, member of speech communities and a human being

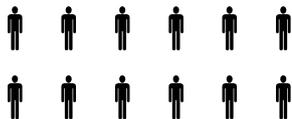


Firstly, meaning is **embodied**, i.e. grounded in human bodily experience. This experience is to a certain degree common to all speakers because they are human beings. All human beings have similar bodily and cognitive capacities (M. Johnson 1992:357) which enable them to construe meaning. In this sense, meaning is partly universal. For example, people all over the world conceptualise anger in terms of a hot fluid in the container (cf. Lakoff 1987). It is because this conceptual metaphor is grounded in physiological effects experienced probably by all human beings regardless of their geographical location, culture and language.

However, each language user is an individual with unique experiences, personal history and special relations with other people (unique communicative competence, social skills, emotional intelligence). The word *dog* has a different meaning for a member of the Kennel Club, a veterinarian and for somebody who was badly bitten by a dog. In this sense, meaning is **subjective** and idiosyncratic.

The individual does not exist in isolation from society and culture: experiences are shared to a certain degree with other members of speech community. Individuals are immersed in culture and language. In this respect meaning is **intersubjective** (i.e. shared with other individuals) and **conventional** (see Table 1). As a result, “a linguistic unit may be shared by an entire speech community, by a substantial subgroup (dialect group, members of a profession) or by a mere handful of people. (...) No two speakers control precisely the same set of units even if their speech patterns appear to be identical” (Langacker 1987:62). It is linguistic convention that enables understanding and communication.

**Table 1. Subjectivity, conventionality and uniqueness of meaning**

HUMANKIND	COMMUNITY	INDIVIDUAL
		
Universal human experience common to all human beings due to similarities in the structure of the brain, cognitive capacities and other physiological features Embodiment of meaning	Culture shared by a given speech community (Polish and English cultures belong to a common European culture), age group, gender, social group, colleagues, etc. Group members have similar common experience.	Unique experience of each individual (social, linguistic, physical, etc.), personal history and relations with other people; individual communicative competence; distinct bodies, beliefs, feelings; each individual is a member of a unique set of speech communities.
biology	culture and language	idiosyncrasy
<b>Universal</b> aspects of meaning	<b>Conventional and Intersubjective</b> aspects of meaning	<b>Unique and Subjective</b> aspects of meaning

The cognitive theory of meaning is formed on the following assumptions proposed by Langacker (1988:49-50):

- Thesis A: Meaning reduces to conceptualisation (mental experience).
- Thesis B: A frequently-used expression typically displays a network of interrelated senses.
- Thesis C: Semantic structures are characterized relative to “cognitive domains”.
- Thesis D: A semantic structure derives its value through the imposition of a “profile” (designatum) on a “base”.
- Thesis E: Semantic structures incorporate conventional “imagery”, i.e. they construe a situation in a particular fashion.

Thesis A emphasises the conceptual nature of meaning. Meaning is equated with **conceptualisation** which encompasses novel conceptions and established concepts, sensory, emotive and kinaesthetic experience, as well as the social, physical and linguistic context (Langacker 1988:50). Understanding of a lexical item is grounded in the rich set of affordances (i.e. sensations experienced during interaction with objects; bodily experience) in “vision, smell, taste, touch, skeletal postures, haptic actions, and even locomotion” (MacWhinney 1999:218), as well as in previous knowledge. As a result of the reduction of meaning to conceptualisation, Cognitive Linguistics is not preoccupied with the relationship between language and the real world, but between language and the conceptualisation of the real world.

Thesis B claims that established senses of a lexical item form a network. This issue will be discussed in more detail in Part I, where the word *distance* will be presented as a network model. Theses C and D are discussed in section 2.2 while Thesis E in 2.3.

## **2.2 Organisation of Conceptual Structure**

Thesis C claims that in order to characterise a given concept it is necessary to refer to other cognitive domains which are presupposed by and incorporated in such a concept

(Langacker 1988:53). It is because concepts do not occur alone but are embedded in other background knowledge structures called **domains** (Clausner and Croft 1999:2). Langacker also defines a domain as a mental construct which is “a **context** for the characterization of a semantic unit” (Langacker 1987:147).

One of the domains which are always evoked in face-to-face conversation is the **Domain of Interpersonal Relationships**. For example, before the speaker decides how to greet the interlocutor and which expression to choose from the inventory of conventional linguistic units, i.e. whether to say “good morning”, “hello” or “hi”, he/she has to activate relational domains which contain knowledge about his/her previous encounters with a given interlocutor and about relationships in general.

More complex and abstract concepts, such as interpersonal relationships, are construed by metaphorical mappings from basic spatial domains; hence, they require quite a large number of other domains. All the domains activated to characterise a given concept are called its **matrix** (Langacker 1988:56). The multidomain matrix includes both linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge/experience. In fact, Cognitive Linguistics does not make a distinction between these two types of knowledge and, by analogy, between semantics and pragmatics. Semantics is encyclopaedic in scope and it may not be separated from context and use. Thus, the conceptualiser’s entire knowledge about a given concept forms part of its meaning. Such knowledge is organised in terms of relevance and salience: some aspects are in the foreground while others are activated in the background (Langacker 1988:58).

Thesis D concerns the imposition of a profile on a base. The meaning of a word includes both its profile and its base. The **base** is another term for the matrix, i.e. domains which are activated and required for the understanding of a concept/profile. The very term “highlights the way in which background knowledge ‘supports’ the concept”

(Clausner and Croft 1999:5). The **profile** is a focal point of the base, i.e. these parts of the base which are “elevated to a distinctive level of prominence as the entity which the expression designates” (Langacker 1990:61).

The claims that meaning is encyclopaedic and that highly-structured background knowledge is indispensable to construe the meaning of lexical units are not questioned by cognitive linguists of various orientation. They, however, apply different terms to describe how such knowledge and experience are conceptually organised. Apart from Langacker’s domains, matrix and base, the following terms are also used: frames, cognitive models, cultural models, ICMs, scripts, scenarios, etc.<sup>2</sup>

The term **FRAME**, applied in Charles Fillmore’s frame semantics, is defined as a system of interrelated concepts that form a coherent script-like structure. In order to understand any such concept it is necessary to activate the entire script (Fillmore 1982:111; Johnson, Fillmore et al. 2002). One type of frames is an interactional frame which includes the conceptualisation of “what is going on between the speaker and the hearer” (Fillmore 1982:117). It may be noted that the frame is very similar to Langacker’s base. As noted by Clausner and Croft, “the term *frame* highlights the semantic supporting function of domains for concepts, and also the hypothesis that domains have a structure that is more than a list of experientially associated concepts” (1999:2). Ungerer and Schmid see frames as a type of **cognitive models**. The cognitive model is a more general term which includes scenarios, domains, interactive networks and scripts (1996:211). It represents “a cognitive, basically psychological, view of the stored knowledge about a certain field” (ibid.:49).

George Lakoff’s **Idealised Cognitive Model** is an idealised model of experience and knowledge which includes frames, image-schemas, metaphoric and metonymic

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<sup>2</sup> See Ungerer and Schmid (1996:205-249) and Clausner and Croft (1999) for a detailed discussion of these terms.

mappings (1987:68). This knowledge is referred to as ‘idealised’ because it does not necessarily correspond to the reality. Cognitive representation of the external world will differ from speaker to speaker as it is often based on individual experiences. According to Clausner and Croft, ICMs have the same role as domains “while highlighting the not-so-simple relationship between a semantic domain and the external experience it is used by the mind to grasp” (1999:2). G. Lakoff also makes a distinction between **folk models** and scientific models. The former are based on traditional beliefs, observations, theories held by “ordinary people without any technical expertise” and differ from scientific expert knowledge (1987:118).

Cognitive models are to a large degree conditioned by culture. Another term applied within CL is ‘a **cultural model**’. It is defined as a set of cognitive models based on collective experiences of a speech community and intersubjectively shared by members of such community (Ungerer and Schmid 1996:49-52).

To sum up, in order to understand a concept it is necessary to activate conceptual structures of encyclopaedic knowledge and experience stored in the brain. In this dissertation I will mainly use Langacker’s terminology and G. Lakoff’s ICM/folk model, as explained above.

### **2.3 Dimensions of Imagery**

Thesis E claims that meaning incorporates conceptual content and “a particular way of construing and portraying that content” (Langacker 1991:4). The same experience may be conceptualised in many alternate ways. This ability of the mind is defined as **conventional imagery**. Imagery is language-specific: languages have different grammatical structures; hence, they “differ in the imagery that speakers employ when conforming to linguistic convention” (Langacker 1990:12). It also means that imagery is

shared by speakers of a given language but the speaker always makes a subjective choice of an image best suited for his/her purpose from an array of alternate images.

In Cognitive Linguistics lexicon and grammar are indissociable: they form a continuum of symbolic elements. Grammar is an inventory of conventional linguistic units (Langacker 1987:63): “like lexicon, grammar provides for the structuring and symbolization of conceptual content, and is thus imagic in character” (Langacker 1990:12). The use of a particular construction involves a selection of a particular image “to structure the conceived situation for communicative purposes” (ibid.:12).

Langacker recognizes various **dimensions of imagery**. One of them is a **level of specificity**, which is “the degree of precision and detail with which an entity is characterized” (1988:64). When a speaker construes a given situation, he/she selects a degree of specificity:

1a. *Bring her some coffee.*

1b. *Bring your dear mum some coffee.*

The patient in 1a (*her*) is more schematic. The more schematic an expression the less content it contains. The patient in 1b (*your dear mum*), is more specific and provides information about the relationship between participants and the speaker’s attitude.

The second dimension of imagery, **the scope of a predication**, is defined as “that portion of relevant domains which it specifically invokes and requires for its characterization” (Langacker 1990:62). An expression often activates a wide range of domains; for example, when a mother says to her son “*John Brown, come here*”, the domain of reprimand is evoked within the scope of this expression.

The next dimension of imagery, **perspective**, includes such factors as: vantage point, orientation, directionality and how subjectively or objectively the scene is construed (cf. Langacker 1988:84). The notion of distance always evokes the dimension of perspective. In order to determine proximity or remoteness it is necessary to determine

the spatial position of the speaker which serves as a reference point from which they are measured. Karl Bühler refers to this position as “the Origo” – a zero point which “is fixed by the person who is speaking (the ‘I’), the place of the utterance (the ‘here’), and the time of the utterance (the ‘now’)” (1982:10). In this dissertation, the assumption is made that the conceptualiser is one of the speech event participants, i.e. the speaker or the hearer, and his/her perspective will be the main focus.

The **vantage point** “is equated with the position of the speaker”, which he/she assumes to construe a given situation (Langacker 1990:43). The conceptualizer may assume a *viewer-centred* (his actual/egocentric point of view), *geocentric* (overhead or bird’s-eye point of view) or *object-centred* vantage point (Rohrer 2000:53). Because of psychological proximity to other human beings and anthropocentrism, conceptualisers often adopt an egocentric orientation: “we consider ourselves to be at the centre of the universe, and everything around us is seen from our point of view” (Dirven and Verspoor 1998:6).

The viewer can also conceptualise a situation from a different vantage point than his/her actual one: this ability is known as **mental transfer** (Langacker 1988:85). For example, the speaker may adopt the hearer’s vantage point and shift from Received Pronunciation to Estuary English in order to accommodate to the hearer (see page 138). The speaker may also adjust his/her vantage point to have more effective communication on equal ground and to signal his/her interest in the interlocutor.

The vantage point is determined by the conceptualizer’s **orientation** in physical space and time, and by **directionality**. “Certain predications (...) presuppose a particular orientation on the scene being described” (Langacker 1988:84): the viewer has his/her front and back, right and left, up and down. Orientation also includes the speaker’s conceptualisation of physical and figurative distance to the interlocutor. The notion of

**directionality** is prototypically applied to physical motion. It can also be applied to “static configurations of indefinite duration” (ibid.:87). For example, some relational concepts, such as PRIDE and BOASTING, involve the vertical dimension. The conceptualiser is elevated and looks down on the interlocutor (direction of conceptualisation from up to down). It will be argued that directionality is important in the conceptualisation of social distance.

The last factor influencing the speaker’s perspective is **subjectivity/objectivity** defined as “the extent to which an entity functions asymmetrically as the subject vs. the object of conception” (Langacker 1991:4). The scene is construed maximally subjectively when the speaker is solely the subject of observation, i.e. he/she views a distinct entity on the scene. The scene is viewed objectively when the speaker is both the subject and object of conceptualisation (cf. Langacker 1990:316-18).

The fourth aspect of imagery, the **relative prominence** of substructures, subsumes various types of salience, e.g. profile/base distinction, figure/ground alignment, trajector/landmark distinction. The **trajector/landmark** distinction is applied to relational predications. A trajector stands out as the figure within the profiled relationship while the landmark is the second most prominent participant (cf. Langacker 1988:76). This distinction is important for certain grammatical concepts; for example, the use of active or passive voice involves assigning the status of trajector to different participants (cf. Langacker 1990:129-135).

The fifth dimension of imagery, **background assumptions and expectations**, has not been explicated in detail by Langacker. It subsumes such phenomena as: presuppositions (pragmatic inferences and assumptions occupying a borderland between semantics and pragmatics; cf. Levinson 1983:225), metaphor, topic/comment asymmetry, given-new distinction (old information represents “the bulk of past experience” while

new information is a surprise; Givón 1979:348) and the conception of the negative (involves a background reference to its positive; Langacker 1991:133) (cf. Langacker 1988:67). For example, it is emphasised by social psychologists that perception is subject to selective attention and personal relevance; hence, it depends to a certain degree on the perceiver's assumptions and expectations (see page 61).

Background expectations involve a certain evaluation on the part of the speaker who shows his/her attitudinal commitment towards the message. The notion of background subsumes also speaker's **epistemic and axiological commitment**: "the process of concept formation necessarily involves (...) the conceptualizer's constant commitment to a particular system of beliefs and values" (Tabakowska 1993:59, see also Krzeszowski 1997). When colouring the expression epistemically or axiologically, "the speaker makes a motivated choice out of the inventory of appropriate linguistic units" (Tabakowska 1993:59) on the basis of subjective perception, his/her assumptions and expectations. The conceptualiser may have positive or negative expectations about the interlocutor, the relationship between them: such expectations may impact the process of communication. It will be claimed that the interlocutors' assumptions about the pre-existing social and psychological distance between them underlies a number of linguistic choices.

## **2.4 Cognitive Theory of Metaphor**

Initiated by Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By* in the 80's, the cognitive theory of metaphors revolutionized the way of thinking about figurative language. In the traditional approach metaphor was treated only as a figure of speech and a matter of language. In the cognitive approach metaphor is a conventional mode of thought, a cognitive instrument grounded in human experience. Metaphorical language is conceptual in nature and conventional (unconscious, automatic and effortless). One of

the most important findings is that metaphor is not marginal, but omnipresent in everyday language (G. Lakoff 1991:202-251).

Metaphor is a cognitive process where abstract, complex or novel concepts (target domain) are understood in terms of more basic, concrete, well-known concepts (source domain). Each metaphor establishes a set of systematic epistemic correspondences, referred to as mappings, between the source and target domain. Metonymy is also a cognitive process but it involves mapping within one model: one concept provides a mental access to another concept within the same domain (Ungerer and Schmid 1996:128-129).

Mappings are constrained by the Invariance Hypothesis formulated by G. Lakoff: “metaphorical mappings preserve the cognitive topology (that is, the image-schema structure) of the source domain, in a way consistent with the inherent structure of the target domain” (1991:215). It means that metaphoric mappings cannot change the image-schematic structure of the source domain. Thus, the NEAR\_FAR image schema in the source domain must correspond to the NEAR\_FAR relation in the target domain in Distance metaphors.

## **2.5 Social Aspects of Language**

Within Functional Linguistics, the main function of language is a communicative function (Kalisz 2001:15). Language is a tool of interaction, and of interpreting and understanding the world. It is used to communicate ideas and to establish, maintain and strengthen social relations. Furthermore, when using language, the speaker inevitably shows his/her social, regional and educational background. Thus, speech always occurs in the social and cultural context and language is “indexical of one’s social class, status, region of origin, gender, age group and so on” (Mesthrie et al. 2000:5).

There are branches of functional linguistics which focus only on social aspects of language. One of them is **Sociolinguistics**, which is “the study of language in relation to society” (Hudson 1980:1). Its objective is to obtain a better understanding of language by analysing it in the social context (Trudgill 1992:68). Sociolinguistic findings are of high relevance for the analysis of social distance, which is part of communicative distance. However, in some cases Sociolinguistics is a one-sided approach because it does not take into account conceptual aspects of language. It is also emphasised that Sociolinguistics lacks the coherent and systematic theoretical framework (Grabias 1997:15).

On the other hand, Cognitive Linguistics is mainly preoccupied with cognitive and psychological aspects of language. It would be useful to combine findings of Sociolinguistics with those of Cognitive Linguistics. Recently, more attention has been paid to integrate cognitive and social aspects of language within the framework of Cognitive Linguistics (cf. Hawkins 1997, Harder 1999, C. Sinha 2001). Although CL has neglected social aspects, it has never denied their importance. In fact, it has a potential for accommodating them within its theoretical framework.

Let us start with social aspects of imagination. Mark Johnson emphasises that imaginative structures are **shared** and **social**: “Human beings are irreducibly social creatures. (...) The self is formed in and through an ongoing social process. Since the self develops as a process in which meaning develops, and since meaning is primarily a social phenomenon, human subjectivity is social through and through” (1992:357). The meaning is construed with the use of frames/knowledge structures shared with others. The interactional and pragmatic character of embodiment has often been emphasised: “the body does not exist by itself, in isolation from the world, but instead develops in contact and through experimentation with it” (Rohrer 2000:9).

Being focused on conceptual aspects, Langacker, one of the founding fathers of Cognitive Grammar, did not discuss social aspects of language in much detail at first. Quite recently he published an article where he explicates discourse phenomena. The article starts with the statement: “The grounding of language and social interaction is a central if not a defining notion within the functionalist tradition. This is no less true for cognitive linguistics” (2001:143). Langacker further claims that the grounding of language in social interaction was fundamental to CL from the very beginning (2001:185). I will now discuss these aspects of Langacker’s Cognitive Grammar which emphasise the social and interactive nature of language.

First of all, the process of meaning construction incorporates social aspects. Conceptualisation encompasses the **social**, physical, communicative and cultural context, among others (Langacker 1988:50). Speakers conceptualise their experience for purposes of communicating it to the hearer. Furthermore, conventionality of imagery, grammar, meaning, etc. indicates that they are shared by speakers of a speech community. Another aspect of the conventionality of meaning is the speaker’s knowledge about the sociolinguistic status of semantic units: “to the extent that speakers learn the sociolinguistic status of conventional units, it constitutes an aspect of their linguistic value and is thus a proper concern of linguistic description” (Langacker 1987:63). Therefore, sociolinguistic norms and restrictions are part of the speaker’s knowledge of language and form a peripheral aspect of semantic value of linguistic units (ibid.:63).

As already mentioned, an expression’s meaning is encyclopaedic and it presupposes, incorporates and activates other concepts, i.e. cognitive domains (Langacker 1988:53). Possible domains may include social relationships, emotions, status, dialects, etc. Langacker distinguishes distinct levels of conceptual organization. The first level covers the speaker’s knowledge of the profiled entity itself. Another level

activates the domain of symbolic space, i.e. a correspondence between the phonological pole and the knowledge of the entity. The highest sociolinguistic level comprises domains related to language use, social relations between interlocutors and the speech community (1991:495).

It should be also noted that Cognitive Linguistics is often referred to as **the usage-based model** (Langacker 1990:261-288). It rejects a rigid structuralist division of language into *langue* (the system) and *parole* (use of the system) (C. Sinha 2001:18). Instead, it takes the view that linguistic structures are cognitive routines “abstracted from usage events, i.e. actual instances of language use” (Langacker 2001:144); they emerge from specific conceptualisations applied in usage events. Usage events may be seen as a joint action of the speaker and the hearer. Since they are acts of social interaction “usage brings into the picture social variables along with those cognitive variables brought out by the attention to processing” (Hawkins 1997:24).

Harder describes the relation between social/interactive and cognitive aspects of language and cognition as a paradox: social constructs, including language, exist only by virtue of the mental powers of individuals. On the other hand, the individual’s language exists only as a result of his/her socialisation as a member of collective body, i.e. speech community: “individual minds make possible the creation of properties whose ontological grounding transcends the individual mind” (1999:206). Thus, “although an individual’s language is totally included in his cognitive system an essential property of it consists in the fact that it is adapted to the communicative environment of the individual”: an individual’s language is constantly shaped through interaction, social norms, feedback received from the hearer and adaptive mechanisms (ibid.:207).

It is proposed after C. Sinha (2001) and Harder (1999) that cognition and language are **dually grounded** in neurobiology and interactive patterns. “Human

cognition is best viewed as dually grounded, in organismic properties adapted to the ecology of human life, and in the socio-communicative processes which construct that ecology” (C. Sinha 2001:27). Linguistic units are motivated both by conceptual representation and their communicative function (ibid.:18). Thus, CL offers a coherent theoretical framework in which both cognitive and social aspects of language may be integrated due to the dual grounding of language. As this dissertation is focused on the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, more attention will be paid to social and interactional aspects of language; and in particular how this relationship is conceptualised by interlocutors in terms of distance.

## **2.6 Model of Communication and the Speaker-Hearer Relationship**

According to the deeply ingrained folk model of communication called the Conduit Metaphor, people talk and think about linguistic communication as about the sending and receiving of parcels filled with thoughts. Ideas, thoughts, emotions are taken out of the mind and put into words by the speaker; next they are sent along a conduit to the receiver, who unpacks the ideas from words (Ungerer and Schmid 1996:119). It has been often emphasised that this folk model is highly inaccurate and obscures many important aspects of communication (cf. Langacker 1991:508). Cognitive Linguistics postulates a much more comprehensive and realistic model of communication. Langacker claims that during conversation interlocutors not only conceptualise the referential content but also “their interactive circumstances and the very discourse they are engaged in” (2001:144). Thus, conceptualisation includes both the **ground** and the **current discourse space** which are cognitive domains activated as the base in meaning construction. The ground covers the speech event, interlocutors (the speaker and the hearer), and its setting. Its role may be more or less peripheral or implicit but it is never completely excluded from the meaning of a linguistic unit; it is part of its semantic value

(Langacker 1991:495). The ground may also become salient. For example, when the usage event focuses on the phatic function of language, the referential content is not as important as the relationship between the interlocutors.

The domain of speaker-hearer relationships may be treated as one of the domains in the ground evoked in the usage event as the ground includes both the physical setting of the speech event and psychological circumstances:

“The ground subsumes (...) the psychological status of its participants, including such factors as the speaker’s desires and communicative intent, the hearer’s expectations, their knowledge of the current discourse space, as well as their feelings and social relationship vis-à-vis one another. (...) A conception of how the speaker intends his utterance, and how he expects the hearer to interpret and respond to it, provides a background in terms of which the relationship profiled by a sentence is construed and into which it must somehow fit. These psychological aspects of the ground are the locus of illocutionary force and furnish the cognitive domains required for the characterization of speech acts” (Langacker 1991:496).

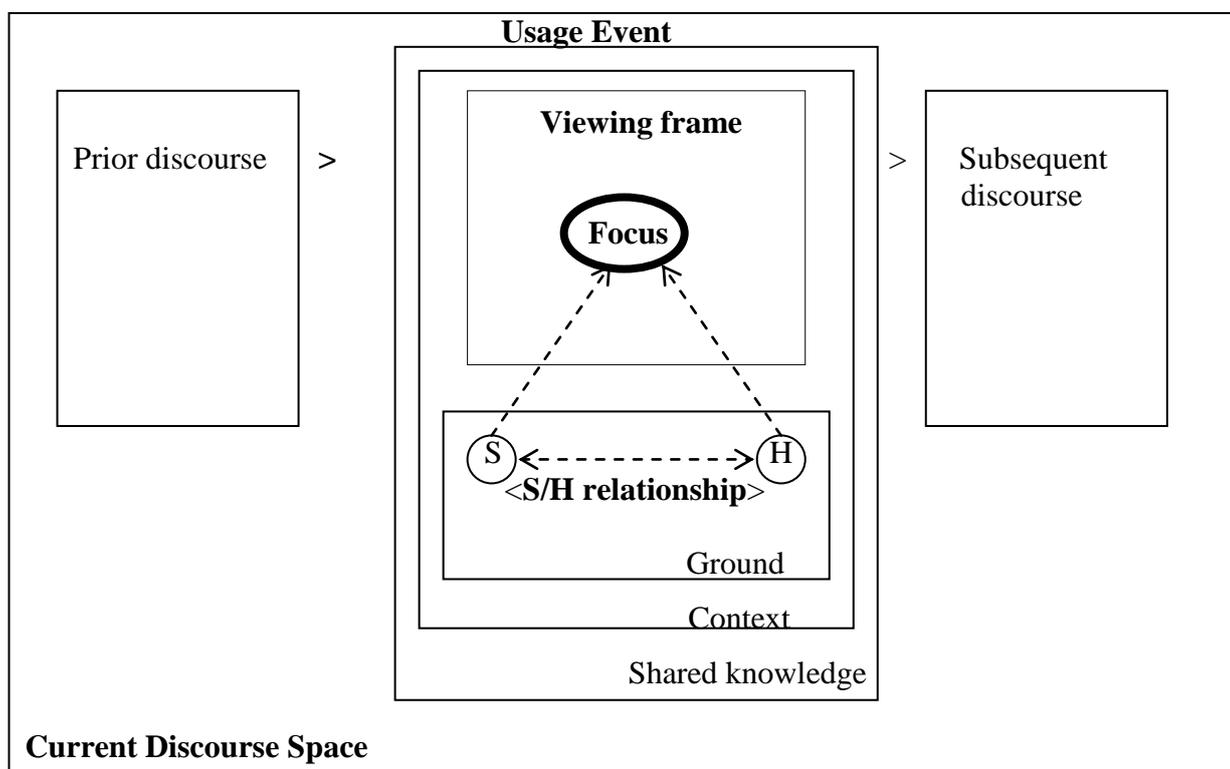
However, Langacker does not focus in more detail on the interactional part of communication. He does not explicate how the speaker and the hearer conceptualise their relationship.

The **current discourse space** is similar to Herbert Clark’s concept of the common ground (which is described by Clark as the interlocutors’ awareness of their mutual knowledge, assumptions and beliefs; 1996:120-121). The current discourse space is defined as “the mental space comprising those elements and relations construed as being shared by the speaker and hearer as a basis for communication at a given moment in the flow of discourse” (Langacker 2001:144). Thus, it comprises both the speaker’s and the hearer’s expectations about the common ground and each other’s knowledge. In order to communicate successfully, the speaker has “to construct a mental model of the knowledge state” of the hearer by assuming the hearer’s perspective (MacWhinney 1999:242).

The current discourse space also includes the context of speech and shared knowledge that figures directly in the participants’ conscious awareness or may be easily

activated. The space changes constantly in the process of conversation: new information flows in and pushes old information into the background away from the interlocutor's awareness (Langacker 1991:97); "conceptual structures are progressively built and modified in accordance with the semantic poles of the expressions employed" (Langacker 2001:143). The current discourse space also covers the prior discourse and anticipations of subsequent discourse (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Current Discourse Space**



Source: Langacker (2001:145).

As shown in the Figure above, the ground is a central part of the context in a usage event. The context also involves a common **viewing frame** applied by the speaker and the hearer. They direct and focus their attention, in a coordinated way, on some aspects of the world (the focus, i.e. the profile of linguistic units) (Langacker 2001:144-5). Viewing frames are actively imposed by the speaker on the hearer. The speaker packages information in linguistic structures: he/she construes a given situation in a particular way by selecting such units that best suit his/her purpose. In this way, the

speaker induces the hearer to decode the message in a specific way. The hearer focuses his/her attention in accordance with the speaker's intentions and activates neural pathways involved in real interactions: "understanding of the meaning of an object involves running a 'cognitive simulation' of our interactions with that object in terms of its most salient affordances" (MacWhinney 1999:219). As a result, the hearer construes a meaning of the message (in accordance with interpretative conventions and norms), but also identifies the psychological state of the speaker and adjusts his/her construal of their mutual relationship in the ground. Because of different experiences and knowledge, the hearer's conceptualisation will differ from that of the speaker.

Linguistic units in usage events are made up of two poles: conceptualisation (semantic pole) and vocalisation (phonological pole). Each pole consists of coordinated multiple channels. The former includes an **objective situation** (locus of attention), **information structure** (emphasis, given/new distinction, discourse topic) and **speech management** (turn-taking, minimal responses, etc.). The latter includes **segmental content, intonation** and **gesture** (Langacker 2001:146). It is consistent with the generally accepted view that communication occurs on many channels. Depending on the speaker's choice, linguistic units may focus on one particular channel.

The linguistic system includes not only conventional linguistic units but also conventionalised patterns of pragmatic and social inferences, meaning interpretation, expectations, assumptions, etc. Linguistic units are seen "as instructions to modify the current discourse space" (Langacker 2001:151). As discourse progresses, new linguistic structures update the current discourse space by shifts in attention focusing with a viewing frame. Thus, a discourse consists of "a succession of frames each representing the scene being 'viewed' and acted on by the speaker and hearer at a given instant"

(Langacker 2001:151). Furthermore, linguistic units constantly update the interlocutors' conceptualisation of their mutual relationships.

It may be assumed from the above considerations that each usage event automatically activates a schematised and conventionalised model or script of communication against which the conversation is carried out by the interlocutors. Such a cognitive model of communication functions as an interactive frame which includes an individual's knowledge and experiences related to the process of communication (including the folk model of communication, i.e. the conduit metaphor). It also forms a basis for the construal of the current discourse space, the ground and the speaker-hearer relationship.

**Summary.** This chapter has presented basic theoretical assumptions of Cognitive Linguistics adopted as a methodology in the analysis of communicative distance. Cognitive Linguistics is often referred to as space grammar. The spatial nature of dimensions of imagery will be useful for the analysis of distance, which is also a spatial category. The interdisciplinary and functional approach of CL allows for the holistic and wide-ranging analysis encompassing various aspects of complex face-to-face communication. Furthermore, CL tools of lexical analysis and its approach to meaning enable an in-depth examination of the concept DISTANCE and its definition for purposes of linguistic analysis.

## PART I. THE CONCEPT OF DISTANCE

This chapter addresses the first part of Objective 1: it sets out to define the concept of communicative distance. The first section discusses previous conceptions and applications of distance in linguistics. The next sections apply CL tools of lexical analysis, starting from dictionary definitions of distance, the network model, preconceptual image schema NEAR\_FAR, and metaphors where distance functions as a source domain to arrive at the definition of communicative distance.

### 1. Previous Applications of *Distance* in Linguistic Research

The term *distance* is used in numerous branches of science, such as linguistics, sociology, psychology, anthropology, intercultural communication, etc. and is applied to diverse phenomena. One of the earliest usages is the concept of **social distance**. It was introduced by Park and Burgess in 1924 and was popularised by Emory Bogardus<sup>3</sup> (Collins's Dictionary of Sociology). The concept was next adopted in Sociolinguistics.

The notion of **physical distance** between interlocutors was extensively researched by Edward Hall, who developed a separate branch of nonverbal communication studies called proxemics. Hall identified four types of physical distance: **intimate, personal, social** and **public distance** (1978; to be discussed in Part III). The term *physical distance* is often used interchangeably with **interpersonal distance** or **conversational distance** within psychology and communication studies.

In addition to the above terms, psychologists also use: **psychological, emotional, communicative, relational, mental, and intellectual distance**. These concepts are rarely defined and they often mean a degree of psychological or intellectual involvement.

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<sup>3</sup>He invented the social distance scale which “consists of a sequence of progressively more intimate relationships: would have to live outside of my country (7), would live outside my neighborhood (6), would have merely as speaking acquaintances (5), would have several families in my neighborhood (4), would work beside in an office (3), would have as regular friends (2), would marry (1)” (Cover 1995).

Within the field of intercultural management/communication, the following terms are applied: **cultural distance** (dissimilarities between two cultures), **psychic distance** (cultural, structural and language differences between two nations; cf. O'Grady and Lane 1996), and **power distance** (one of the dimensions of national cultures; degree of inequality in society<sup>4</sup>).

Finally, the concept of “distance” is frequently used by linguists. Some applications concern the relation between linguistic structures, e.g. **linguistic distance** (dissimilarity between two languages), **referential distance** (a measure of topicality: how recently the entity has been mentioned; Givón 1990), **conceptual distance** (distance between linguistic and cognitive structures<sup>5</sup>), **cognitive distance** (defined by Langacker as “a measure reflecting the number and likelihood of cognitive events needed to relate two notions, e.g. the degree to which a schema is elaborated by a particular instantiation” 1987:487). Another usage concerns the distance between the speaker and his/her message, e.g. the speaker’s involvement in conversation or commitment to the information transacted, including the notion of **epistemic distance** used by Langacker to discuss English modals (i.e. it pertains to the conceptualiser’s conception of a given event as known/unknown reality or irreality 1991:240-249). However, the majority of applications were adopted from sociology and psychology to describe the relationship between interlocutors as created through or encoded in language. In particular, the notion of distance is frequently applied within sociolinguistics, pragmatics, ethnolinguistics and discourse analysis.

This project focuses on the last type of applications within the field of linguistics, i.e. the relationship between interlocutors in the process of communication. Sometimes references will be made to the distance between the speaker and his/her message if this

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<sup>4</sup> Power distance is “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (Hofstede 1994:28).

distance is relevant for the relationship between interlocutors. Although the notion of relational distance has not been researched holistically within linguistics, it has been applied in the discussion of numerous concepts:

- **politeness** (Brown and Levinson 1987, R. Lakoff 1990, Leech 1983);
- **speech acts:** (Wierzbicka 1991, Jakubowska 1999);
- **varieties of language:** informal vs. formal registers (Joos 1961, Haiman 1983, Biel 2000); style shifting (Hathaway 1982); genderlects (Yokoyama 1999);
- **directness/indirectness** (Duszak 1998); hedges (Powell 1992);
- **forms of address** (Brown and Gilman 1972, Head 1978, Kamio 2001, Keown 2003, Kielkiewicz-Janowiak 1992, Friedrich 1972), the vocative (Jaworski 1992), honorifics (Okamoto 1997);
- **irony and sarcasm** (Boxer and Cortés-Conde 1997, Clift 1996);
- **euphemisms** (Haiman 1983);
- **deixis** (Yule 1996);
- **silence** (Jaworski 1992).

All these issues will be discussed in more detail in Part III of the dissertation.

Within the framework of Cognitive Linguistics the notion of distance between interlocutors has not invited much attention. Distance was analysed as a source domain in friendship and judgement metaphors (Kövecses 1995, Emanatian 1997, Nowakowska-Kempna 1995). Haiman discusses the iconic expression of social distance (formal registers and euphemisms), claiming that physical distance is a metaphor for social distance (1983:800). Keown discusses Polish address forms in terms of personal space and size (2003).

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<sup>5</sup> The term was used, for example, in Smith's analysis of German *es* (2002:95).

It should be stressed that the term distance is often treated as self-explanatory and is very rarely defined (Wierzbicka 1991:108). This problem was discussed in detail by Helen Spencer-Oatey in her insightful article “Reconsidering power and distance” (1996). It presents a comprehensive summary of how linguists use the term *distance*, understood as a horizontal dimension of social relationships as opposed to the vertical dimension correlated with status/power (ibid.:2). She points to the significant inconsistency of terminological usage: the term distance is used with different meanings or different terms are used with the same meaning. For example, distance is applied interchangeably with other concepts, such as *solidarity*, *closeness*, *familiarity*, *relational intimacy*, and *friendship* (1996:2).

Secondly, there is no consensus among linguists whether distance corresponds to the horizontal or vertical dimension of interpersonal relations. Spencer-Oatey sees distance solely as a horizontal dimension in contrast to the vertical dimension – power (1996). In other sociolinguistic studies distance is linked to status/power; hence, the vertical dimension of relations, and is seen as a result of the inequality of social roles or status (Hymes 1974:30). Leech divides distance into vertical distance (“the degree of distance in terms of the ‘power’ or AUTHORITY of one participant over another”) and horizontal distance (“measure what Brown and Gilman call the ‘solidarity’ factor or what I shall prefer to regard, from the opposite point of view, as SOCIAL DISTANCE”) (1983:126).

One of few definitions of distance may be found in Brown and Levinson’s *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. They see distance (D) as a politeness factor that influences a choice of linguistic structures and underlines the concept of positive and negative face:

“D is a symmetric social dimension of similarity/difference within which S and H stand for the purposes of this act. In many cases (but not all), it is based on an assessment of

the frequency of interaction and the kinds of material or non-material goods (including face) exchanged between S and H (...). An important part of the assessment of D will usually be measures of social distance based on stable social attributes. The reflex of social closeness is, generally, the reciprocal giving and receiving of positive face” (1987: 76-7).

Thus, distance is perceived in terms of social similarity/difference and frequency of contact (strangers being positioned at the far end of the social distance scale). Another politeness factor related to the relationship between interlocutors is power (“an asymmetric social dimension of relative power” 1987:77); hence, the main distinction between distance and power lies in symmetry/asymmetry of relations. Predominant occupation with social distance may be noted.

Although Wierzbicka criticises a number of linguists<sup>6</sup> for not defining *distance* (1991:108), she herself uses the term without defining it. She makes a sharp distinction between *intimacy* and *closeness*; however, she does not clarify whether distance is a synonym of closeness, intimacy, both of them or is a distinct cultural value:

1. **Intimacy** is a “readiness to reveal to some particular persons some aspects of one’s personality and of one’s inner world that one conceals from other people; a readiness based on personal trust and on personal ‘good feelings’ (1991:105). In brief, it is a degree of selective (in terms of the addressee) self-disclosure based on personal affection.
2. **Closeness** is a long-term feature of a relationship, based on interpersonal knowledge and mutual good feelings (1991:109). It may be concluded from Wierzbicka’s definitions that mutual knowledge is a result of self-disclosure (“I want to know what this person feels/thinks/wants” and “I want this person to know what I feel/think/want” 1991:109); hence, closeness is a result of intimacy.

Thus, Wierzbicka focuses on psychological distance. In light of her definition that intimacy is readiness to self-disclose, it is however unclear how she reaches the

conclusion that American culture does not attach much importance to intimacy since *you* is used indiscriminately to everyone, while the expressive derivation of personal names in Slavic languages points to the importance of intimacy in Slavic cultures (1991:106-7). With respect to closeness, Wierzbicka claims that in contrast to Anglo-American culture, Polish culture promotes closeness (since, as she maintains, Poles would opt for saying bad things to the interlocutor and overtly express their disapproval); hence, closeness involves a desire to maintain a special relationship between interlocutors, “even at the cost of hurt and conflict” (1991:110). Elsewhere Wierzbicka explicates distance in her definition of *Sir* as follows: [DISTANCE] “I want to speak to you the way people speak to men whom they don’t know or whom they don’t know well and the way they don’t speak to men whom they know well” (1992:310). This explication, however, is not very revealing.

The term *distance* is used alone (Brown and Levinson 1987; Jaworski 1992; Wierzbicka 1991) or is modified by adjectives, including **social** distance (Haiman 1994, Leech 1983, Hudson 1980, Head 1978), **psychological** distance (Yule 1996:13, Wierzbicka 1991:47), **emotional** distance (Levinson 1983:81), **attitudinal** distance (Powell 1992:77). The frequently used term *social distance* is most problematic: there is no consensus whether it refers to asymmetry in the relationship or to some other parameters within symmetrical relationships. For example, Hudson describes social distance between interlocutors in his definition of solidarity as: “how much experience they have shared, how many social characteristics they share (religion, sex, age, region of origin, race, occupation, interests, etc.), how far they are prepared to share intimacies” (1980:122), which means that it is both a degree of familiarity, intimacy and asymmetry between interlocutors. Leech defines social distance as the opposite of solidarity

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<sup>6</sup> In particular Brown and Levinson, despite the fact that they provide the definition of distance as presented above (1987:76-7).

(1983:126) while Haiman applies social distance to symmetric relationships: “politeness mirrors social distance between equals” (1994:1631), which intuitively would be understood rather as psychological distance.

The term *distance* is more frequently applied in analyses of English and is more popular among Anglo-Saxon linguists than among Polish researchers due to the different status of *distance* and *dystans* as a lexical unit, which will be discussed in the next subchapter. As far as the Polish language is concerned, it is important to note Wierzbicka (1991, 1992) and Keown (2003) as English-writing linguists. Polish linguists who apply the concept of *distance* include Grybosiowa, who describes formal forms of address as a distance marker (1990). Kita characterises an informal register as a language of closeness and physical distance as a determinant of Lubaś’s types of linguistic contact. She defines distance as one of the three dimensions that organise the system of expression of interpersonal relations. Distance is a horizontal relation; other dimensions are a vertical relation (axis of dominance) and a relation of discursive attitudes (2001:171). Dąbrowska discussed the use of familiar forms of address as a way to decrease distance between interlocutors; however, she does not define what is meant by *distance* (2001).

Having analysed a large number of pragmatic studies, Spencer-Oatey identified factors which are used by linguists to measure and interpret *distance*. These are: social similarity/difference, frequency of contact, length of acquaintance, familiarity or how well interlocutors know each other, sense of like-mindedness, positive/negative affect (1996:7). These factors often overlap and are not explicitly differentiated by researchers. She further points to the lack of consensus among linguists and psychologists “as to reliable ways of distinguishing close and distant relationships” (ibid.:21), which also contributes to the problematic status of distance in linguistic research.

In conclusion, terminological inconsistencies call for a detailed examination of the concept *distance*, which will be conducted below with CL tools of lexical analysis.

## 2. Dictionary Definitions of Distance versus the Network Model

This subchapter analyses definitions of *distance* in a number of monolingual Polish and English dictionaries<sup>7</sup>. The word *distance* was borrowed from Latin via French around the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It meant ‘standing apart’ in Latin (*dis-*, apart + *stare*, stand) and it developed into the sense of ‘discord, quarrel’ in Old French, which became the earliest meaning of *distance* in English. After 1600, the word was evolving into the sense of ‘estrangement, coolness’ (OED).

In respect of the modern usage of the word *distance*, its typical dictionary definition in modern British English is presented below (Collins):

**distance**, n.

1. the intervening space between two points or things
2. the length of this gap
3. the state of being apart in space; remoteness
4. an interval between two points in time
5. the extent of progress; advance
6. a distant place or time
7. a separation or remoteness in relationship; disparity
8. **keep one's distance**. to maintain a proper or discreet reserve in respect of another person

Such a dictionary definition does not show how specific senses are interrelated and how metaphorical meanings are derived from concrete ones. Furthermore, the above definition does not provide much information about the meaning of *distance* in the context of interpersonal relationships.

Interrelations between specific senses are better shown in Langacker's network model, which allows for a more comprehensive analysis of a lexical item. Langacker

claims that “a frequently used expression typically displays a network of interrelated senses” (1988:51). Each node of the network represents one sense of the word. Nodes are connected by two types of relationships: schematicity and extension<sup>8</sup>. The former is a horizontal relationship which reflects contrasting levels of specificity; hence, meanings may be schematic or may be an elaboration or instantiation of a higher-level sense. The latter relates to metaphoric or metonymic extensions of a sense (1988:51). Figure 3 presents a fragment of the network which represents the conventional usage of the English noun *distance*.

Nodes in the network differ in their degree of cognitive salience: some of them, referred to as **prototypes**, are more readily activated than others (Langacker 1988:51). In the case of *distance*, the most prototypical meaning seems to be “the intervening space between two points” (e.g. provided by Collins, CLD and AHD in the first place). However, this sense is listed in the second place by Webster, which assigns more prominence to “the fact or condition of being separated or removed in space or time”. This meaning functions as another prototype since *distance* is polysemous. In the spatial sense, it is most frequently activated as 1. space between two points, or 2. remoteness in space. It should be noted that the latter is an extension of the former: the far end of intervening space stands for this space (the PART FOR WHOLE metonymy) combined with the STATES ARE LOCATIONS metaphor<sup>9</sup>.

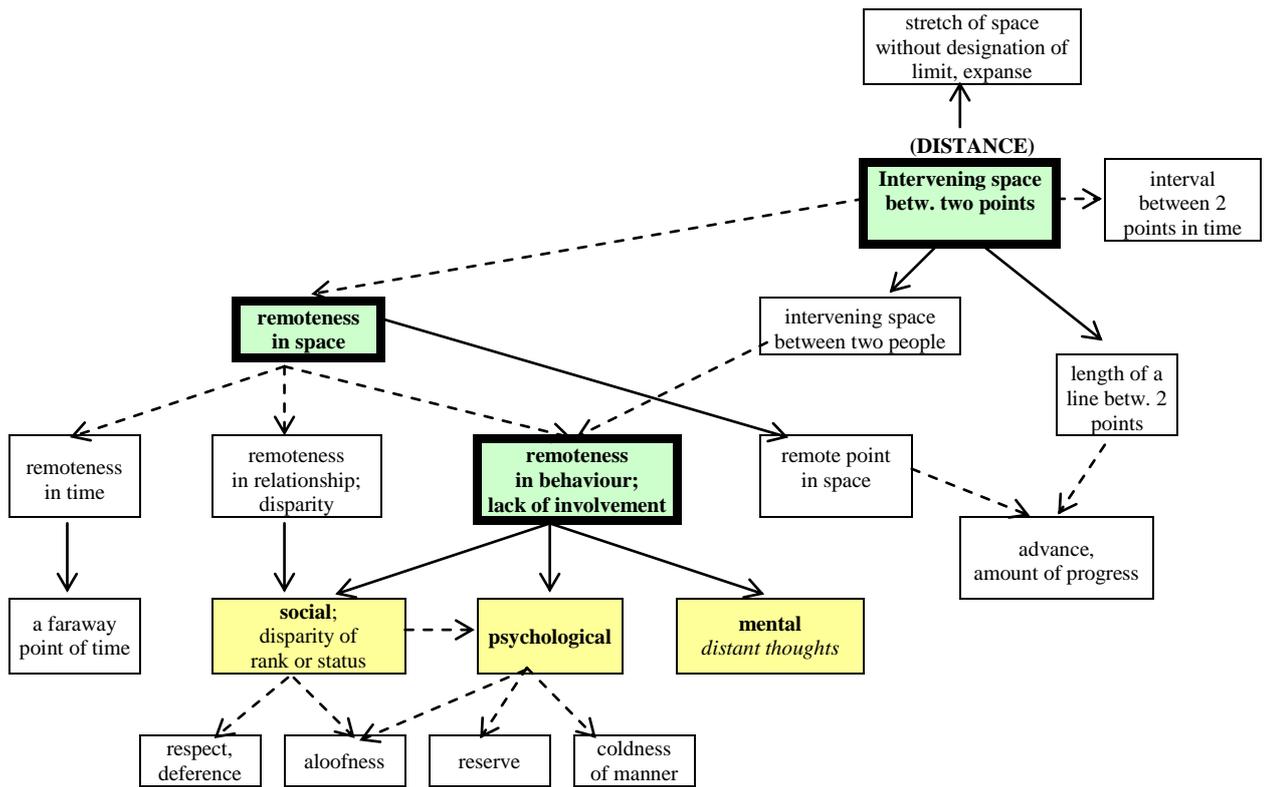
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<sup>7</sup> The list of dictionaries is attached at the end of the thesis.

<sup>8</sup> The notational convention proposed by Langacker is used in the figure: schematic relations are indicated by solid arrows [A]→[B], extensions are marked by dashed arrows [A]-->[B] and prototypes are in bold frames (1988:51).

<sup>9</sup> For purposes of terminological clarity, I will use the term ‘distance’ to refer to 1, and ‘large distance’ to refer to 2.

Figure 3. Network model of the word *distance* in modern British English



‘Remoteness in space’ serves as a starting point for metaphorical mappings from concrete, physical experience into the abstract sphere: hence, *distance* means “remoteness in any relation to which spatial terms are transferred and figuratively applied” (OED). As shown in the Figure above, spatial remoteness is metaphorically extended onto ‘remoteness in relationship/disparity’ and ‘remoteness in behaviour’. The latter is marked as another prototype: the reason is that, as already mentioned, the word *distance* was borrowed in the meaning of ‘discord, quarrel’ and evolved into the sense of ‘estrangement, coolness’ in the 17<sup>th</sup> century; hence, extension from ‘disparity of opinion’ to ‘remoteness in behaviour, lack of involvement’. The diachronic analysis falls beyond the scope of this dissertation; however, it is likely that originally the mapping was from abstract to concrete, i.e. from ‘remoteness in behaviour’ to ‘remoteness in space’.

The comparison of dictionary definitions of *distance* in the context of personal relations points to a number of problems. For example, Collins does not specify a

separate sense for ‘remoteness in behaviour’: this meaning is only listed in the phrase *keep one’s distance*. Other dictionaries describe interpersonal distance as a single sense, defining it as **aloofness and chillness** of manner (AHD, Webster), coldness *and* **social separation** (only LIED). The OED is the only dictionary (out of those covered by the analysis) which provides a detailed explanation of the term and lists two separate usages: “remoteness in intercourse, the opposite of intimacy or familiarity, arising from disparity of rank or station, or exclusiveness of feeling: hence, on the one part: a. aloofness, ‘stand-off-ness’, excessive reserve or dignity; on the other b. deferential attitude, **deference**”. The OED makes a distinction between aloofness and deference; however, the introductory part of the definition includes both coolness of manner and social separation.

Overall, dictionaries use the following concepts as synonyms of distance: coldness, aloofness, reserve, deference, and respect. Why do these concepts appear in the definition of distance and how are they related to each other? The first part of the question will be addressed in more detail in the analysis of distance as a source domain in relational metaphors. At this juncture I will only analyse differences between these concepts for purposes of the network model.

In the network model, it is proposed to elaborate ‘remoteness in behaviour’ into social, psychological and mental distance, each of them constituting a separate sense. **Social distance** (resulting from disparity of rank or status, etc.) is also an elaboration of ‘remoteness in relationship’. It is next metonymically extended into ‘respect’/’deference’ or ‘aloofness’ (EFFECT FOR CAUSE), depending on the direction of conceptualisation. The link between social distance and psychological distance means that in a large number of cases social distance results in psychological distance. Since reserve is associated with self-restraint, it is metonymically extended from ‘psychological distance’. **Psychological**

**distance** is also a metonymic CAUSE for ‘coldness’ which, being related to the AFFECTION IS WARMTH metaphor, stands for lack of affection or intimacy. **Mental distance** is connected with lack of mental involvement; it is often required for objective and impartial judgement.

It is important to differentiate between respect, deference, aloofness and reserve. All the four concepts involve the notion of distance but they are based on different conceptualisations of the interlocutor’s vertical position. When the conceptualiser signals respect or deference, he/she adopts a vantage point that is far from his/her interlocutor and conceptualises the interlocutor as being located higher than himself/herself (direction of conceptualisation: from down to up). The difference between ‘respect’ and ‘deference’ may be described as a quantitative one: deference involves further distance and/or locates the interlocutor higher than respect does. When the conceptualiser signals aloofness, he/she adopts a vantage point that is far from and above his/her interlocutor (direction of conceptualisation: from up to down); thus, aloofness profiles the conceptualiser’s high position. Reserve involves only far distance: the interlocutor is conceptualised at the same level as the conceptualiser.

American English dictionaries covered by the analysis provide only negative evaluation of the term *distance* (excessive reserve, aloofness, coldness)<sup>10</sup>. On the other hand, the British English dictionaries analysed include both negative valuation (excessive reserve; aloofness)<sup>11</sup> and positive valuation (a discreet or proper reserve; deference). It is possible that the terminological inconsistency in how the term *distance* is used in linguistic research is connected with the different meaning and evaluation of the term in specific cultures.

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<sup>10</sup> It is in particular noticeable in definitions of the phrase “keep one’s distance”.

<sup>11</sup> Except for Collins, which has a positive valuation only.

The network model for the Polish equivalent of *distance* will significantly differ from the English one. It is because Polish has at least two synonymous equivalents which occupy the semantic field corresponding to the English *distance* - namely, *odległość* (modelled on German *entlegenheit*, formed with the prefix “*od-*” (away from) and the verb “*legac*” (to lie); hence, originally meaning remoteness in space, cf. SEJP2) and *dystans* (like in English, borrowed from Latin via French, cf. SWO). The former is mainly used in the literal meaning of intervening space between two points. It may also be occasionally used metaphorically in the phrase *trzymać się w odległości* (keep oneself at a distance) where it stands for reserve. The word *dystans*<sup>12</sup>, which is listed in the Polish Dictionary of Foreign Words (SWO), is also used in the literal sense of a space between two points<sup>13</sup>. However, its most frequent usage relates to metaphorical extensions: 1. cold, official attitude towards another person (i.e. psychological distance), and 2. difference in the material status, education, etc. between two persons (i.e. social distance). It should be also noted that the sense of ‘remoteness in space’ is expressed in modern Polish by a separate lexical item ‘*dal*’.

As already discussed in the Introduction, Cognitive Linguistics claims that the meaning of a lexical item is not like a dictionary but like an encyclopaedia (Langacker 1987:155-158). Thus, the above presented network model constitutes only a fragment of the user’s conventional knowledge of the concept DISTANCE. The exact form of the network and salience of nodes may differ among users depending on their experience and knowledge. The next sections will focus on the network node related to interpersonal relationships.

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<sup>12</sup> Polish linguists use the term *dystans*, not *odległość*.

<sup>13</sup> In particular in the sports context.

### 3. Preconceptual Image Schema NEAR\_FAR

Image schemas are one of tools humans use to comprehend the world. These are basic cognitive structures in the form of recurrent patterns derived from everyday repetitive bodily experience: “our bodily movements through space, our manipulation of objects, and our perceptual interactions” (M. Johnson 1987:29). These abstract (i.e. schematic) and embodied mental pictures are preconceptual, which means that they structure human experience “prior to, and independent of, any concepts” (G. Lakoff 1987:271). Speakers use them automatically and unconsciously.

Image schemas are pervasive in human experience. They “encompass sensory-motor and visual schemas such as motion, containment, surface, contact, support, blockage, verticality, proximity-distance” (Dirven 2000:4). In fact, a large number of image schemas are related to spatial orientations. For example, human beings experience many instances of proximity and remoteness in their life. On the basis of such experience they form a dynamic representation of near-far relations (i.e. the NEAR\_FAR image schema) and apply it to perceive and comprehend other experiences that reflect the same relations. Thus, image schemas mediate between perceptions and the conceptual structure. They are used to structure the physical world but they are also used metaphorically to categorize the abstract world (G. Lakoff 1987:283).

The **NEAR\_FAR image schema**<sup>14</sup> is listed by M. Johnson as one of the more important image schemas (1987:126). The schema forms a basis for categorising the physical world as near or far. It is also applied metaphorically to abstract and complex concepts, e.g. interpersonal relationships, understood in terms of proximity and remoteness relative to the conceptualiser.

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<sup>14</sup> Also referred to in the literature as HERE\_THERE and PROXIMITY\_DISTANCE.

The NEAR\_FAR preconceptual image schema is an orientational schema as it is related to the orientation of the human body in the physical world. Krzeszowski notes that “the canonical human body of the speaker is the only point of reference for this schema, reflected in the ME-FIRST orientation” (1997:117). This orientation is frequently adopted by egocentrically focused human beings: “since we are where we are and exist in the present, we conceive ourselves as being HERE rather than THERE, and NOW rather than THEN” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:132). The schema emerges from human perception of the environment and everyday experiences with the horizontal dimension of space, including the way people structure space for communicative purposes (proxemics).

Krzeszowski claims that although the NEAR area and the FAR area are not clearly demarcated from each other, they may be defined in kinaesthetic terms. Thus, the NEAR area is within reach, i.e. in the basic sense – within the distance of an outstretched arm while the FAR/THERE area is identified as out of reach (1997:117). This claim is confirmed by neuropsychological experiments, which show that the brain has separate neural systems for representing near space and far space: “the visual system makes a fundamental distinction between a near or peripersonal region of space that extends roughly to the perimeter of arm’s reach – the realm in which most manual activity takes place – and a far or extrapersonal region of space that expands outward from that boundary – the realm in which visual search and object scanning and recognition usually take place” (Kemmerer 1999:55). Thus, the near system represents space to manipulate or avoid objects with hands, arms and the head (limb-centred and head-centred coordinates) while the far system represents space to analyse objects with the eyes (gaze-centred coordinates) (ibid.:45). This property is reflected in the fact that a large number of languages have binary demonstrative systems (*this-that*), which reflect the near-far division of space.

According to Krzeszowski, image schemas incorporate the plus-minus polarity (the axiological SCALE schema) which “allows the assigning of values to concepts arising from that schema” (1997:132). The combination of the NEAR\_FAR schema with the SCALE schema results in: NEAR IS PLUS versus FAR IS MINUS. There is also an implication that NEARER IS BETTER (1997:118) and FARTHER IS WORSE. Below is a list of English and Polish expressions which confirm this axiological valuation:

**NEAR IS PLUS**

*close friend, he is near and dear to me  
be together  
Here, have my chair.*

**BLISKO TO PLUS**

*bliska przyjaźń, znajomość,  
osoba/rzecz bliska sercu, nawiązać z kimś  
bliższe stosunki, najbliższa rodzina, bliźni*

**FAR IS MINUS**

*How’s that throat?  
I don’t like that!  
this man over there  
distant relative  
standoffish*

**DALEKO TO MINUS**

*Ja tam jemu nie wierzę. Jaki tam z niego  
fachowiec. Ma tam jakieś zasługi.  
daleki krewny, dalekie sprawy,  
posunąć się za daleko  
trzymać kogoś na dystans*

However, it is quite easy to find a large number of both Polish and English counterexamples where NEAR is evaluated negatively while FAR is evaluated positively:

**NEAR IS MINUS**

*Here!<sup>15</sup> What do you think you’re doing?  
He’s very close with his money.  
It’s very close today  
to be near death  
a close shave/thing*

**BLISKO TO MINUS**

*ubliżyć komuś  
bliski płaczu, omdlenia, załamania  
Daj już tego ryżu.  
ta cała Zośka  
W tym domu nie ma nic do jedzenia.*

**FAR IS PLUS**

*That’s a good girl/a clever dog.  
There, there don’t get so upset.  
There! I’ve done it! I’ve resigned.  
go far  
far-sighted*

**DALEKO TO PLUS**

*dalekowzroczny  
dalekonośny  
nie widzieć dalej swego nosa  
zajść daleko  
mądra ostrożność patrzy w dal*

Krzeszowski distinguishes between absolute values and actual values (1997:132-140). Proximity is an absolutely positive value while remoteness is an absolutely

negative value. As shown above, actual realisations may be different depending on the context of use. In particular, other preconceptual image schemas may be superimposed on the NEAR\_FAR schema as image schemas are often interrelated and co-experienced:

“Given a center and a periphery we will experience the NEAR\_FAR schema as stretching out along our perceptual or conceptual perspective. What is considered near will depend upon the context, but, once that is established, a SCALE is defined for determining relative nearness to the center” (M. Johnson 1987:125).

The NEAR\_FAR schema may also co-occur with: CONTACT, PART-WHOLE, MERGING, SPLITTING, LINK, CONTAINER. Other limitations are related to target domains onto which the NEAR\_FAR schema is mapped. For example, FAR is evaluated positively when it applies to the concept of judgement or progress. Kalisz also adds: “evaluation in terms of good and bad often involves sociological factors which may override general experiential metaphor interpretation” (1990:176). It will be especially noticeable in relational metaphors discussed in the next subchapter.

#### **4. Distance: the Scope of Metaphor**

The aim of this section is to analyse conceptual metaphors where distance is used as a source domain. The main focus will be on conventional metaphors related to relationships. As a result, the scope of metaphor will be defined, i.e. the range of the application of a given source domain to particular target domains (Kövecses 1995:316). This analysis will provide more information about the metaphorical meaning of DISTANCE, which forms an essential part of Polish and English folk knowledge system. The scope of metaphor will also show which domains may be easily activated in the base when the term distance is used metaphorically.

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<sup>15</sup> To signal annoyance.

#### 4.1 DISTANCE as a Source Domain

Interaction of human beings in space is one of the elementary human experiences. In general, space is an irreducible fundamental domain and distance is its dimension. Distance may be regarded as a primary concept: it is experientially basic, concrete, and well-known; hence, it is well suited to function as a source domain. Distance is often mapped from spatial to more abstract domains: it is applied to comprehend complex human relations and underlines a large number of other concepts.

The preconceptual image schema NEAR\_FAR, discussed in the preceding section, is an essential element of the *distance* domain. In accordance with the Invariance Hypothesis, metaphoric mappings cannot change the image-schematic structure of the source domain (G. Lakoff 1991:215). Thus, the NEAR\_FAR schema is mapped from the distance domain onto target domains. Below is a list of selected target domains onto which mappings are made from the source domain of DISTANCE:

- **Emotional Relationship**, involvement, intimacy, etc. The EMOTIONAL RELATIONSHIP IS A PHYSICAL DISTANCE BETWEEN INTERLOCUTORS metaphor proposed by Kövecses (1995:321) is discussed below.
- **Emotional Effect**: EMOTIONAL EFFECT IS PHYSICAL CONTACT (*His mother's death hit him hard; She's a knockout; I was struck by his insincerity; I was touched by his remark*) (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:50) – physical contact reduces distance to minimum.
- **Judgement**. The spatialisation of judgement was pointed out by Michele Emanatian. She discusses the INTELLECTUAL INVOLVEMENT IS PROXIMITY and EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT IS PROXIMITY metaphors. To judge objectively, a person must be far enough to have good vision but close enough to be involved (*I've got to get some distance from this; Take a few steps back*). Too far distance

may turn into a lack of involvement or interest (*to be very far removed from something*). Too close distance gives only a partial view: a person loses objectivity and becomes emotionally involved (*She's too close to the project*) (1997)<sup>16</sup>.

- **Agreement and Disagreement:** AGREEMENT IS CLOSENESS (*to be in step with somebody, reach an agreement*) and DISAGREEMENT IS FAR DISTANCE (*fall out, depart*).
- **Compromise** (*meet halfway, go halfway to meet somebody, middle ground*): compromise is conceptualised as a meeting in the middle of the road.
- **Support:** SUPPORT IS STANDING CLOSE: *to stand by someone; I'm on your side; to side with somebody; stać przy kimś; jestem po twojej stronie*). The supporter stands close, usually on somebody's side.
- **Difference** (*at opposite ends of the earth, poles/miles/worlds apart*). When people are different, they are conceptualised as being separated by large distance.

The list shows that the source domain DISTANCE extends across a range of target concepts. It should be stressed that the list is not exhaustive as I am concerned here only with metaphors which describe interpersonal relations. The next subchapters will investigate the source domain of distance in the Emotional Relationship metaphor, which is the primary focus of this dissertation.

#### **4.2 Distance in Relationship Metaphors: INTIMACY**

The high-level central metaphor **AN EMOTIONAL RELATIONSHIP IS A PHYSICAL DISTANCE BETWEEN INTERLOCUTORS** (cf. Kövecses 1995:321) underlines a number of

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<sup>16</sup> This metaphor explains why FAR in *far-sighted* is evaluated positively.

abstract concepts related to interpersonal relationships. The metaphor is well grounded in human proxemic behaviour: people tend to move closer to those they like and maintain more distance to those they evaluate negatively (Argyle 1999:57).

The importance of physical closeness as a source domain in friendship and love metaphors was discussed in detail by Kövecses (1986, 1995). The **EMOTIONAL RELATIONSHIP IS A PHYSICAL DISTANCE** metaphor is realized by the general metaphor **EMOTIONAL INTIMACY IS PHYSICAL CLOSENESS**<sup>17</sup>: psychological closeness is understood in terms of physical closeness. This metaphor may be extended to the concept of familiarity and liking: **FAMILIARITY/LIKING IS CLOSENESS**. Its other instantiations are **FRIENDSHIP IS CLOSENESS** and **LOVE IS CLOSENESS**. Distance serves as a scale: the smaller the distance, the more intimate the relationship is.

**EMOTIONAL INTIMACY IS PHYSICAL CLOSENESS**



**FAMILIARITY IS CLOSENESS  
LIKING IS CLOSENESS**

*rub shoulders/elbows with sb*  
*mix with sb*  
*keep company with*  
*eat off the same trencher*  
*keep in touch*  
*take to somebody*

**FRIENDSHIP IS CLOSENESS**

*close friends*  
*a bosom friend*  
*a sidekick*  
*close to sb's heart*  
*to keep friends*  
*stick to a friend*

**LOVE IS CLOSENESS**

*be close to each other*  
*be together*

**ZNAJOMOŚĆ TO BLISKA ODLEGŁOŚĆ  
LUBIENIE SIĘ TO BLISKA ODLEGŁOŚĆ**

*trzymać się razem*  
*bliskie kontakty*  
*zadawać się z*  
*dotrzymywać komuś towarzystwa*  
*utrzymywać z kimś stosunki, kontakty*  
*nawiązać kontakt z kimś*

**PRZYJAŹŃ TO BLISKA ODLEGŁOŚĆ**

*bliski przyjaciel*  
*nawiązać bliskie stosunki*  
*nierozłączni przyjaciele*  
*papuzki nierozłączki*  
*zbliżyć się do siebie*  
*bliski sercu*

**MIŁOŚĆ TO BLISKA ODLEGŁOŚĆ**

*byliśmy bardzo blisko ze sobą*  
*chodzić ze sobą*

<sup>17</sup> EMOTIONAL INTIMACY IS PHYSICAL CLOSENESS was also discussed by Adele Goldberg on the Conceptual Metaphor Home Page: [http://cogsci.berkeley.edu/metaphors/Emotional\\_Intimacy\\_Is\\_Physical\\_Closeness](http://cogsci.berkeley.edu/metaphors/Emotional_Intimacy_Is_Physical_Closeness).

*never apart*  
*he is very near and dear to me*

*mieć się ku sobie*  
*być razem*

The EMOTIONAL INTIMACY IS PHYSICAL CLOSENESS metaphor functions both in English and in Polish<sup>18</sup>. It may be elaborated as follows:

**INCREASE OF EMOTIONAL INTIMACY IS MOVEMENT TOWARD PHYSICAL CLOSENESS**

*get close to sb*  
*we're moving closer*  
*to cement the relationship*

*zbliżyć się do siebie*  
*zbliżenie*  
*jesteśmy coraz bliżej*  
*zacieśnić więzi*

*tighten the relationship with*  
*come back*

*wrócić do kogoś*

**INCLINATIONS TOWARD INTIMACY ARE FORCES TOWARD CLOSENESS<sup>19</sup>** (it combines with LOVE/SEXUALITY/ATTRACTION IS A PHYSICAL/MAGNETIC FORCE; cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1980:49):

*be attracted to somebody*  
*an attractive man*  
*I was drawn to her*

*pociągający*  
*przyciągający*  
*lecieć na kogoś*

As already noted, the difference between liking, friendship and love lies in the length of distance: close, closer and very close, respectively. It is also interesting to note that the FAMILIARITY IS CLOSENESS metaphor activates the domain of touch, i.e. *keep in touch, be in touch, out of touch*. It is also reflected in Polish: *trzymać się razem, dotrzymywać towarzystwa, utrzymywać kontakty*. The Polish expressions have the verb “*trzymać*” (to hold) in their root and evoke an image of two people holding each other. Touch means very close distance.

The CLOSENESS metaphor is central to relational concepts and it motivates a number of other metaphors (cf. Nowakowska-Kempna 1995:309). For example, LOVE and FRIENDSHIP are also conceptualised in terms of unity and bond. With respect to UNITY, people are so close to each other that they form one unit. This metaphor also

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<sup>18</sup> cf. Nowakowska-Kempna (1995) for a detailed discussion of FRIENDSHIP IS CLOSENESS (PRZYJAŹŃ TO BLISKOŚĆ FIZYCZNA) in Polish.

involves the mapping of the PART\_WHOLE image schema since lovers are conceptualised as a unity (whole) of two complementary parts.

It is worth noting that human relationships have been conceptualised in terms of physical closeness for a very long time. The FRIENDSHIP IS CLOSENESS metaphor was used as early as in Old English: there is a large number of synonyms of ‘close friend’ which are related to body parts, such as shoulder, hand, head or mean ‘near companions’ (e.g. *neahfreond*) (Romano 1998). The LOVE IS UNITY metaphor was, for example, used by Shakespeare in *Romeo and Juliet* (Barcelona Sánchez 1995). Here are instantiations of the UNITY metaphor in modern English and Polish:

**LOVE IS UNITY**

*be as one*  
*unite in holy wedlock*  
*better half/ other half*  
*bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh (Bible)*  
*glued to somebody*  
*you are part of me*

**MIŁOŚĆ TO JEDNOŚĆ**

*moja druga połowa*  
*zjednoczeni w miłości*  
*ty moje serce*  
*jesteś częścią mnie*  
*nic nas nie rozdzieli*  
*w komunii miłości*

**FRIENDSHIP IS UNITY**

*friendship is one mind in two bodies*  
*friendship is union of spirits*  
*hand in glove*  
*reunion*

**PRZYJAŹŃ TO JEDNOŚĆ**

*nierozłączni*  
*jedność duchowa*

The domain of UNITY is also mapped onto the concept of SOLIDARITY (*unity of interest, community of interest, unification, unity*), which is often used interchangeably with the term *distance* in linguistic research.

Friendship and love are conceptualised as a strong bond between people: “a common way to comprehend relationships is through the source domain of PHYSICAL LINKS/CONNECTIONS”, hence INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS ARE BONDS (Kövecses 1995:323). The bond implies close physical distance. People are bonded; hence, they form a unity. The stronger the bond, the more likely it is to achieve a unity.

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<sup>19</sup> cf. Adele Goldberg.

**FRIENDSHIP IS A BOND**

*be bound by friendship  
bonds of friendship  
feel attachment  
be inseparable*

**PRZYJAŹŃ TO WIĘŹ**

*łączą nas wspólne zainteresowania  
zacieśniać więzy przyjaźni  
przywiązani do siebie  
nierozłączni przyjaciele*

**LOVE IS A BOND**

*romantic ties  
love knots  
indissoluble bonds*

**MIŁOŚĆ TO WIĘŹ**

*być z kimś związanym/ związek  
więź uczuciowa  
nierozzerwalny węzeł miłości*

The BOND metaphors are also involved in the concept of marriage and affection<sup>20</sup> (Kövecses 1995:324), which again implies a close physical distance. In the case of marriage, the bond metaphor may be motivated socially and religiously. For example, hands are symbolically tied together during the Christian marriage ceremony:

**MARRIAGE IS A BOND**

*wedlock  
bond of matrimony  
wedding knot  
nuptial tie/knot*

**MAŁŻEŃSTWO TO WIĘŹ**

*węzeł małżeński  
związek małżeński  
podstawowa komórka społeczna  
związani na śmierć i życie*

It should be noted that physical closeness is not always evaluated positively in relationship metaphors. There is a certain boundary where intimacy may become too close and uncomfortable: **EXCESSIVE INTIMACY IS SPACE INVASION/TOO CLOSE DISTANCE**. It is conceptualised as an invasion of one's personal space and disturbance of the equilibrium (it co-occurs with the BALANCE image schema).

**EXCESSIVE INTIMACY IS SPACE INVASION**

*This relationship is stifling/suffocating me.  
Do you always have to be clinging to me?  
You've got to learn to back off a little.  
Give me room to breathe.  
I need a little space once in a while.<sup>21</sup>  
A hedge between keeps friendship green.*

**ZBYT NIA BLISKOŚĆ TO NARUSZENIE TERYTORIUM**

*Duszę się w tym związku.  
Przyczepił się jak rzep do psiego ogona.  
Przyssał się do mnie.  
wsadzać nos w nie swoje sprawy  
wchodzić z buciarami w czyjeś życie*

<sup>20</sup> e.g. babies bond with their mothers.

<sup>21</sup> Examples are from the *Big Love Paper* by Jordan Howe (1993ms), which was made available to me by Michele Emanatian.

At a more specific level, this metaphor may be realised as **CAUSING ANGER IS TRESPASSING**, which was discussed by George Lakoff in his study of anger. The cause of anger is seen as a trespasser (1987:395):

**CAUSING ANGER IS TRESPASSING**

*You're beginning to get to me.  
Get out of my sight!  
This is where I draw the line!  
Don't step on my toes.  
Back off, will you?*

**WYWOLYWANIE GNIEWU TO NARUSZANIE TERYTORIUM<sup>22</sup>**

*Zejdź mi z oczu.  
Jeszcze jeden krok a doigrasz się.  
Odwal się.  
Spadaj.  
Nadepnąć komuś na odcisk.*

By analogy to the conceptualisation of intimate relationships as physical closeness, non-intimate relationships are understood in terms of far distance. Therefore, on the other end of the NEAR\_FAR scale, the **EMOTIONAL RELATIONSHIP IS A PHYSICAL DISTANCE** metaphor is realized by the general metaphor **LACK OF EMOTIONAL INTIMACY IS FAR DISTANCE**:

**LACK OF EMOTIONAL INTIMACY IS (FAR) PHYSICAL DISTANCE**

*to distance oneself  
distant relations  
standoffish, withdrawn  
out of sight out of mind  
be worlds apart*

**BRAK BLISKOŚCI EMOCJONALNEJ TO (DALEKA) ODLEGŁOŚĆ**

*zdystansować się od kogoś/czegoś  
daleki znajomy  
co z oczu to z serca  
trzymać kogoś na odległość  
odsunąć się od kogoś*

Lack of emotional involvement (unsociability, dislike/enmity, contempt, rejection, reserve) is understood in terms of far distance which results from the avoidance of close contacts by the speaker or the hearer. The increase of distance between interlocutors may be conceptualised in a number of ways:

1. One of the interlocutors moves backwards:

*standoffish, withdrawn  
I distanced myself from him.  
turn away from somebody*

*zdystansować się  
odsunąć się od kogoś  
wycofać się*

<sup>22</sup> Translation of examples by Kubiński and Modrzejewska from *Językoznawstwo Kognitywne: wybór tekstów*, (1998) edited by W. Kubiński, R. Kalisz, and E. Modrzejewska, Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, p. 124.

2. One of the interlocutors maintains the distance and does not allow the other to come nearer (i.e. avoidance of contact):

<i>unapproachable</i>	<i>nieprzystępny</i>
<i>keep sb at a distance</i>	<i>trzymać kogoś na odległość</i>
<i>keep sb at arm's length</i>	<i>trzymać kogoś na dystans</i>
<i>maintain the distance</i>	<i>nie pozwolę mu się zbliżyć do mnie</i>
<i>keep sb at bay</i>	

For this purpose, interlocutors may build some obstacles to separate themselves from each other:

<i>to build a wall around oneself</i>	<i>budowa ściany/muru wokół siebie</i>
<i>stonewalling<sup>23</sup></i>	<i>odgrodzić się od reszty świata</i>
<i>he shields himself from people</i>	<i>schować się w skorupie</i>

3. One of the interlocutors pushes the other backwards:

<i>send to Coventry</i>	<i>odtrącić kogoś</i>
<i>put somebody off</i>	<i>odrzuć kogoś</i>
<i>brush somebody off</i>	<i>odepchnąć kogoś od siebie</i>

The notion of far distance is also involved in the conceptualisation of friendship and love via the general metaphor END OF RELATIONSHIP IS INCREASE OF DISTANCE. The deterioration or, ultimately, the end of relationship is understood as an increase of distance between friends, lovers, etc.:

<b>END OF RELATIONSHIP IS INCREASE OF DISTANCE</b>	<b>KONIEC ZWIĄZKU TO ZWIĘKSZENIE ODLEGŁOŚCI</b>
<i>drift apart</i>	<i>oddalać się od siebie</i>
<i>we are growing apart</i>	<i>odsuwać się od siebie</i>
<i>walk out on sb</i>	<i>odejść od kogoś</i>
<i>desert sb</i>	<i>rozejść się</i>
<i>run away from</i>	<i>rozstanie</i>
<i>leave sb</i>	<i>zostawić kogoś</i>
<i>come to a parting of the ways</i>	<i>rzucić kogoś</i>

This metaphor overlaps with the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor: 1. Two lovers are at the crossroads and each takes a separate path (e.g. *come to a parting of the ways*) 2.

<sup>23</sup> This term is used by psychologists to describe polarizing conflicts with the use of silence and a stone expression to defend oneself in arguments in a close relationship (Goleman 1997:217).

Two lovers start to move in the opposite direction (*we are growing apart*), 3. one lover moves away from the other (*leave sb, run away from sb*). The further they go in separate or opposite directions, the further psychological distance between them. It should be noted that in the case of Polish, distance is often encoded in the prefixes *roz-* (1. movement in opposite horizontal directions; 2. division into parts) and *od-* (1. decrease; 2. separation (SJP)). In English, phrasal verbs are often used with particles, such as *out, off* and *away*.

Another overlap is with the BOND metaphor: a break of ties and bonds leads to the increase of distance and the end of relationship. Far distance is also involved in the UNITY metaphor, where the WHOLE is broken into PARTS; hence, the distance increases between two people:

**END OF RELATIONSHIP IS BREAK OF BOND/UNITY**

*split up*  
*break up with*  
*to break off the engagement*  
*break free/loose*  
*the relationship dissolves*  
*to part*

**KONIEC ZWIĄZKU TO ROZERWANIE WIĘZI / JEDNOŚCI**

*nasz związek/małżeństwo się rozpada*  
*separacja*  
*rozłam w związku*  
*zerwać z kimś*  
*rozwiązanie małżeństwa*

REPULSION (WSTRĘT) and DISGUST (ODRAZA / OBRZYDZENIE) are other concepts which denote a negative emotion and are understood in terms of far distance:

**REPULSION IS FAR DISTANCE**

*wouldn't touch sb with a bargepole (ten-foot pole)*  
*that repels me*  
*put off*

**WSTRĘT TO DALEKA ODLEGŁOŚĆ**

*to mnie odrzuca*  
*odpychające zachowanie*  
*odrażający człowiek*

This metaphor may be seen as an opposite of ATTRACTION, i.e. ATTRACTION IS A PHYSICAL/MAGNETIC FORCE. There is some kind of physical force which pushes the conceptualizer away from another person.

The focus of this dissertation is on the conceptualisation of interpersonal relationships in terms of distance. However, it should be noted that there are also other variables applied in the folk knowledge of relationships. One of them is **TEMPERATURE**, which is connected with the **EMOTION IS TEMPERATURE** metaphor, e.g. **AFFECTION IS WARMTH**, **FRIENDSHIP IS WARMTH** (Kövecses 1995:321-2), **LOVE IS HEAT**, **DISLIKE IS COLD**. The higher the temperature of emotion, the more affection between two people:

**AFFECTION IS WARMTH**

*put a warm friendship on ice*  
*a warm friendship*  
*warm sb up*  
*cold relations*  
*give somebody a cold shoulder*

**SYMPATIA TO CIEPŁO**

*ciepłe uczucia*  
*żyć do kogoś gorące uczucia (love)*  
*ciepły uśmiech*  
*oziębienie relacji*  
*chłodne spojrzenie*

It should be noted that the expressions ‘coldness’ and ‘chillness of manner’ often appear in dictionary definitions of *distance*. It may be a result of the overlapping conceptualisation of non-intimate relationships in terms of low temperature and remoteness: **DISLIKE IS COLD** and **DISLIKE IS FAR DISTANCE**. Thus, by way of a conceptual leap - distance is defined (and conceived of) as coldness, i.e. lack of affection. Similarly, ‘intimacy’, which is often defined as close or warm personal relationship (cf. Collins), is conceptualised both along the parameter of distance and temperature.

To sum up the intimacy-related metaphors, positive emotions and relations (love, friendship, liking, familiarity, marriage) are understood metaphorically, among others, in terms of physical closeness: **INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP IS CLOSE DISTANCE**. By contrast, negative emotions and relations are comprehended either in terms of **far distance: NON-INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP IS FAR DISTANCE** (dislike/enmity, lack of intimacy, lack of involvement, reserve, deterioration or end of relationship) or in terms of **very close distance EXCESSIVE INTIMACY IS TOO CLOSE DISTANCE** (space invasion, intrusion, encroachment, trespassing). Distance serves as a scale to measure a degree of intimacy and it often combines with other metaphors, such as **UNITY**, **BOND** and **JOURNEY**, which

map richer images compared with DISTANCE. It is evident that INTIMACY metaphors provide a basis for the use of psychological distance in linguistic research.

### 4.3 Distance in Relationship Metaphors: RESPECT

The conceptualisation of RESPECT is more complex as it differs from the prototypical NEAR IS PLUS / FAR IS MINUS distinction present in INTIMACY. It is conceptualised both horizontally (RESPECT IS PHYSICAL DISTANCE) and vertically<sup>24</sup> (RESPECT IS UP). The person who is respected is often perceived as standing/being higher than other people: *think highly of, hold a high opinion of, look up to, put on a pedestal, mieć o kimś wysokie mniemanie*. Respect often involves disparity of rank or status; hence, it is linked to social distance. As far as the horizontal conceptualisation is concerned, respect is also a positive attitude that requires the maintenance of a proper (rather far) distance. The word *proper* is crucial as the right equilibrium must be struck in accordance with the convention. DEFERENCE and REVERENCE require farther distance. However, when distance is too far, respect turns into SUBSERVIENCE (the speaker's status is lower than that of the interlocutor) or ALOOFNESS or RESERVE (the speaker's status is higher). When the distance is too short, the person may interpret it as DISRESPECT.

#### RESPECT IS (FAR) DISTANCE

*to know/keep one's distance*  
*make room*  
*Manners know distance*  
*He always follows at a respectful distance*

#### SZACUNEK TO DALEKA ODLEGŁOŚĆ

*chodzić ogródkami*  
*pelen szacunku dystans między*  
*nauczycielem a uczniem*  
*zachować dystans*

#### RESERVE IS VERY FAR DISTANCE

*keep somebody at a distance*  
*keep somebody at arm's length*

#### REZERWA TO BARDZO DALEKA ODLEGŁOŚĆ

*trzymać kogoś na dystans/ na odległość*  
*trzymać się z daleka*

<sup>24</sup> Vertical conceptualisation is applied in a number of other concepts, e.g. admiration, pride, boasting, arrogance, harming (*cut sb down to size, high and mighty, uppish, get on one's high horse, ściąć kogoś, sprowadzić na ziemię, wyniosły, poniżać kogoś*). This conceptualisation often emphasises unequal relations.

**DISRESPECT IS TOO SHORT DISTANCE**

*be short with somebody*  
*straightforward*  
*slap in the face*  
*go too far*

**BRAK SZACUNKU TO BLISKA ODLEGŁOŚĆ**

*ubliżyć komuś*  
*bezpośredniość*  
*bez ogródek*  
*posunąć się za daleko*

The connection between disrespect and physical closeness is well visible in the Polish phrase *ubliżyć komuś* (lit. come near to somebody), which means *to insult, to offend*. The proper distance is not maintained, the speaker signals disrespect and, in consequence, offends the interlocutor. For example, harming with words is perceived as physical injury (VERBAL HARM IS PHYSICAL INJURY), which reduces distance to minimum (Maćkiewicz 1999:112), e.g. *words hurt, I was touched by his words, wbijać szpilę, zajechać komuś pod piąte żebro*. Since emotional harm to the interlocutor is conceptualised as physical effect, such as touching or physical injury, the concepts of DISRESPECT, OFFENCE and INSULT overlap and usually involve the notion of close physical distance. For example, Simmel describes an insult as a violation of personal sphere created by the interlocutor's honour: "language poignantly designates an insult to one's honor as 'coming too close;' the radius of this sphere marks, as it were, the distance whose trespassing by another person insults one's honor" (qtd. in Goffman 1967:62-63). The Polish word for 'insulted', i.e. *obrażony* and *urazony*, have a common root meaning 'a physical blow' (SEJP1). The English word 'insult' is derived from Latin *insultāre* 'to jump upon' (Collins).

DISRESPECT may also be signalled by DISREGARD (and CONTEMPT): a person is treated as if he/she was unworthy of consideration/respect. He/she is not noticed or is noticed but is not recognised. This behaviour is reflected in a number of metaphors: *overlook, turn a blind eye to, refuse to acknowledge/recognise, pass by, take no notice of, pay no attention*. The image behind these metaphors is that the conceptualizer is physically close but does not establish any visual or verbal contact.

To sum up, the conceptualisation of RESPECT is based on the SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP IS HORIZONTAL/VERTICAL PHYSICAL DISTANCE BETWEEN THE INTERLOCUTORS.

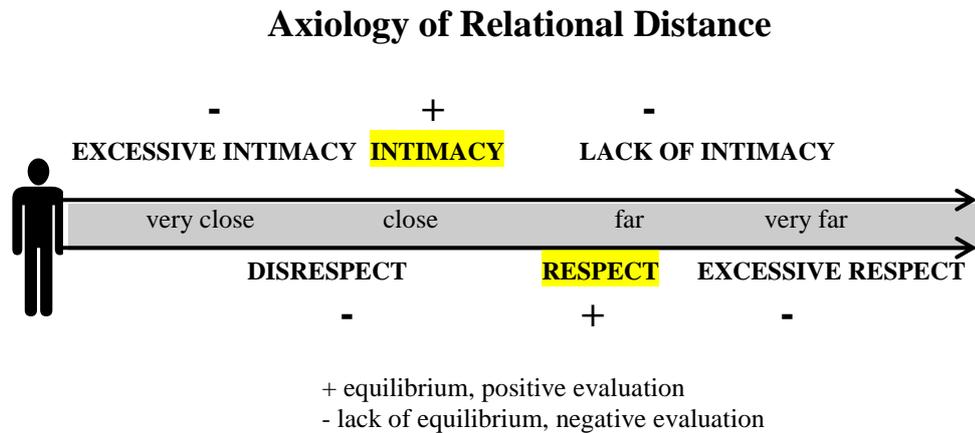
## 5. Conclusions: Definition of Communicative Distance

The above analysis shows that DISTANCE is one of the most fundamental concepts involved in the comprehension of INTIMACY and RESPECT, both in English and in Polish. It is also a source domain for a large number of other relational metaphors (**Spatialization of Relationships**), e.g. similarity, familiarity, liking, friendship, love, reserve, respect, deference, aloofness, reserve, etc. All of them may be easily activated in the base when the term *distance* is used metaphorically. This is one of the causes of terminological inconsistency in the use of *distance* in linguistics.

Distance metaphors may be referred to as *orientational metaphors* because they “give a concept a spatial orientation” (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1980:14-21) grounded in everyday human experience with space. The concept of DISTANCE does not contain a very rich knowledge, but is rather schematic. Distance assigns near-far orientation to relational concepts; hence, it serves as a scale built on the NEAR\_FAR image-schema. This scale is used to measure a degree of intimacy, respect, etc. between the interlocutors.

Having regard to the folk knowledge of DISTANCE evidenced in relationship metaphors above, I propose the following axiological model of distance both for English and Polish (see Figure 4). The scale shows a metaphorical distance to the conceptualiser and it is made up of four degrees (very close, close, far, very far), which form a continuum.

Figure 4. The axiological model of relational distance



The Distance Scale allows the conceptualiser to measure distance to his/her interlocutor. Distance is not a bipolar (NEAR-FAR) scale built on the INTIMACY vs. LACK OF INTIMACY opposition, where NEAR IS PLUS and FAR IS MINUS. The scale consists of two axes: one related to INTIMACY and the other to RESPECT. It is because distance is involved in the conceptualisation of *both* intimacy *and* respect; hence, both these central concepts must be incorporated into the model. Each axis consists of the centre and two poles. The centre serves as a reference point; other related concepts are built around it. The centre is situated in a different segment of the Distance Scale for intimacy and for respect. In the case of intimacy, the centre is close distance. Excessive intimacy is very close distance. When distance is far or too far, it stands for a lack of intimacy. The centre for respect is (rather) far distance. If distance is too short, it signals disrespect (it covers two degrees on the scale, i.e. close and very close). Excessive respect is expressed in terms of very far distance.

In consequence, Figure 4 implies a different axiological model than the simple bipolar PLUS-MINUS version of the SCALE schema proposed by Krzeszowski for the NEAR-FAR image schema (1997:118). In the above figure, the centre of the axis is evaluated positively. Movement away from the centre towards one of the poles disturbs the

equilibrium and is contrary to expectations; hence, it is evaluated negatively. It explains why in some cases close distance may be evaluated negatively (DISRESPECT - peripheral) or positively (INTIMACY – the centre). Thus, the NEAR-FAR image schema co-exists with the balance scheme (BALANCE IS PLUS; IMBALANCE IS MINUS; Krzeszowski 1997:126).

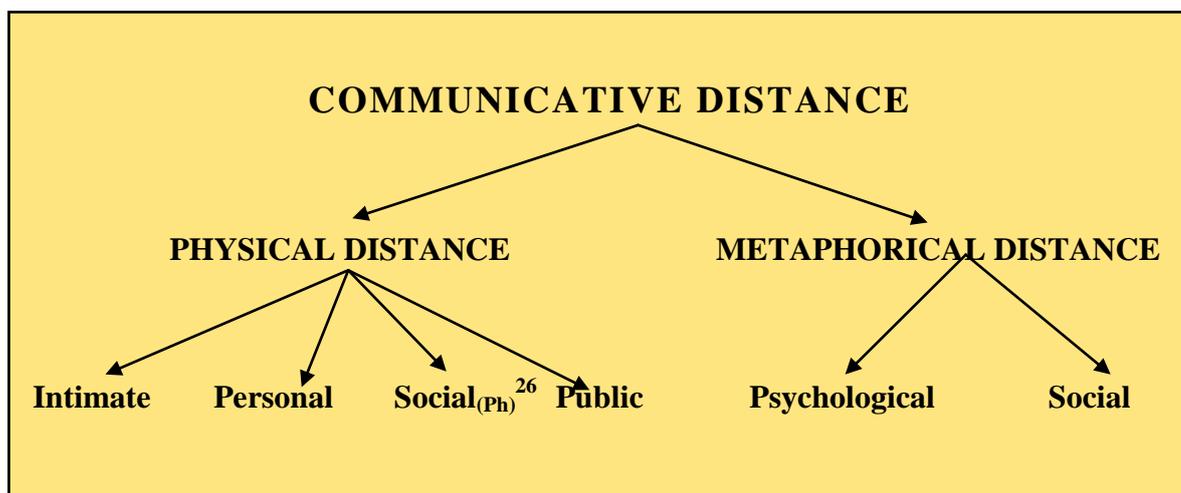
The intimacy axis is the main component of psychological distance between the interlocutors while the respect axis is the main component of social distance. The axiological model proposed for the intimacy and respect axes is also valid for social and psychological distance. **Psychological distance** will be understood here as a mental construct created by the conceptualiser for a degree of intimacy, familiarity and affection between the interlocutors. It is metaphorically comprehended in terms of physical distance (**PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTANCE IS PHYSICAL DISTANCE**), which imposes a horizontal orientation on psychological distance. By way of conceptual leap, all intimacy-related concepts may be activated in the base whenever the term psychological distance is used. For example, psychological distance is often associated with affection, which is understood via warmth (AFFECTION IS WARMTH); hence, psychological distance is also comprehended in terms of temperature (for this reason dictionaries define *distance* as ‘*coldness of manner*’).

**Social distance** is a mental construct for a disparity of rank, class or status between the interlocutors, i.e. when the relationship between the interlocutors is asymmetrical, social distance is conceptualised as large and when the relationship is symmetrical, there is no social distance between the interlocutors. It is also metaphorically comprehended in terms of physical distance (**SOCIAL DISTANCE IS PHYSICAL DISTANCE**), which provides it with both a horizontal and vertical orientation due to its associations with status and respect. Since these concepts are understood through the UP-DOWN orientation, it is also mapped on social distance. Social distance results from the conceptualisation of the

interlocutor's status as superior or inferior relative to the conceptualiser's own social status, which confirms the importance of conceptualisation directionality (from up to down or from down to up) for social distance.

It may be concluded that in face-to-face conversation the conceptualiser has to assess at least three types of distance: actual physical distance, social distance and psychological distance to his/her interlocutor. For purposes of this dissertation the term *communicative distance*<sup>25</sup> will be used as a general superordinate term encompassing all types of relational distance (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5. Functional division of communicative distance**



Communicative distance is a sum of physical, social and psychological distance. It is a real-time dynamic mental construct created in the ground and changing in the course of the usage event (i.e. actual conversation). The division of **physical distance** into intimate, personal, social and public distance was adopted after Hall (1978). Physical distance is understood here as the conceptualisation of actual distance between the speaker and the hearer based on the conceptualiser's perception.

<sup>25</sup> For reasons of terminological clarity the terms *conversational distance* and *interpersonal distance* were rejected as candidates for superordinate terms. The former applies only to face-to-face communication while the latter is often used as a synonym of *physical distance*.

It should be noted that psychological distance and social distance are not always two mutually exclusive notions since psychological distance often stems from social distance. However, as shown above, although interrelated, these are two distinct concepts and it is important to make a clear distinction between them in linguistic studies. The relation between social and psychological distance will be discussed in more detail in Part II, together with factors that impact the conceptualisation of communicative distance.

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<sup>26</sup> Hall's terminology; distinct from metaphorical Social Distance. In order to avoid confusion physical social distance will be marked with the symbol <sub>(Ph)</sub>.

## **PART II. FACTORS IMPACTING CONCEPTUALISATION OF COMMUNICATIVE DISTANCE**

The aim of this section is to address the second part of Objective 1, i.e. to identify factors that impact the conceptualisation of communicative distance. Conceptualisation is usually preceded by the process of perception and is followed by expression/symbolisation (**PERCEPTION → CONCEPTUALISATION → EXPRESSION**). As already mentioned in the *Introduction*, conceptualisation involves novel conceptions, established concepts, sensory, emotive and kinaesthetic experience, and the social, physical and linguistic context (Langacker 1988:50). Since conceptualisation takes place in the conceptualiser's mind, it is subject to internal idiosyncratic features of such an individual, including his/her age, gender, ethnic background, education, knowledge, experience, personality, intellectual abilities, current emotional state, values, beliefs, opinions, attitudes, communicative competence, social skills, emotional intelligence, social status, power, role, expectations and goals. Communicative distance measures the relationship between the interlocutors and conceptualisation of communicative distance is also influenced by external factors, such as the other interlocutor's characteristics, the pre-existing relationship between interlocutors, and the setting (situation). The analysis of collected material shows that the most important factors that impact conceptualisation of communicative distance are psychological, cultural and social factors.

### **1. Biological and Psychological Factors**

#### **1.1 Social Perception**

Perception is one of the processes involved in language production during face-to-face communication because it usually precedes conceptualisation. I am here

concerned with social perception, i.e. how speakers perceive themselves, their interlocutors and their relationships.

It is often emphasised by psychologists that although human perceptual systems have the same physiology across cultures, perception is subjective. Subjectivity of perception stems from the fact that perception is not just 'seeing'. It is a complex physical and psychological process which involves the interpretation of stimuli received by the perceiver. The body's sensory system receives cues from different stimuli, such as colour, shape, texture, etc. People provide particularly complex perceptual stimuli: physical characteristics, speech patterns, nonverbal behaviour, emotional expressiveness (Lewicki et al. 1997:134). Moreover, different criteria are used to observe friends, family and strangers (Knapp and Hall 2000:140).

Because of the magnitude of stimuli, perception always becomes selective as it has to focus on some stimuli and ignore others. Next the brain transforms sensory data by structuring them in a meaningful way. Human beings are predisposed to apply the following universal principles to organise stimuli: proximity (close elements tend to be perceived as belonging together), similarity (similar elements are often perceived as one segment), closure (tendency to see closed figures), continuation (preference for continuous figures) (Ungerer and Schmid 1996:33). Furthermore, according to the gestalt theory, the brain organises the visual field into the figure which stands out against the ground (ibid.:157).

After the selection of stimuli for cognitive processing and their organisation, they are identified and classified on the basis of knowledge stored in the brain (Ungerer and Schmid 1996:6). These processes may lead to a number of distortions. One of typical distortions is called **selective attention** and is a tendency to perceive on the basis of *personal relevance* and *cognitive consistency*. The former means that perception is

conditioned by expectations, needs, wants and emotional states – namely, human beings tend to notice what they need or want to notice. The latter means that the perceiver tends to incorporate only such new information that fits his/her initial perception and already-established impressions, and to filter out any inconsistent information (Calhoun and Acocella 1990:397-8). Furthermore, each person forms certain unique associations that impact observation (Knapp and Hall 2000:139).

The observer may add information (*assumed content*) to make his/her perception complete. He/she derives information from his/her knowledge structures, including implicit personality theories. These are assumptions and beliefs held by an individual about how personality traits are correlated (Brehm and Kassin 1996:106). For example, the total perception of a person is often organized around one central trait, e.g. warmth, which automatically activates other domains in accordance with the observer's implicit personality theories. As a result, other traits are attributed to this person, e.g. friendliness, helpfulness, etc. Some personality traits are more important than others in perception structuring: “we place these traits at the center of our picture of another person and organize the rest of the picture around them. In the process of bending traits to make them consistent with one another, we tend to bend other traits to conform to the central trait” (Calhoun and Acocella 1990:238-239). Research confirms the highest centrality of the warm-cold trait (ibid.:240), which suggests that observers automatically categorise people as warm or cold.

Another important factor is the *primacy effect* – “the tendency for information presented early in a sequence to have more impact on impressions than information presented later”, i.e. reliance on first impressions (Brehm and Kassin 1996:107). After the first impression is formed, the perceiver will tend to adjust incoming information so that it is consistent with that first impression. Psychologists also mention the impact of

**priming** – the tendency for frequently or recently used concepts to be evoked easily and to influence the interpretation of new information (Brehm and Kassin 1996:104).

Another typical distortion is **stereotyping**. It occurs when the perceiver classifies people solely on the basis of their membership in a particular group and automatically assumes that they have attributes typical for such a group (Lewicki et al. 1997:135). For example, a Briton is perceived as reserved because of the stereotype that the British are reserved. Stereotyping is very common: it is a shortcut which does not require much mental effort. Thus, it economises perception.

The process of **projection** takes place when the perceiver transfers his/her characteristics / feelings onto others. It often results from the need to maintain a positive and consistent self-concept (Lewicki et al. 1997:136). Perception may also be distorted by perceptual defence. Defence is ensured by “screening out, distorting, or ignoring information that we find threatening or otherwise unacceptable” (ibid.:136-7).

To sum up, perception is shaped by universal principles and distortions, but also by culture, stereotypes, individual experiences, psychological factors, and the perceiver’s current state of mind. The foregoing discussion shows that conceptualisation is based on subjective (but also conventional) perception, conceptualisation of relationships and communicative distance is, to a certain degree, subjective and unique to each individual.

## **1.2 Relationships**

The emotional relationship between interlocutors, i.e. psychological distance, depends on idiosyncratic features of participants, but is also governed by universal regularities identified by psychologists. One of the most important determinants of psychological distance is a degree of **familiarity** between interlocutors, i.e. whether they are strangers (large psychological distance) or whether they know each other (smaller psychological distance). Social relations are generally divided into **formal** ones

(connected with an individual's role and position in society), where psychological distance is rather far, and **informal** ones (the social network an individual is part of), which are usually associated with smaller psychological distance. Informal relations are further divided into the following main types, each of which provides different rewards: 1. friendship (acquaintances, friends and close friends); 2. marriage and/or cohabitation; 3. parent-child relationship; 4. relations with siblings and other relatives; 5. relations at work (colleagues and superiors); 6. relations with neighbours. Argyle argues that this cluster of informal relationship types may be found in all cultures because all human beings have the need to develop such relations (1999:156).

Spencer-Oatey presents a summary of social psychology research on **fundamental dimensions of** relationships. Generally, two main dimensions of relationships are distinguished: 1. **vertical** dimension related to dominance, control or status; and 2. **horizontal** dimension related to friendliness and affection. The vertical dimension is rather uncontroversial while the existence of a single horizontal dimension is often questioned: there may be more than one horizontal dimension (1996:16-19). Closeness / distance are often applied by psychologists to describe relationships; however, there is no clear consensus as to the precise meaning of these terms and as to factors that may measure the relative distance/closeness of a relationship. Social psychologists agree that there is no single factor but probably a number of factors. The following factors are most often distinguished: type of relationship, frequency of contact, length of acquaintance, emotional tone of relationship (positive and negative affect); strong, frequent and diverse interdependence, companionship (sharing an experience together, doing something together), consideration (help, concern for the interlocutor's well-being) and communication (self-disclosure) (1996:14-21).

More consensus among social psychologists pertains to factors which have a decisive impact on whether a relationship is evaluated positively as liking (small psychological distance) or negatively as dislike (large psychological distance). One group of factors is connected with the conceptualiser's characteristics, and in particular his/her self-esteem, expectations, social motives, and social difficulties (Brehm and Kassin 1996). Generally, people show two types of social needs:

- **the need for affiliation:** the desire to establish and maintain many interpersonal relationships; focus on the quantity of social contacts;
- **the need for intimacy:** the preference for warm and close relationships; focus on the depth and quality of relations (Brehm and Kassin 1996:166).

People with the need for affiliation will tend to maintain larger psychological distance than those with the need for intimacy. The need for affiliation is typical for extroverts who enjoy social contacts and are outgoing, more assertive and cooperative. They tend to talk more, agree and compliment more, tell more jokes and establish commonalities. They have a specific expressive nonverbal style of interaction: they smile more, look and speak more, and stand closer. They have more friends and more social impact than introverts, who tend to have the need for intimacy. Introverts enjoy close social contacts with friends rather than strangers (Argyle 1999:140). Extroversion/introversion is one of the most important personality aspects because it affects the conceptualiser's social needs and interpersonal behaviour.

Interaction may be disturbed by social difficulties, which include **anxiety** and loneliness. The former is a feeling of discomfort and social awkwardness in the presence of others. It often creates a trap: it causes negative reactions to others, withdrawn and ineffective social behaviour and, in consequence, negative reactions by others (Brehm and Kassin 1996:168). **Loneliness** is a feeling that an individual is deprived of social

relations. It may be social isolation (deprivation of a network of friends; hence a social distance) or emotional isolation (deprivation of a single intense relationship, hence a psychological distance) (ibid.:171). Such difficulties are partly due to the fact that people differ in terms of **social competence** and **social skills**. Social competence is the ability to exert the desired impact on other people in social situations (Argyle 1999:133) and it depends on one's social experience and personality. In respect of communicative distance, **social intelligence** is an important aspect of social competence. Social intelligence is the conceptualiser's knowledge of social situations and norms, and ability to manage his/her relations (Argyle 1999:138). It has been recently emphasised that social intelligence comprises **emotional intelligence** which includes the following: 1. self-awareness: knowledge of one's own emotions; 2. managing emotions: ability to express emotions in accordance with social and cultural norms; and 3. empathy: the ability to understand the interlocutor's emotions, to adopt his/her point of view and to manage his/her emotions (Goleman 1997). At the linguistic level, social and emotional intelligence is demonstrated through **communicative competence**, which is the speaker's ability to use language effectively and appropriately (Trudgill 1992:17) in order to handle relationships; to interpret verbal messages sent by the interlocutor and to integrate them with other nonverbal cues.

Another group of factors that impact the evaluation of relationships is related to the characteristics of the hearer or both interlocutors. First of all, it is important how the speaker conceptualises the hearer and his/her personality (e.g. friendly, sociable, rude, suspicious, aggressive, dominant, etc.). Another factor is **physical attractiveness**, which impacts first impressions (primacy effect) and elicits more favourable responses (Calhoun and Acecella 1990:242-245). Major determinants of attraction and liking are **proximity** due to repeated exposure, expectations of further interaction and availability

(minimal effort/low costs), and **familiarity** (more frequent contacts). Another factor is **similarity** (demographic, personality, mood, physical attractiveness and attitudinal), **complementarity**, and **reciprocity** (balanced relationships: people like those who like them and do things for them) (Brehm and Kassin 1996:182-193). The latter is connected with **rewards** people derive from relationships: both *direct rewards*, such as attention, support, anchorage in social networks, understanding, access to valuable commodities, rewarding personal characteristics (beauty, intelligence, sense of humour) and *rewards by association*, i.e. people like those who are associated with a positive rewarding experience although they are not responsible for that experience. Rewarding experiences “create a positive emotional response, which strengthens our desire to be with that individual” (Brehm and Kassin 1996:164). According to social psychologists, interpersonal attraction (and evaluation of relationships) is based on the calculation of perceived costs and rewards: this process is automatic and natural in real life (cf. Calhoun and Acecella 1990).

Two of the above factors, *perceived* similarity and familiarity, are decisive for the **inclusive** or **exclusive** categorisation of interlocutors into the in-group (i.e. insiders, us) or the out-group (i.e. outsiders, strangers, them), respectively. In-group members are conceptualised as similar and *close* to the speaker while out-group members are conceptualised as different and *distant*. The in-group is stereotypically evaluated positively and the out-group negatively, which reflects the simplified schematic conceptualisation of people as friends or enemies (Nowak 2002:63). The in-group/out-group categorisation of the interlocutor impacts the entire communication process (and in particular the choice of linguistic units).

### 1.3 Gender Differences

Another variable which impacts the conceptualisation of communicative distance is gender. It should be emphasised that there are far more similarities than differences regarding gender differences in communication. In some contexts differences may be quite significant while in others they are outweighed by other socio-cultural variables (i.e. class, education, race, age). As a result, there is a substantial diversity in communication practices within each gender group.

It is often stressed that gender differences, in particular gender-specific psyches, result from nurture rather than nature due to the socialisation process (Meunier 1996). From an early age boys and girls grow up in different worlds: boys are usually involved in competitive hierarchical games while girls play in small groups where the centre is their best friend (Tannen 1999:36-42). Different norms and expectations of society about female and male behaviour result in the development of distinct cognitive models, worldviews and hierarchies of values.

According to Deborah Tannen, women focus on relationships, interconnectedness and intimacy. They believe in symmetry and closeness of people. Men tend to focus on control, status, power and independence. They believe in asymmetry of people and their place in social hierarchy (1999). Since these goals are realised through communication, men and women hold different attitudes, norms, expectations and interpretations of language use, including “the form and function of friendly conversation” (Hannah and Murachver 1999). This leads to the development of distinct conversational styles, called *genderlects*. As shown in Table 2, women focus on rapport and the affective function of language while men focus on report and the referential function of language (Talbot 1998:98-101):

**Table 2. Gender differences: conversational style**

<b>CONVERSATIONAL STYLE</b>	
<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
sympathy (problem-sharing) rapport listening private talk connection supportive intimacy	problem-solving (giving advice) report lecturing public talk status oppositional independence

**Source:** based on Talbot (1998:98)

Female conversational style “tends to be collaborative rather than competitive” (R. Lakoff 1990:204). For women conversation is the way to connect with other people, establish affiliation and solidarity with interlocutors, find commonalities, share confidences, and consolidate relationships (Tannen 1999:70-94). As a result, women are more polite, more socioemotional and more facilitative during interaction since they are responsive listeners highly involved in maintaining a conversation (Hannah and Murachver 1999). Furthermore, women are better receivers of nonverbal messages than men (Knapp and Hall 2000:143) and are more sensitive to interlocutors’ feelings (Tannen 1999:250). Thus, they are more willing to compromise, avoid reproach, attenuate criticism, give compliments and express appreciation (Hannah and Murachver 1999).

Male conversational style is more competitive and assertive. Men tend to use language as a tool to negotiate and maintain status and independence, attract attention and demonstrate their expertise (Tannen 1999). Men have been reported as less polite, less cooperative and less facilitative during interaction. They more frequently brag, use insults, verbal abuse and jousting. Their talk is focused on mutual activities rather than relationships (Hannah and Murachver 1999).

As shown in the Table above, communicative behaviours may differ depending on a type of setting. Men have been shown to talk more in formal or public situations, which are a ground for competitiveness and self-display. They talk less in private: they often become quiet and uncommunicative at home. Women tend to talk more in private and at home (Meunier 1996), in particular to other females about interrelational topics. In this way, they establish small psychological distance with the interlocutor by negotiating the common ground, values and attitudes (Tannen 1999:95-122). Conversations are essential to female friendships, which often start with gossip, talking about secrets, private matters (ibid.:97). When men talk with their friends, they mainly discuss impersonal topics, such as sport, politics and business. If they raise interrelational topics, they focus on institutions, power and status relations, financial plans, etc. (ibid.:100-101).

These facts may suggest that men are less prone to develop close and intimate communication and relationships. However, it is claimed that both genders “have similar desires for intimacy. Because of different socially constructed meanings of intimacy, however, men may not express intimacy in ways that women hear (and vice versa)” (Twohey and Ewing 1995). Thus, men understand and achieve intimacy differently: through shared interest and activities rather than through self-disclosure. When they self-disclose, they tend to “disclose strengths and conceal weaknesses to a greater degree than women” (ibid.). As a result, male intimacy is often interpreted as nonintimacy.

Another important issue is that female and male communicative behaviour is different in same-sex and mixed-sex dyads. Both women and men reduce their gender-specific styles of conversation when talking to the opposite gender. However, women adjust more to the presence of men by masculinising their own speech while men are less likely to adopt a feminine conversational style when talking to women (Meunier 1996). Both women and men are careful to depart from gender stereotypes only within socially

acceptable limits otherwise they are pejoratively evaluated as *unwomanly*, *unfeminine*, *Dragon Lady* (women)<sup>27</sup> and *unmanly* or *effeminate* (men)<sup>28</sup>.

As far as English is concerned, evidence for gender differences in communication is substantial, but there is little research on Polish. Since the role and status of women is similar in Polish and British culture, it may be assumed that certain general aspects of language use, such as conversational styles, worldviews and hierarchies of values, will be similar. Minor differences may be expected at a more specific level of language.

In view of the above discussed gender differences, it is evident that men and women have different evaluative frames for the conceptualisation of relationships; hence, communicative distance. It may be hypothesised that women will keep smaller physical, psychological and social distance than men.

## 2. Cultural Factors

It has already been noted that each language user is immersed in culture and speech always occurs in a cultural context. This section sets out to analyse the relationship between culture and language and the role of British and Polish culture in the conceptualisation of communicative distance.

Because of its complexity, the concept of culture is a much contested topic. Culture has a large number of various definitions depending on the methodological framework, research perspective and objectives. In 1957, Ward Goodenough proposed a noteworthy definition, which lay foundations for a cognitive view of culture adopted by cognitive anthropologists:

“... a society’s culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members, and do so in any role that they accept for any one of themselves. Culture, being what people have to learn as distinct from their

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<sup>27</sup> In Polish: *niekobieca*, *babochłop*, *chłopczyca*.

<sup>28</sup> In Polish: *niemęski*, *zniewieściał*, *laluś*.

biological heritage, must consist of the end product of learning: knowledge, in a most general, if relative, sense of the term. By this definition, we should note that culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behaviour, or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the forms of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them.” (qtd. in Duranti 1997:27)

This definition emphasises the role of convention (culture enables socially acceptable behaviour), as well as the nature/nurture dichotomy (culture is not inborn but learnt through socialisation). Goodenough sees culture as knowledge which includes a certain worldview, patterns of thinking and communication, patterns of understanding and evaluating the world, and making inferences (Duranti 1997:27). Thus, according to this definition, culture resides solely inside a person’s mind.

However, this issue arises controversy. Hutchins notes that this view totally ignores the material side of culture. Instead, he sees culture as a cognitive process which occurs both in an individual’s mental operations and outside the mind (1995:354). Culture is “knowledge and habits of thinking, on the one hand, and out-there-in-the world as objects, interactions, communicative behaviors, on the other” (P. Brown 2002:13). In this view, culture is both knowledge and objects. It is manifested at a number of levels. Table 3 presents a modification of culture manifestation models proposed by Hofstede (1994:8-9), Spencer-Oatey (2000:5) and Brown (2002:32). The first level of culture manifestations is the most implicit one while the last level is the most explicit (external and supraindividual) one.

**Table 3. Manifestations of culture**

Level of culture	Manifestation
<b>Shared mental structures</b>	Semiotic systems, knowledge, ideas, beliefs, attitudes, values, interpretative patterns, emotional habits, cultural models, cognitive styles
<b>Shared rituals and behaviour</b>	Gestures, ways of greetings, ceremonies, behavioural styles, interactional ethos, public rhetoric

<b>Shared systems and institutions</b>	Education, government, law and order, health care, family life
<b>Shared objects, artefacts</b>	Tools, knowledge technologies, works of art, literature, etc.

All the levels of culture are **intersubjectively shared** by members of a speech community. Peter Harder’s claim about the paradox of social constructs is also valid for culture: “individual minds make possible the creation of properties whose ontological grounding transcends the individual mind” (1999:206). Culture exists by virtue of the mental powers of individuals but it is internalised through socialization. Being a social construct, culture is often referred to as “the collective programming of the mind” / “software of the mind” (Hofstede 1994:4). Yet, culture is unequally distributed: each person belongs to a unique set of communities at the same time (a nation, regional/ethnic/religious community, linguistic community, gender group, generation, social class, etc. (ibid.:10)). Consequently, every individual has different knowledge of and experiences with respective levels of culture; hence, he/she internalises culture in a unique way.

I adopt the latter view of culture, i.e. that culture is both material and non-material. However, as a cognitive linguist, I am most interested in non-material aspects of culture, and in particular how cultural knowledge and values are internalised and activated for purposes of meaning construction. Thus, within Cognitive Linguistics, the key focus is placed on the first two levels (mental structures and rituals/behaviour) because they have the largest impact on communication. Systems/institutions and objects/artefacts, as such, fall beyond the main scope of linguistic research; however, an individual’s knowledge of such systems/institutions and objects/artefacts does not.

This leads to a question what the relationship between culture and language is. Most theories of culture agree that language has an important role in the analysis of

culture. It is “a social tool that is both a product and an instrument of culture” (Duranti 1997:50). In fact, the relationship between culture and language flows in two directions: culture impacts language *and* language impacts culture.

Let us first consider the impact of language on culture. It is impossible to understand a culture without its language. Language is often seen as the key to culture (Brown 2002:11) and it forms part of cultural heritage, being an archive of experiences stored by generations. For example, Wierzbicka claims that cultures may be understood through their key words<sup>29</sup>: “Language – and in particular vocabulary – is the best evidence of the reality of ‘culture’, in the sense of a historically transmitted system of ‘conceptions’ and attitudes” (1998:54). Furthermore, language is both an evaluative tool and a source of information about the axiological system of a given culture and national identity (Bartmiński 2000).

This issue was earlier addressed by 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century German philosophers<sup>30</sup>. According to Wilhelm von Humboldt, each language contains a different cognitive perspective/worldview - *Weltansicht* (Anusiewicz 1990:280). It also inspired a number of Polish linguists who research the linguistic image of the world (the so-called *JOŚ*), i.e. an interpretation and classification of the reality contained in language (Bartmiński 1990:110; 2000). It is also worth mentioning George Lakoff, who claims that languages (in particular metaphors) encode folk theories of experience (1987).

The relationship between language, culture and thought was further examined by the **Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis**, which has a radical version called **linguistic determinism** and a weak version called **linguistic relativism**. According to the former, language determines the way of thinking and perceiving the world. Language is a prison: “you grow up in a language, and that language shapes the way you see the world, the way you

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<sup>29</sup> cf. Mondry and Taylor (1998) for methodological problems connected with the relationship between cultural values and the semantics of natural language.

think about it, the consciousness you have of it” (Agar 1994:67). The strong version is difficult to uphold and most linguists adopt its weaker version: language influences thinking and predisposes particular worldviews (Mesthrie et al. 2000:6). It provides a complex system of categories for classification and conceptualisation of experience. As Hawkins emphasises, speakers learn to conceptualise their experience in the way which is conventional in a given speech community: “We may not become permanent prisoners of these modes of conceptualising our experience, as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis suggests we do, but we remain comfortable operating within this set of conventions as long as we invest ourselves in the particular speech community” (1997:25). Thus, speakers use conventionalised ways of conceptualisation and expression because it facilitates communication. The consequence of relativism is that it is difficult to provide an objective account of culture as the researcher always looks through the pair of spectacles imposed by his/her culture.

The second direction is the impact of culture on language. The most obvious impact of culture is manifested in lexicon. Vocabulary is regarded as a means of adaptation to the cultural environment: it is “elaborated in the direction of what is considered adaptively important in that culture” (Ferraro 1990:53). Thus, languages reflect cultural emphasis in their vocabulary. For example, each language has culture-specific words which have no equivalents in other languages since they stand for concepts and collective experience which are unique to a given speech community (Wierzbicka 1990:95). Furthermore, concepts which are particularly salient in a given culture are reflected in the frequency and status of corresponding words (Ferraro 1990:53).

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<sup>30</sup> cf. Anusiewicz 1990 for a detailed discussion of Herder, Humboldt, Weisgerber, Gipper and others.

However, the impact of culture on language is much deeper and goes beyond vocabulary. In fact, it is impossible to understand language without its cultural context. Language is a cultural practice (Duranti 1997:23) as it always takes place in a cultural environment. This claim is also maintained by Cognitive Linguistics, which adopts an encyclopaedic view of meaning. Culture is internalised by each language user in cognitive domains and cultural models which are subconsciously and automatically activated during conceptualisation. Each culture forms a unique set of cultural models which are shared by members of a speech community to a certain degree. Their internalisation is both subject to convention and idiosyncratic experience.

In the process of communication, the interlocutors' cultural knowledge is always evoked in the ground and shapes their background assumptions and expectations, one of the dimensions of imagery. Culture impacts an individual's psychological makeup by providing beliefs, attitudes, core values, as well as patterns of understanding the world and patterns of interaction. It is involved in the process of perception, interpretation and evaluation. It may be concluded that culture provides evaluative frames for the conceptualisation of communicative distance between interlocutors.

## **2.1 British Culture**

It should be stressed at the very beginning that British and Polish cultures have a large number of similarities which "stem from the European cultural tradition based on Greco-Roman heritage" (Kalisz 1993:117), Christianity and the common Indo-European origin of the two languages. Differences may be found at a more specific level, i.e. the Slavonic origin of Polish culture and Anglo-Saxon origin of British culture. However, it falls beyond the scope of this dissertation to present a detailed and systematic description of British and Polish culture. The discussion will be focused only on such similarities and differences which are relevant for the relationship between interlocutors.

The term *British* poses some methodological difficulties. In principle, it applies to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, i.e. it is an amalgam of English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish cultures. However, the British identity is in decline: a majority of Britons think of themselves as primarily English, Scottish or Welsh, not British (Davis 2002:179). Since about 80 per cent of the UK population is English<sup>31</sup>, British culture is predominantly English: in other words, English is a privileged ethnicity. In consequence, the terms *British* and *English* are often used interchangeably as synonyms, especially by the English (Davis 2002:184).

Any attempt to describe a national character is inevitably based on stereotypes. Stereotyping distorts social perception; nevertheless, it is an omnipresent routine phenomenon which functions as a mental shortcut to facilitate orientation in the world (see page 61). Within Cognitive Linguistics, a stereotype is defined as “an idealized representation of a category prototype, which may – and often does – depart from the real life cases. It is a conventionalised image of an object – G. Lakoff’s Idealized Cognitive Model, a folk model of a fragment of the world” (Tabakowska 1995:1). Such a stereotypical folk model is highly emotional and evaluative because it is filtered through the culture-specific system of norms, values, beliefs and attitudes (Bartmiński and Panasiuk 1993:385). Thus, stereotypes provide interesting information not only about the most striking differences and salient features of a national character seen from the perspective of another nation, but also about the culture which forms such stereotypes.

Let us first analyse the stereotype of the British held by other cultures. The opinion poll “*Through other eyes: How the world sees the United Kingdom*”<sup>32</sup> (1999) presents a generally favourable view of the UK as an influential and stable country and a

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<sup>31</sup> *Elektroniczna encyklopedia i słownik ortograficzny PWN*. CD-ROM. Warszawa 2002.

<sup>32</sup> *Through other eyes: How the world sees the United Kingdom*. The findings of research into the attitudes of young professionals in thirteen countries (e.g. France, Germany, USA, Poland, China, Japan, Brazil, Egypt, Russia, etc.) carried out by MORI on behalf of the British Council. October 1999.

negative image on a personal level. The survey shows that the British are seen as cold, reserved, aloof, unadventurous and unwelcoming to outsiders, difficult to get to know by foreigners, conservative, snobbish and arrogant.

Other surveys quoted in the above mentioned report confirm these findings. The only more positive image of British personal qualities was obtained in the international version of the *C'est bon to be British* survey<sup>33</sup>. As many as 56% of responders said that British people were not reserved and they had become more friendly in the last five years (29%). Furthermore, the British were characterised as polite, friendly, well-dressed, intelligent, approachable, sophisticated, but also snobbish.

As far as Polish attitudes are concerned, the UK ranked third as the most liked country among Poles (51% of responders)<sup>34</sup>. It should be noted that Poles' knowledge about Britons and Britons' knowledge about Poles are indirect as only ca. 5% of Poles visited Great Britain and 4% of Britons have visited Poland; this knowledge is mainly shaped by the mass media and books.<sup>35</sup> As other nations, Poles hold the image of reserved, detached and cold Britons, but they admire English *sang-froid*, i.e. coolness and calm (Pl. *angielska flegma*) (Pisarkowa 1976:18). As a result of these characteristics, interpersonal relations are perceived by Poles as deprived of cordiality and spontaneity<sup>36</sup>. Other features present in the Polish stereotype of the British include: eccentricity, fairness, conservatism, hypocrisy, openness of mind, matter-of-fact attitude towards kids, emotional restraint, sense of humour, politeness, good manners, and snobbishness (Tabakowska 1995:6)<sup>37</sup>. It may be noted that the stereotype has remained unchanged since at least the seventies. In the late nineties, similar findings were obtained by the

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<sup>33</sup> *C'est bon to be British. Survey 1997. International Detail*. Quentin Bell Organisation. It was conducted in six countries (Japan, South Africa, India, USA, Germany, France).

<sup>34</sup> CBOS opinion poll: "Czy Polacy lubią inne narody?" Warsaw, January 2003.

<sup>35</sup> CBOS opinion poll: "Brytyjczycy i Polacy o sobie i wzajemnych kontaktach." 2001. Report No. 2487 by Michał Strzeszewski. The poll was conducted in Poland by CBOS and in the UK by ICM Research.

MORI survey (1999): according to Poles, main British strengths include tradition, culture, heritage, economy, and political situation. Main weaknesses are related to human qualities: 1. tradition, conservatism, stasis; 2. lack of interest in Europe; 3. xenophobia, narrow-mindedness, unfriendliness; 4. conflict in Northern Ireland; 5. pride and self-importance<sup>38</sup>. However, certain changes in the stereotype have been reported by the CBOS 2001 opinion poll: two thirds of Poles think that Britons are well-educated, tidy and modern and fifty per cent think that they are entrepreneurial, disciplined, efficient and responsible<sup>39</sup>. Polish managers perceive Britons as well-organised phlegmatic and patient bureaucrats who are cold and reserved, but also relaxed and informal (Chapman et al. 2002).

The British national character involves two clashing images of Stodgy Old England and New Britain. Most stereotypes are based on the former image, which is mainly rooted in traditional British values and features, such as: individualism, privacy, class-consciousness, conservatism, formalism, politeness, reserve and self-control. British culture may be generally classified as individualist (the primacy of individual), non-contact (avoidance of contact) and low-context (high reliance on paralanguage)<sup>40</sup>. **Individualist** societies think in terms of “I”, evaluate independence positively and interdependence negatively (Hofstede 1994:67). They believe in self-reliance: “we are the architects of our own destiny” (Murdoch 1999:62-63). This is much in line with Wierzbicka’s claim that British culture “places special emphasis on the rights and on the autonomy of every individual, which abhors inference in other people’s affairs (...), which is tolerant of individual idiosyncrasies and peculiarities, which respects everyone’s

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<sup>36</sup> “Polak, Anglik – dwa bratanki” within the *Polaków Portret Własny* television series; 29 November 2001, TV2 channel.

<sup>37</sup> See also footnote 35.

<sup>38</sup> cf. *Attitudes Towards Britain and the British. Poland. Research Study Conducted for the British Council. MORI Social Research. May-August 1999.*

<sup>39</sup> See footnote 35.

privacy, which approves of compromises and disapproves of dogmatism of any kind” (1991:30).

In the case of the UK, individualism appears also at the national level. The British have **island mentality**, which means that they regard themselves as distinct from Europe and the Europeans. Another prototypical feature of Stodgy Old England is **conservatism** and related formalism. The British are often perceived as class-ridden and class-conscious society, where ritual and social protocol are of large importance. In the idealised cognitive model held by Britons and other nations, the UK is a country of **gentlemen** with perfect manners (Rosiak 2001:30). As a gentleman, an ideal Briton is polite, hence, self-controlled<sup>41</sup>: the British “have a world-wide reputation for their reserve and self-control unless they are intoxicated football fans” (Weightman 1997). Uncontrolled displays of emotion are considered embarrassing, improper and vulgar because in the Western tradition emotions are negatively associated with irrationality, weakness and antithesis to reason (Wierzbicka 1991:54). However, it should be noted that self-control is characteristic of upper classes: “the higher the class the more extensive and elaborate are the taboos against contact”; physical contact is more acceptable in rural lower-class environments (Goffman 1967:63).

It is claimed that this idealised cognitive model of Britishness is deeply ingrained in the past and applies to a small portion of British society - namely, aristocracy and the upper class. It means that the concept of Britishness is accessed through the stereotype pertaining only to the upper class. The authors of the *Through Other Eyes* report partly blame Hollywood for creating such stereotypes: “on the big screen we British are variously portrayed as lovably eccentric and as pompous stuffed shirts harbouring

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<sup>40</sup> The last two classes will be discussed in detail in the section on nonverbal communication (p. 103).

feelings of superiority over other people just by virtue of our being British.”<sup>42</sup> In fact, the British have quite a different view of themselves (an autostereotype). The *C'est bon to be British*<sup>43</sup> survey (1997) asked the British how, in their opinion, foreigners would see them. The results show that the British have a very positive image of their personal qualities: they see themselves as polite, friendly, and approachable. Only one in ten responders thought that the British would be called boring, rude, aggressive and snobbish.

The disparity between the autostereotype and international stereotypes may be also due to the fact that the British have been undergoing substantial transformations, especially in the last two decades. There were several significant events of political importance, e.g. reorientation towards less class-ridden society (meritocracy replaced aristocracy in the government (cf. Sinha and Lock 1998)), integration with the European Union, end of imperialism – Hong Kong, devolution from Scotland and Wales, and New Labour's landslide victory. As a result, Stodgy Old England is being replaced with the image of **New Britain / cool Britannia**. The central part of New Labour's programme was to modernise national character and culture. In 1997, Tony Blair's election manifesto promoted the idea of rebranding Britain into a young, modern, stylish and less formal country: 'cool Britannia' (C. Johnson 2002:166). Blair won the elections also because he projected himself as “a warm, spontaneous, caring person determined to remedy the evils of 'cold' conservatism” (Mergenthal 1998).

Is New Britain merely part of Tony Blair's propaganda? The very fact that this 'un-British' self-projection and the idea of cool Britannia were accepted by allegedly cold

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<sup>41</sup> Jane Austen describes self-control as a conventional mask: “[the greeting] succeeding in the true English style, burying under a calmness that seemed all but indifference, the real attachment which would have led either of them, if requisite, to do every thing for the good of the other.” (*Emma*. Penguin Books, 1994:77-78).

<sup>42</sup> p. 47.

<sup>43</sup> *C'est bon to be British. Survey 1997. British Tables*. Quentin Bell Organisation.

and formal British society is evidence of transformation. Other evidence may be found in the unprecedented emotional outcry after Diana's death. As 'the Queen of Hearts', Diana was associated with warmth, emotional openness, spontaneity and "new, more humane, more caring and more feminine Britain" (Sinha and Lock 1998). In the idealised cognitive model of traditional society, the British are not expected to "indulge in great surges of popular emotions"; yet, the British public astonished the world by inventing "quite un-British rituals the sea of flowers, the trees and lamp-posts ringed with candles, the home-made icons and teddy bears, the outpouring of doggerel verse" (Weightman 1997). The Royal Family was heavily criticised for their restrained and controlled behaviour and failure to capture the popular mood: "they have been far too British for the current British mood" (Weightman 1997). As a result, their popularity plummeted and 81% of the surveyed Britons said that the Royal Family should become much more informal (Mergenthal 1998).

This widespread collective grief was a signal and result of transformation: the nation is evolving into the more open, caring and multicultural society. The transformation is very deep because it is associated with the breakdown in the perceived appropriateness of inherited cultural values related to Britishness (Sinha and Lock 1998). It is now trendy to be spontaneous, open and relaxed. In particular, young people want to have high 'street cred' (credibility), i.e. be anonymous, not to stand out in the crowd, which points to anti-individualism (Rosiak 2001:57). At the linguistic level, high 'street cred' may be achieved by the rapidly spreading Estuary English, which is adopted as a neutral accent (Coggle 1993:87) in contrast to the RP, which loses its status of a prestige variety. Other linguistic examples will be discussed in Part III of the dissertation.

It is claimed that nowadays the most offensive thing to be said to a Briton is that he/she has no sense of humour (Parry 1994). Half a century earlier, according to George

Orwell, the most hateful name was Nosey Parker, “which can hardly be true today, given the invasive tabloid press, television soap operas, fly-on-the-wall documentaries and the broadcast of home videos” (Parry 1994). The traditional British value *privacy* contrasts with the obsessive interest of paparazzi and tabloids in the private life of public figures (as buyers, British readers create the market for such information). Another ‘un-British’ phenomenon is high popularity of voyeuristic entertainment called reality TV shows, e.g. *Big Brother*, *Castaway*, *Survivor*. The British television is no longer a bastion of conservatism; as a result of the downmarket attempt to win more viewers, popular culture is winning on. This trend may be illustrated with **Big Brother**, which attracts huge audiences all over the world. Viewers are both Peeping Toms and Big Brothers: they watch and vote who is to be evicted. Surprisingly, the show is also very popular in privacy-loving Britain. The 2000 final attracted ca. 10 million viewers, which was a 56% share of the viewing (Cozens 2000). Another ‘un-British’ TV show is the Weakest Link. Broadcast by the BBC, the show involves the ritual humiliation of contestants. The hostess’s cruel comments enjoy high popularity in the country of gentlemen.

To sum up, Britain is now a modern country undergoing deep transformations which also pertain to cultural values. It is easy to find counterexamples to most of the typically British features: gentlemen versus intoxicated football hooligans and drivers; individualism versus street cred; privacy versus popularity of Big Brother, tabloids and paparazzi; reserve versus emotional outcry after Diana’s death; island mentality versus integration with the EU. These transformations are not complete yet and the British change within certain limits. Despite these changes, stereotypes have remained the same for years and now there are two conflicting images of the UK: Stodgy Old England (idealised folk model held by other cultures) versus Cool Britannia (idealised folk model

held by a large number of Britons). It is important to bear recent transformations in mind and not to be influenced by popular stereotypes in linguistic research.

What are the evaluative frames provided by British culture for conceptualisation of the relationship between interlocutors? Wierzbicka claims that “in the Anglo-Saxon culture distance is a positive cultural value, associated with respect for the autonomy of the individual” (1991:37). This statement is consistent with traditional British values: individualism, privacy, reserve, self-control and emotional constraint (and deeply encoded beliefs as to what is proper). The British still seem to be culturally predisposed to maintain larger physical distance, as well as psychological distance because of self-control and social distance as class-conscious society. However, in light of recent transformations, and in particular cultural re-orientation towards warmth, spontaneity and informality, it may be reasonably expected that distances will be shorter. For this reason, Wierzbicka’s claim about the positive evaluation of distance in British culture (and association of distance mainly with the respect axis) may be problematic at some points.

## **2.2 Polish Culture**

Different methodological difficulties are connected with Polish culture. It is changing together with entire Poland, which has undergone deep economic and mental transformations since the fall of Communism in the late eighties. The last 15 years may be called the transition period; however, Polish society is not fully transformed yet. With high unemployment and recession, a part of it still lives in the past while another part is modern, upwardly mobile and feels European. Therefore, it may be expected that some of traditional Polish cultural values and attitudes are no longer applicable to the latter.

Let us start with the ICM of a Pole held by other cultures. Poland is often perceived as a typical backward post-communist country. The stereotype of a Pole is not very positive, either. For example, Poles are dirty and drunk for the French; pathetic for the

Czech; Catholic, double-faced and rebellious for Russians (Bartmiński and Panasiuk 1993:380), and nationalistic, lazy, corrupt and uneconomic for the Germans (e.g. *Polnische Wirtschaft*) (Chapman et al. 2002), who hold the most hostile image. Foreign managers who work in Poland emphasise that Poles love excuses, are impatient, want to be told what they are to do (Murdoch 1999:207). It should be noted that, in contrast to the stereotype of the British, which applies to the upper class, the stereotype of a Pole is often related to the lower social class.

The stereotype of a Pole held by the British is more positive than the average: although Poland is often perceived as a remote, faraway and unfamiliar country, it ranked second as the most liked country among the British (38% of responders)<sup>44</sup>. As already noted, the British do not have many direct contacts with Poles; as a result, the image of a Pole and Poland is fuzzy and not well defined<sup>45</sup>. The British stereotype is mainly shaped by: 1. Polish airmen who took part in the Battle of Britain; and 2. Solidarity and Lech Wałęsa – large contribution to freedom in Eastern Europe and the resulting strong pro-Poland sentiments. The Poles are seen as hopeless romantics, heroic but reckless and irresponsible. However, this image is changing due to “the increasing warmth of British commercial and business attitudes to Poland” and foreign investments in Poland (Oborski 1999). In general, the image is positive: other more recent features associated with Poles are: religious and hard-working, disciplined, responsible and friendly<sup>46</sup>, open, spontaneous and crazy, but also impulsive and impatient.<sup>47</sup> It is interesting to note that the British are very open to personal contacts with Poles (75% would accept a Pole as a neighbour, colleague or a friend). The image of Poland as a country is much worse than

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<sup>44</sup> See footnote 39.

<sup>45</sup> See footnote 35.

<sup>46</sup> See footnote 39.

<sup>47</sup> See footnote 36.

the image of a Pole<sup>48</sup>. The survey conducted by Chapman et al. among British managers who work in Poland (hence, they have direct experience) shows that they see Poles as a transforming society where younger generation is well-educated and not affected by Communism. Polish negative national features include tendency to evade responsibility, avoidance to question the decisions of their superiors, need of authority to perform their job well, excessive respect for authority, and reluctance to take any decisions (2002).

The Poles do not hold a very high opinion of themselves. They describe themselves as: religious, patriotic, hospitable, tolerant, sociable, friendly, warm-hearted, proud, brave and chivalrous. However, negative features are more dominant and they include: envy, hatred, nationalism, jealousy, hot temper, irritability, recklessness, querulousness, impatience, drunkenness, dishonesty (cf. Szadura 1993:253, Bartmiński and Panasiuk 1993:380, Lewandowski 1995: fn.35). The autostereotype is less positive than the stereotype held by the British. It may confirm the claim that Poles are a nation with inferiority complexes: they perceive Western Europeans as better than themselves (Zarembina 1998).

I will now discuss the Polish national character as perceived subjectively by Poles. Polish identity is based on values from the following sources: 1. pan-Slavonic, 2. Christianity, 3. Greco-Roman, 4. Western European, 5. nobility and land owners, 6. peasantry. The combination of these values gives the (multi-dimensional and multi-layer) Polish mentality (Bartmiński 2000).

Polish culture is a contact, high-context and predominantly collectivist culture with increasingly more individualist features. **Collectivist** cultures think in terms of 'we'; focus on social groups and their interests, relationships; avoid confrontations and maintain harmony (Hofstede 1994:67). In collectivist societies independence is evaluated

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<sup>48</sup> See footnote 36.

negatively while social interdependence is positive. Collectivism of Polish culture was certainly influenced by over 40 years of Communist history, on the one hand, and Catholicism, on the other hand. In particular, the family and its interests take priority over a Pole's individual interest (in principle, family is more important than work) and Poles also value friendship highly. However, Polish culture has always shown certain signs of individualism, which may be exemplified by the old Polish saying *musi to na Rusi, w Polsce jak kto chce* (lit. you do as you have to in Ruthenia, you do as you want in Poland). Moreover, foreign managers emphasise that Poles are not very good at teamwork due to intrigues, envy and reluctance to contribute their efforts to the success of the entire team (Murdoch 1999:211). It is also noted that, due to social and mental transformations, perceptions of an individual are changing (ibid.:81). In sum, Polish culture is not prototypically collectivist, but it is not as individualist as US or UK cultures.

This partial individualism of Polish culture is connected with love of **freedom**, which earlier combined with pride and haughtiness rooted in Sarmatian values. However, in contrast to the British, Poles attach more value to freedom of their nation/country, rather than that of an individual. It is reflected in Polish culture-specific words, such as *Bóg* (God), *Honor* (Honour), *Ojczyzna* (Homeland) (Bartmiński 2000). Because of Polish history, Poles often fought for freedom of their country with high patriotism and courage: always ready to die for their country (which is perceived not as recklessness, but as martyrdom and heroism). In Polish culture, national **mythology** and history are important, and in particular, the 19<sup>th</sup> century Romantic poets' vision of Poland as the Messiah of nations / Winkelried of nations, and the resulting belief that Poland's suffering will bring salvation to other nations (Davis 2002:58). Although this Romantic mythology has been dying out since the late 80's, Poles still think of themselves as better

than other nations in terms of morality, religion and ethics, which is often interpreted as a way to mask national complexes (Wojtach 2002:17).

Another myth deeply ingrained in the Polish mentality is that Poland is the bulwark of Christianity, i.e. it a defender of Catholic Europe (Davis 2002:52-3). Up till now, the prototypical Pole is believed to be a **Catholic** (just as a prototypical Briton is a gentleman). The Catholic Church played an important role in the fight against Communism and because of Catholicism, the influence of Communism on the Polish psyche was not very deep. It should be noted that the role of Catholic church is changing and it is much smaller than 15 years ago. However, Poles believe that they will contribute true religion, true values and true Catholicism to the European Union (Wojtach 2002:14).

The above discussion shows that in the folk model held by themselves, Poles are convinced of the unique and heroic role of Poland in Europe and their involvement in deep moral and spiritual issues, idealism, and symbolism. Poles like to think they have a deep Slavonic soul in contrast to empty and superficial Europeans. As for the interpersonal level, the following cultural values are mentioned as typically Polish: cordiality, spontaneity, hospitality and courtesy (Wierzbicka 1991). As in other Slavonic cultures, **cordiality** combines with warmth and affection through expressive derivation (Wierzbicka 1991:50). **Hospitality** is connected with the Polish-specific hectoring style of offers and suggestions (ibid.:51) and it is well reflected in proverbs, such as *Nigdzie gościnność taka jak u Polaka* (lit. nowhere will you find greater hospitality than at a Pole's) or *Gość w dom, Bóg w dom* (lit. whenever a guest comes to you home, God also visits it) (cf. Szadura 1993:253), which sharply contrast with the English *My home is my castle*.

**Courtesy** is a “ceremonial show of respect for every individual person (and especially for women). There is in Polish culture, alongside cordiality and spontaneity, an element of ceremony, of somewhat ritualised courtesy and chivalry. (...) Courtesy is not in conflict with cordiality, but it imposes on it certain ritual forms, a certain ceremoniality” (Wierzbicka 1991:56). It should be noted that courtesy, respect and certain restraint are prototypically applied to people who are not classified as ‘one’s own territory’, i.e. strangers, distant acquaintances and superiors (out-group). On the other hand, friends, family, and subordinates are classified as ‘own territory’ (in-group) and treated informally, unceremoniously and even despotically (Duszak 1998:273) since such behaviour is often a signal of emotional closeness.

Polish culture also has different patterns and evaluation of emotional expression. In contrast to the British taboo on display of emotions, Poles are characterised by high emotional expressiveness related to a wide range of both positive and negative emotions. Wierzbicka claims that “Polish culture values what might be called uninhibited emotional expression” (1991:121). Displays of emotion are less controlled than in Western cultures; however, they *are* inhibited by convention, in particular, concerning positive emotions. It is often emphasised that the Polish street does not have a happy face. Poles are happy in private: they are smiling and cordial at home. Only 23% of Poles think it is proper to talk about one’s happiness (Mistewicz and Świdorska 2000:78) since the projection of oneself as a successful and optimistic person is regarded as immodest.

What is specific to all Slavonic cultures is an uninhibited public expression of negative emotions, such as anger, irritation, sadness, discontent, depression and frustration. In Western cultures, it is proper to mask frustration with optimism. In Poland there are no cultural norms to disguise negative emotions. It is socially acceptable to show **negative thinking**, defeatism, and pessimism, in particular through grumbling.

According to the Pew Global Attitudes Project, Poles are one of the most discontented nations in the world: only 28% of Poles are satisfied with their own lives, compared to 54% of Britons and 64% of Americans<sup>49</sup>. Bogdan Wojciszke notes that Poles have created a culture where it is proper to talk and think about the world in negative terms. This attitude to life is connected with Christianity and Marxism: two ideologies in which those who suffer are morally superior (qtd. in Mistewicz and Świdorska 2000:79). Since a suffering person arouses pity and sympathy of other people, negativism strengthens the feeling of togetherness and relationships with other people: it helps claim in-group identification through common fate “we are brothers in misery”. When negativism combines with fatalism, it may also function as a justification of one’s failures and errors: “I am not the one to blame”. Negativism is often connected with lack of trust (Skarżyńska 2003:18). It should be noted that in Poles’ opinion optimism is often a result of naivety and lack of knowledge while negative thinking is a signal of realism: it helps project an image of an experienced, wise and foreseeing person.

However, this convention is changing. As already noted, Poles are slowly transforming into a more successful, smiling and optimistic society. The Pew Global Attitudes Report shows a 16% increase in Poles’ satisfaction with own life during the last decade<sup>50</sup>. In particular, the post-communist generation is “much more upbeat about their lives than those age 35 and older.”<sup>51</sup> As a result of Americanisation, Poles started to smile more since smile is perceived as a product and a tool to create an impression of success. Cultural values, attitudes and beliefs have been reevaluated, which is particularly visible among young people who are career-oriented, more optimistic and individualistic.

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<sup>49</sup> p. 6: *What the World Thinks in 2002*. The Pew Global Attitudes Project. The Pew Research Center For the People and the Press, USA. The survey was conducted in 44 countries around the world.

<sup>50</sup> p. 8; see footnote 49.

<sup>51</sup> p. 10, see footnote 49.

In light of the foregoing, evaluation of distance is problematic due to changing cultural patterns. Wierzbicka claims that in Polish culture distance “is associated with hostility and alienation” (1991:37), i.e. the far end of the intimacy axis. Is this claim still valid? Cordiality, affection, warmth and negative thinking certainly predispose Polish culture to smaller physical and psychological distance than in British culture. Furthermore, as a predominantly collectivist culture, Poles attach more attention to interpersonal relations. However, it should be noted that Poles make a sharp distinction between their public and private behaviour. Among friends and family distances will be shorter while Polish public behaviour may be expected to be even more distanced than the British one. This view will be developed in Part III.

### **2.3 Informalisation: Social Changes**

The analysis of **American culture** falls beyond the scope of this dissertation; however, a few distinctive features of this culture should be mentioned because of its large impact on the UK and Poland. American and British cultures are quite closely related: American culture is likewise classified as low-context, non-contact, and individualist. However, American individualism is different from British one since it combines with high competition and focus on success, winning and achievement (Ferraro 1990:110). Orientation towards success requires positive thinking and excessive expression of optimism. Furthermore, American immigrant heritage contributes to multiculturalism and egalitarianism, which created a classless and highly informal society that attaches much importance to status levelling (Ferraro 1990:109). In fact, informality is one of the most distinctive features of American culture and its global impact is reflected in informalisation of other cultures through the process referred to as the Americanisation or Macdonaldisation of the world.

Trends towards informalisation have been observed in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century nearly all over the world as a result of globalisation. Wouters's study of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century etiquette books shows that physical, social and psychological distances were much larger at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century than nowadays. For example, an elaborate system of formal rules (introductions, leaving cards, calls 'at homes', dinners, etc.) protected against crossing established social dividing lines, in particular in the UK (Wouters 1995). Etiquette books warned against psychological proximity and familiarity, which were regarded as 'bad style'. It applied not only to people of different social class, rank or status: it was believed that familiarity was harmful even in relations with friends. This view may be illustrated with the following passage from a 19<sup>th</sup>-century Victorian etiquette book: "the well-mannered individual was not 'familiar'; he did not intrude on others; he did not ask personal questions; he did not thrust information about himself onto others; he kept his knowledge of others to himself; he did not talk to strangers; he did not snoop or eavesdrop; and he did not stand closely to his interlocutor, talk loudly, or gesticulate wildly" (Curtin 1987:126-7). Such self-controlled and reserved behaviour was required of a gentleman, i.e. an ideal Briton. It is interesting to note that the stereotype remained in the 20<sup>th</sup> century despite significant social changes.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, attitudes towards physical, social and psychological distance started to change due to global processes of **democratisation** and social integration. Although the need to keep a distance was still discussed by etiquette books, they focused on the requirement to show respect to people from other social classes and to limit expressions of superiority. "Particularly around the turn of the century (...) social dividing lines were 'on the move': the social definition of the spectrum between the extremes of keeping too great a distance and coming too close was changing" (Wouters 1995:4). Social mixing was unavoidable and physical distance between people of

different social classes was decreased “especially in the expanding cities, at work and on the streets, in public conveyances and entertainment facilities such as dance halls, cinemas and ice-skating rinks” (Wouters 1995:4-5). With time, large differences in power were eliminated and psychological distance has diminished among people of both the same and different class and rank (ibid.).

In consequence, social codes of behaviour have become less formal and rigid. New norms of behaviour developed since “some ways of behaving, experienced previously as tactful deference, (...) came to be seen as too hierarchical and demonstrative, just as what was once defined and recommended as natural came to be experienced more or less stiff and phoney, and branded as mannered” (Wouters 1995:11). Behaviour indicative of effort, awkwardness or forethought started to be regarded as bad manners; instead, emphasis is placed on self-confidence, ease and authenticity, i.e. “the constraint to be unconstrained”. It is understood as “the quest for behaviour that is experienced as ‘natural’, ‘real’, ‘unconstrained’, ‘relaxed’, ‘spontaneous’, ‘authentic’ and ‘informal’” (Wouters 1991). This trend has changed attitudes towards displays of emotions: informality is associated with less control over emotional expression while formality with suppressed emotional expressivity (Morand 1998). Thus, in order to be authentic, it is necessary to show one’s emotions openly. Likewise, interpersonal relationships have become more informal due to the atmosphere of friendliness, increased openness, familiarity and intimacy; hence, smaller communicative distance. This trend, referred to as informalisation, has been observed both in the UK and Poland<sup>52</sup>.

Informalization is also noticeable in the corporate world, which used to be a traditional bastion of formality and bureaucratic impersonality. Today there is a general

tendency of status-levelling in major companies in the United States. It is achieved through the elimination of preferred parking spaces, separate plant entrances for different classes of personnel, first-naming policies (Morand 1995:1). Informalisation is also reflected in changing dress codes. A large number of companies have introduced casual Friday when employees may (or even should) wear casual clothes (Morand 1998). This dress-down trend has spread to Europe and may be observed, for example, in the UK: “though pockets of formality still hold out, Britain is embracing stylishly casual clothes (...) and less regimentation” (Adler and Biddle 1995). Informalisation is another factor which contributes to the decrease of communicative distance.

As shown above, the twentieth century observed significant social changes which mainly consisted in democratisation, social integration and informalisation. These processes have had a large impact on both British and Polish culture. In consequence, physical, social and psychological distance between interlocutors was decreased in both cultures and attitudes towards distance have changed. Smaller distances are perceived as more natural, spontaneous and relaxed. It may be hypothesised that these changes take place not only in social life, but also in language, which will be analysed in Part III.

### 3. Social Factors

Usage events always occur in the social context which impacts linguistic choices made by interlocutors. As far as communicative distance is concerned, it is social distance that is mainly influenced by **social factors**<sup>53</sup>, such as class and status, because it is defined as a disparity in such variables. Each speaker has some ideas about his/her own **social identity** (class and status) which serves as a reference point for measuring the

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<sup>52</sup> Positive axiological load in expressions emphasising informal behaviour: *cool, wyluzowany, luzak, spontaniczny, swobodny* and negative axiological load in expressions describing formal behaviour: *formalista, sztywniak, być oficjalnym/spiętym, skrępowanym*.

existing social distance between him/her and the interlocutor. Evaluation is based on the speaker's knowledge about his/her interlocutor, as well as overt or covert signals sent by the interlocutor (e.g. material status symbols or linguistic markers of social class, such as a prestige variety of language). As a result, the speaker conceptualises a given relation as symmetric/equal (lack of social distance) or asymmetric/unequal (social distance) and adjusts his/her speech accordingly. Conceptualisation of social distance may change as the speaker gains more information from the hearer.

Social distance related to **social class** is connected with interlocutors' membership in different social classes. Each society shows a certain degree of social stratification, i.e. "hierarchical ordering of groups within a society" (Trudgill 1983:35). As a result, some classes have a higher position in society while other classes are at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Language is often indicative of the speaker's social class since classes use distinct social dialects (sociolects) (Hudson 1980:43), which function as in-group markers and help their speakers identify themselves with a given social group. As noted in the preceding subchapter, British society is much more hierarchical than Polish one. Communism nearly destroyed Polish aristocracy, giving priority to the proletariat (peasants and manual workers) and downgrading the intelligentsia socially and economically (Bajerowa 2003:24-25). Thus, it may be hypothesised that the concept of social class (and social distance resulting from class differences) is more important in English than in Polish. Social distance is to a large degree determined by birth in the UK while in Poland it is determined by education, economic position and profession.

**Status** is determined by one's social class, but also by one's power over the interlocutor, authority, intellect, education, profession, experience, age, wealth/economic position, role etc. Furthermore, during conversation interlocutors assume various **roles**,

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<sup>53</sup> The word *social* is polysemous. In this section it relates to interlocutors' position in society. In the section on psychological factors the word *social* was used in the expressions *social competence* and *social*

such as a teacher and a student, a seller and a buyer, which are associated with specific status. Roles may be created by a situation (a guest and a host) and may be of a more general nature, being determined by age and gender (Argyle 1999:126). It is important to distinguish between the three related concepts: status, dominance, and power, the use of which is problematic in linguistics (cf. Spencer-Oatey 1996). According to Knapp and Hall, status is a socially desirable feature which a given interlocutor has in each situation while power and dominance are functions of a specific situation. Power is control over resources, expertise experience and autonomy while dominance is defined as control over other people's behaviour (2000:547-8).

Social and cultural norms regulate nonverbal and verbal behaviour towards people of a different status. Status is like a buffer zone around a person: it protects a person and makes other people maintain proper communicative distance. Furthermore, higher status people have more communicative freedom. As Givón notes, when the speaker's status is higher, the hearer has a greater obligation to comply with social norms and the speaker has lesser need to be deferent. When the hearer's status is higher, the hearer has lesser obligation to comply and the speaker has greater need to be deferent (1990:807). On the other hand, as noted in the preceding section, trends towards informalisation and democratisation promote social equality and impose a taboo on showing one's superior status. It should be also noted that in general, women are more status-conscious and more often signal their status "because their social position is less secure than a man's" (Wells 1982:20).

Social factors impact not only communicative behaviour, but also the pattern of social relations between members of the same class. It has been reported that friendship is more important for middle class members, who rely more on their friends for help than

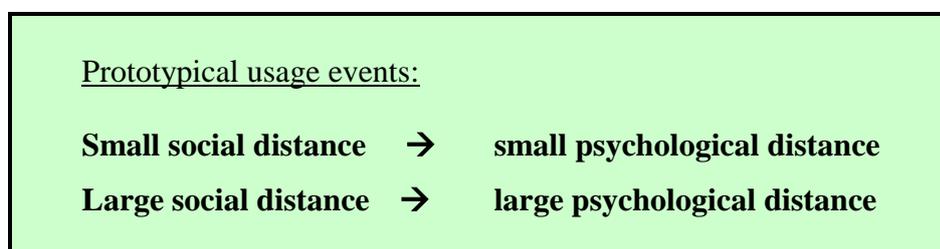
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*skills*, where it relates to interpersonal relations (see page 64).

on their relatives. Middle class friendships develop because of similar interests and attitudes. In contrast, working class friendships usually start because of the proximity of residence and the working class keeps closer contacts with their relatives (Argyle 1999:174). Working class culture is often referred to as masculine because it is associated with roughness and toughness, which are felt to be appropriate for men, but not for women. (Wells 1982:20). It may be hypothesised that the working class may tend to behave in a more open and direct way; hence, may be less distanced. Thus, there are differences between social classes in psychological distance they conventionally keep towards members of their own class.

In general, social distance conditions psychological distance. In prototypical cases, the existence of social distance between interlocutors is an obstacle to reach psychological distance because it automatically *creates* psychological distance. It is because, due to perceived social differences, interlocutors conceptualise each other as different and unequal; hence, as an out-group member. Lack of social distance results in perceived similarity between the interlocutors, which, as already noted, is one of the major factors that impact liking and attraction; hence, potential small psychological distance (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6. Prototypical relation between social and psychological distance.**



However, it is also possible that other factors outweigh the existing social distance between the interlocutors and psychological distance is small, e.g. a married couple where spouses are from two different social classes (large social distance → small

psychological distance). Moreover, despite small social distance, the interlocutors may maintain large psychological distance, e.g. two family members who are not on speaking terms (small social distance → large psychological distance).

It should be noted that in contrast to psychological distance, social distance is a relatively stable measure because one's status or rank in society has a fixed value throughout one's lifetime (e.g. it is determined by birth, education or profession). Nevertheless, perceived social distance depends on how overtly interlocutors reveal their social identity. Psychological distance is a variable measure which undergoes constant changes depending on the conceptualiser's internal processes and observations of the interlocutor's linguistic and non-linguistic behaviour. It exists solely in the conceptualiser's mind; hence, it is more subjective and less measurable than social distance.

#### **4. The Setting**

Besides factors closely connected with the conceptualiser, there are also factors related to the setting where the communicative act takes place. Physical surroundings themselves may impact the relationship between interlocutors. There are several dimensions which shape the perception of the communicative surroundings and determine a type of contact between the interlocutors and their behaviour:

- **Known/unknown.** In unknown surroundings human reactions are usually careful and conventional (Knapp and Hall 2000:160).
- **Warm/cold.** People tend to like other people more in a colder and larger room than in a crowded warm room. Red and yellow interiors create an emotionally warm atmosphere (Argyle 1999:126);

- **Private/public.** For example, one's home versus office. Closed rooms increase the feeling of privacy. Larger privacy usually co-occurs with smaller physical distance and more personal and direct messages (Knapp and Hall 2000:160).
- **Formal/informal.** The more formal the setting is, the more formal contact, roles, behaviour and language are likely to be. Formal settings require strict observance of rules of conduct while informal settings require natural and spontaneous behaviour.

A formal or informal setting decides about the type of contact between interlocutors.

**Categorisation of contact as formal or informal** is one of the most important phases in the conceptualisation of communicative distance. It takes place at the very beginning of communication and, in most cases, precedes both verbal and nonverbal expression. Formal and informal contacts have different social codes of behaviour which underline a large number of linguistic choices (e.g. register, forms of address; see page 143).

A formal setting automatically creates larger psychological distance between interlocutors, who also tend to put more emphasis on social distance (prototypical conditions for respect-oriented distance). Thus, a formal setting is associated with large communicative distance. An **informal setting** creates smaller psychological distance and interlocutors tend to reduce social distance between them (prototypical conditions for intimacy-oriented distance). Thus, interlocutors aim at small communicative distance in the informal setting.

**Summary.** The above discussion shows that although culture is an important factor in the conceptualisation of distance, it is only one of many non-linguistic factors involved. Thus, the conceptualisation (hence, the meaning) of communicative distance depends on the characteristics of the conceptualiser (personality, social skills, gender, social class, status, etc.), similar characteristics of the hearer (the conceptualised),

psychological processes (e.g. subjectivity of perception, regularities that underlie evaluation of relationships as close or distant), culture (culturally-conditioned system of attitudes, beliefs and norms internalised by the conceptualiser), and the setting (formal/informal). It means that the conceptualisation of communicative distance is to a certain degree subjective due to possibilities of perceptual distortions and unique individual experience but, on the other hand, this subjectivity is limited by cultural, social and linguistic conventions and regularities common to human beings or members of given speech communities.

### **PART III. CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF COMMUNICATIVE DISTANCE IN ENGLISH AND POLISH**

The aim of Part III is to address Objective 2, i.e. to compare communicative distance in Polish and English at different levels of language production. The analysis will verify whether or not the repertoire of linguistic devices offered by English and Polish predisposes one language to a larger communicative distance.

Face-to-face **conversation** is the most prototypical type of usage event. It is an **oral** (spoken) variety of language used in everyday contacts. The main difference between oral and written communication lies in the fact that the former uses different channels of communication (oral, auditory and visual channels). **Face-to-face** conversation consists of **nonverbal non-vocal communication** (body language: physical distance, body posture and orientation, gesture, touch, facial expression), **vocal communication** (paralanguage: voice qualities, intonation, accent, stress), and **verbal communication** (linguistic system: lexicon, grammar, conversational strategies, speech management, etc.). Thus, the speaker has more possibilities of expression compared to a written mode of communication because conversation usually takes place on audio-visual channels.

The most important feature of **conversation** is that it is a **dialogic** rather than monologic process, i.e. it is a collaborative interaction between at least two participants<sup>54</sup> who mutually impact their speech. For example, the hearer has an impact on the speaker by providing him/her with feedback, on the basis of which the speaker adjusts his/her speech. According to Biber et al., the main function of conversation is to maintain

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<sup>54</sup> I am concerned only with dyadic conversation, i.e. between two participants, because group interaction is much more psychologically complex and is subject to different processes and conventions regarding communicative distance (see, for example, Brehm and Kassin (1996:411-454) for a psychological description of group interaction).

interpersonal relationships while referential (exchange of information), persuasive and entertaining functions are usually of secondary importance in most conversations (1999:1041). As a result, conversation has a high frequency of **expressive** elements that communicate interlocutors' emotions, feelings and attitudes. For this reason, face-to-face dyadic conversation was chosen as a research unit for the analysis of communicative distance.

Properties of face-to-face conversation determine its language; as shown by Biber et al. on the basis of corpus research, conversations have a different grammar than written texts (1999). Because conversations take place in real time, they are unplanned, spontaneous and chaotic; hence, they are characterised by numerous dysfluencies, e.g. pauses, hesitations, repetitions, redundancy, which compete with economic motivation of conversation. The current discourse space construed by interlocutors as shared allows them to economise their speech, which facilitates mental planning and processing. For this purpose, interlocutors often apply conventional effort-saving devices, such as pronouns, ellipsis, deictic items and avoid lexical elaboration and specification (Biber et al. 1999:1045).

The contrastive analysis of communicative distance consists of four chapters. Chapter 1 discusses physical distance; Chapter 2 deals with forms of address; Chapter 3 discusses selected aspects of linguistic etiquette, and the final chapter is about conversational atmosphere.

## **1. PHYSICAL DISTANCE IN THE CONVERSATIONAL SPACE**

In this section I will discuss how interlocutors use physical distance and other nonverbal and verbal signals to organise the **conversational space**. The term “conversational space” was introduced by Yoshimoto as a proximal part of general space

perceived by the speaker and covering the immediate space between the speaker and the hearer<sup>55</sup>. Conversational space is divided into proximal and distal to the speaker: proximal space constitutes the speaker's territory while the distal part is the hearer's territory<sup>56</sup> (Kamio 2001:1113). It should be noted that conversational space is understood not only in physical terms, but also metaphorically as psychological and social space.

Nonverbal communication, as a conventional way of expression, is an integral part of communication process in face-to-face conversation. Nonverbal communication is less conscious and more spontaneous than verbal one because nonverbal information is mainly processed in the right hemisphere while verbal information is analysed in the left hemisphere (Knapp and Hall 2000:27). There are various (often conflicting) statistics concerning how much information is transferred via nonverbal channels. For example, according to Albert Mehrabian in face-to-face communication 55 per cent of information is transmitted by way of body language (visible signals), 38 per cent is encoded in nonverbal voice and only 7 per cent is carried by words (1972:182). The reliability of such statistics may be easily questioned since they heavily depend on a culture<sup>57</sup> and on a type of information being communicated. In general, nonverbal signals are more important for communicating emotions and attitudes (in particular liking or dislike) than factual information, in the case of which the verbal channel is more efficient (e.g. *Come to my office at 10 a.m.*). In addition, nonverbal communication organises and supports verbal communication (Argyle 1999). For example, it may confirm or contradict messages spoken verbally: when people receive two conflicting messages they tend to

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<sup>55</sup> The conversational space available to interlocutors is also referred to as “the conversational **floor**”, in particular within Conversational Analysis. However, the concept of floor focuses on turn-taking patterns: Edelsky distinguishes between the single floor (speakers take turns to occupy the floor) and the collaborative floor (speakers use the floor simultaneously) (cf. Coates 1997:69).

<sup>56</sup> Kamio's division of space for linguistic purposes also includes the area beyond the hearer's territory, i.e. a distal part of general space perceived by the speaker (cf. Kamio 2001:1113).

<sup>57</sup> The role of nonverbal communication is larger in high-context cultures than in low-context cultures which tend to rely more on vocal and verbal communication (cf. Hall 2001, Murdoch 1999). See also page 122.

believe nonverbal messages which are regarded as more difficult to control and fake (Knapp and Hall 2000:38).

Since in face-to-face conversation nonverbal information contributes to the meaning of a linguistic expression, Langacker's linguistic unit<sup>58</sup> should be modified for purposes of this dissertation. As defined by Langacker, linguistic units account only for verbal and vocal forms of expression although he also includes *gesture* in vocalisation, i.e. in the phonological pole (2001:146). By analogy, this pole should cover all forms of nonverbal communication which express conceptual content and are relevant for meaning construction in actual interaction. The semantic pole should reflect the conceptual content carried by such an 'extended' linguistic unit.

### **1. Physical Distance and Proxemic Behaviour**

In the 1960's, American anthropologist Edward Hall pioneered **proxemics**, a new branch of studies on the use of space for communicative purposes. Proxemics is concerned with communicative functions of space in direct contacts between people, as well as the organisation of space in architectural design. According to Hall, distance adopted by interlocutors in face-to-face interaction is a meaningful and important source of nonverbal information (1978). During conversation interlocutors negotiate a comfortable distance for personal interaction under given circumstances and nonverbally define it as their **personal space**. The term was proposed by Sommer to refer to an area around a person's body into which others may not come (1959). This area has a shape of a bubble with more space in front. Thus, personal space may be viewed as an extension of the human body which functions as a protective buffer zone during communication (Hall 1978:163). People are conscious of their personal space and are socialised to respect those of other people.

The concept of personal space was adopted in linguistics by Inchaurrealde, who notes that “the speaker identifies certain regions of space as his/her own, and he/she feels attached to or detached from them in different degrees. Regions of space can be attached to the hearer (second person) or to the other people in the background (third person)” (1997:135). Likewise, personal space may be interpreted as the proximal part of conversational space, i.e. the speaker’s territory in Kamio’s terms while the hearer’s personal space may be equated with the hearer’s territory.

Physical distance between interlocutors is the most concrete and measurable type of communicative distance. Hall defined four types of physical distance applied by people in direct contacts and each type is further divided into a close and far phase. Hall provides detailed measurements for each type of distance (see Table 4).

**Table 4. Hall’s typology of physical distance**

Type of distance	Phase	Spatial range
<b>Intimate distance</b>	Close Phase	0 – 6 inches <sup>59</sup>
	Far Phase	6-18 inches
<b>Personal distance</b>	Close Phase	18-30 inches
	Far Phase	2.5 – 4 feet
<b>Social distance</b> (Ph)	Close Phase	4-7 feet
	Far Phase	7-12 feet
<b>Public distance</b>	Close Phase	12-25 feet
	Far Phase	more than 25 feet

Source: Hall (1978:114-125).

The **intimate** distance normally requires very small psychological and social distance between interlocutors. The close phase is reserved for love-making, wrestling, comforting and protecting. According to social conventions, only lovers, family and small children are usually allowed to enter it. At this distance vision is distorted. Communication occurs on nonverbal channels, mainly via physical contact and olfactory

<sup>58</sup> See Introduction, page 22.

<sup>59</sup> All measurements are valid only for American culture and are provided here to show *approximate* spatial scopes of each distance.

and thermal sensations. The vocal channel is used minimally and, to a large degree, involuntarily (Hall 1978:161).

The far phase is a distance where bodies (heads, pelvis, legs) do not touch very often but may be easily reached by hands. Verbal communication is reduced to whispering and the voice is kept at a low level (Hall 1978:161-2). The far zone of intimate distance is where face-to-face conversation may start; however, such conversation may be uncomfortable because of close physical distance and frequent physical contact between the interlocutors. Typical physical distances where face-to-face conversation is feasible are shaded in blue in Table 4. Thus, the usual spatial range for conversing falls within the far phase of intimate distance, personal distance and social distance.

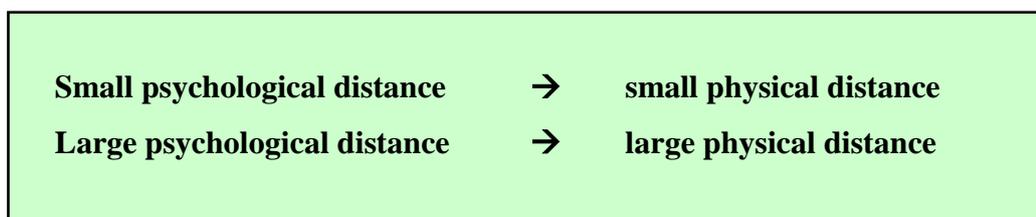
According to Hall, the **personal** distance functions as a 'personal space', a protective bubble which separates the speaker from other people (1978:163). It is reserved for family and very close friends. In the close phase individuals can touch each other, however, only ritualised touch is permissible and physical contact is not so frequent as in the intimate distance (ibid.:164). If strangers come within this space, it may be interpreted as an invasion of personal space. The far phase starts at 'arm's length' and it lies outside easy touching range (ibid.:164). It is a comfortable distance for discussing personal issues with psychologically close people. In fact, the far phase of personal distance and the close phase of social distance are the most convenient physical distances for prototypical face-to-face conversation.

The close phase of **social** distance <sub>(ph)</sub> is used among acquaintances, work colleagues, as well as at casual social gatherings, informal and impersonal business. Nonverbal signals, such as facial features and a tone of voice, are usually perceived clearly at this zone (Hall 1978:166). The far phase is used for more formal business and social meetings. It is often adopted between interlocutors who want to remain at large

social and psychological distance. Hall emphasises that the far phase has the ability to insulate people from each other: this distance is adopted by people who do not wish to engage actively in conversation. Conversation becomes more difficult as the voice has to be raised (1978:168). This distance may also signal that interlocutors perceive themselves as out-group members.

The public distance is excluded from the scope of this dissertation because at this distance face-to-face conversation is physically difficult. In most cases conversation is **monologic**, rather than dialogic. Fine facial features and body parts become unnoticeable and actions have to be exaggerated to be distinguishable. Likewise, the voice must be amplified to be heard. This distance is often used for public speaking or to avoid involvement in conversation. The far zone is automatically assigned to important public people (Hall 1978:172).

Based on Hall's *Hidden Dimension*, the above discussion of physical distances shows that they are closely correlated with psychological distance, in particular, with a degree of familiarity between interlocutors. For example, friends typically interact within personal distance while strangers interact within social distance<sub>(ph)</sub>. Thus, it may be concluded from Hall's description that initial physical distance adopted by interlocutors is determined by the pre-existing psychological distance between interlocutors. As a result, physical distance is felt to be adequate when it proportionally corresponds to psychological distance:



In fact, physical distance is one of the ways to express psychological distance. Physical closeness is an indicator of liking: people stand closer to those they like and maintain

larger distance to interlocutors they subconsciously evaluate negatively (Argyle 1999:57). This fact motivates the British and Polish conceptual metaphor AN EMOTIONAL RELATIONSHIP IS A DISTANCE BETWEEN TWO ENTITIES, by way of which psychological distance is comprehended in terms of physical distance.

Physical distance also reflects power relations and status differences between interlocutors. It is proportionally correlated with social distance between interlocutors:

<b>Small social distance</b>	<b>→</b>	<b>small physical distance</b>
<b>Large social distance</b>	<b>→</b>	<b>large physical distance</b>

For example, people of equal status maintain shorter distance between themselves than people of unequal status and the higher the status of a given person, the larger personal space assigned by people (Birkenbihl 1998:153). It means that symmetric relations (i.e. small or no social distance) require smaller physical distance than asymmetric relations. Hudson hypothesises that this proportional relation between physical and social distance is universal in all cultures (1980:135).

Human proxemic behaviour provides an experiential motivation for the conceptual metaphor PSYCHOLOGICAL/SOCIAL DISTANCE IS PHYSICAL DISTANCE BETWEEN INTERLOCUTORS, where psychological distance and social distance are comprehended in terms of physical distance. It is because physical distance **expresses** a degree of social and psychological distance between interlocutors. Haiman emphasises that physical distance has an instrumental function of preserving social and psychological distance: “when two actors maintain a respectful distance from each other, they not only signal but preserve their lack of intimacy. Signaling is a referential function, but preservation is

**instrumental**” (1983:800). Thus, physical distance is “an icon and a guarantee” of psychological and social distance<sup>60</sup> (ibid.:801).

Actual physical distance differs from perceived distance due to the subjectivity of perception and other factors, in addition to the above discussed socio-psychological factors. As pointed out by Knapp and Hall, these factors include culture and ethnicity, topic, setting, physical features, age, gender of interlocutors, personality and emotional state (2000:216), and significantly limit the exact applicability of Hall’s measurements.

One of the major factors is **culture**. Hall calculated interpersonal distances on the basis of WASP male proxemic behaviour (Knapp and Hall 2000:216). Each culture structures conversational space in a specific way, has its own code of personal space conventions which its members are expected to internalise and observe. As a result, “what is appropriate distance for one cultural group might appear to be ‘crowding’ to another or ‘standoffish’ to a third” (Ferraro 1990:83). Although no comparative measurements have been made for Polish culture so far (Kita 2001:172), it may be assumed that Polish distance zones will be smaller than British or American<sup>61</sup> ones, in particular in terms of personal and social<sub>(ph)</sub> distance. Both British and American cultures are classified as non-contact; hence, they prefer larger zones while Polish culture is considered to be a contact culture (e.g. Wierzbicka 1991:47). Members of contact cultures interact closer to one another, touch more often, and maintain more eye contact (Watson 1970:115). It is probable that what is still personal distance for a Briton may be social distance<sub>(ph)</sub> for a Pole.

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<sup>60</sup> Haiman writes only about social distance; however, his idea should be extended by psychological distance because, as already noted, Haiman’s social distance corresponds to ‘psychological distance’ as defined herein.

<sup>61</sup> The American English lexicon includes the negatively evaluated phrase “close talker”, i.e. a person who talks in (too) close proximity to others. The very existence of the phrase points to the salience of this concept in American English.

The choice of personal space is also determined by the **setting**. People maintain closer distances in informal settings and larger distances in public and formal settings. An arrangement of setting may impose specific physical distance on interlocutors. For example, people conversing at a conference table adopt different distance than people in a ticket line or in the cinema. Moreover, some environmental factors, such as a high noise level or low illumination, will ordinarily bring people closer. It was also demonstrated that people tolerate closer distance in open-air settings more than in closed settings (Painter 1991:3).

Another group of factors covers **idiosyncratic features** of interlocutors, which include their **physical features**, such as height (people reduce distance when talking to a short person), weight (interlocutors assume larger distance to overweight people), gender (women maintain smaller distances than men in a friendly interaction but larger distances with strangers) or age (distance increases with age, greater distance towards elder people) (Knapp and Hall 2000:218-225). In general, perceived dissimilarities require greater physical distance between interlocutors. Other factors are an emotional state (e.g. people who are afraid keep greater distance) and **personality** (e.g. extroverts tolerate physical closeness better than introverts) (Knapp and Hall 2000:237). Furthermore, people develop situational personalities for intimate, personal, social and public interactions. Some speakers may have problems with the public situational personality while others may have problems with the intimate zone and do not tolerate close distances (cf. Hall 1978). It may be hypothesised that people with the need for affiliation (who focus on the quantity of social contacts) and extroverts will have the social and public zone of their personality well developed while people with the need for intimacy will focus on the development of the intimate and personal zone of their personalities.

Physical distance is dynamic and changes during conversation: it may be decreased or increased by interlocutors, both consciously and unconsciously. A decrease of physical distance is conceptualised in the ground as a movement towards the conceptualiser while its increase is conceptualised as a movement away. Both types of movements may be evaluated positively and negatively by the conceptualiser. Burgoon explains this fact with her expectancy violations theory. She claims that each interlocutor has idiosyncratically filtered proxemic norms and expectations. When the interlocutor's proxemic behaviour is consistent with such expectations, it does not cause any arousal. However, when proxemic norms and expectations are violated, the resulting arousal makes the conceptualiser focus his/her attention on the nature of relations with the interlocutor (qtd. in Knapp and Hall 2000:544). Thus, the violation of norms and conventions throws additional light on the relationship between the interlocutors.

Let us first consider an **increase of distance**. Because of the correlation of psychological and social distance with physical distance, an increase of physical distance signals a proportional increase of psychological or social distance on the part of the interlocutor who moves away from the conceptualiser (**increase of physical distance → increase of psychological and social distance**). Such a movement (and in general too large distance) is evaluated negatively in most cases. It happens when the interlocutor's increase of physical distance is inconsistent with the conceptualiser's background assumptions and expectations about the level of mental, social or psychological distance he/she wants to maintain. The conceptualiser may conventionally interpret an increase of physical distance as:

- larger mental distance on the part of the interlocutor: lack of involvement or interest;

- larger social distance on the part of the interlocutor: a signal of his/her higher social status, standoffishness, reserve, a wish to remain an out-group member;
- larger psychological distance on the part of the interlocutor: dislike, emotional coldness, a wish to maintain formal relations, lack of trust, offence, disgust.

These violations may obstruct the fluent flow of conversation. In particular, when a close person signals psychological distance through large physical distance, the conceptualiser may be hurt or offended. On the other hand, the conceptualiser may positively evaluate an increase of physical distance if he/she feels psychologically or socially distant from the interlocutor, for example, due to dislike, fear, disgust or if the current physical distance is too close in light of psychological or social distance between the interlocutors.

A **decrease** of physical distance may signal a proportional decrease of psychological and social distance (**decrease of physical distance → decrease of psychological distance and social distance**). It may be expected that the conceptualiser will positively evaluate an approaching movement, in particular when he/she positively evaluates his/her relationship with the interlocutor. With physical proximity being an indicator of liking (Argyle 1999:57) and one of the factors that impact liking and attractiveness, those who stand closer are perceived as warmer and liking the interlocutor more. Thus, analogically to an increase of physical distance, a decrease of physical distance may signal smaller psychological distance (liking, trust, etc.), smaller social distance (in-group proxemic behaviour) or smaller mental distance on the part of the interlocutor (more interest and involvement in conversation).

An approaching movement may be evaluated negatively by the conceptualiser when it is inconsistent with his/her personal space expectations and when he/she negatively evaluates the interlocutor. Even in close relationships there is a physical boundary which should not be crossed otherwise such a forward movement is

conceptualised as space invasion. People seem to have less tolerance for a decrease of distance because this is not only a psychological but also physical violation experienced as *physical discomfort* with physiological reactions, such as increased tension levels, arousal, distraction (Knapp and Hall 2000:205). According to folk knowledge, it may even cause anger and aggressive behaviour<sup>62</sup>.

When evaluated negatively, a movement towards the conceptualiser may be interpreted by him/her as a lack of respect or undue familiarity. A lack of respect for the interlocutor's personal space signals a lack of respect for him/her. This may happen when, according to the conceptualiser, there is large psychological distance between the interlocutors and he/she does not want to reduce this distance. Moreover, if there is social distance between the interlocutors, a decrease of physical distance signals the invader's wish to reduce social distance but may not be paralleled by the conceptualiser's wish to reduce it. If the invader's social status is higher than that of the conceptualiser, the latter may interpret a decrease of physical distance as a signal of dominance or power because it is a higher status person who has the right to break proxemic rules. Thus, higher status speakers can impose closer distance on lower social status hearers.

A decrease of physical distance may also be associated with attack, threat or manipulation. For example, the conceptualiser may react to the interlocutor's impertinence with the following question *What's your problem, man?* [En] / *Fikasz?* [PL], accompanied by a forward movement to signal that he/she is not afraid. Research shows that close distance enhances powers of intended and perceived persuasion (Grayson and Coventry 1998:3). This fact is utilized by sales people and police interrogators. The latter often use the strategy of sitting close and crowding a suspect:

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<sup>62</sup> This fact is reflected in the Polish and English folk model of anger, where the CAUSING ANGER IS TRESPASSING metaphor views the cause of anger as a trespasser (Lakoff 1987:395).

due to the invasion of the suspect's personal space (with no chance for defence), the officer gains a psychological advantage (Bowen 1999:2).

The next issue addresses interlocutors' reactions to changes in physical distance during conversation. Like animals, people instinctively protect their territories. It was observed that interlocutors do not usually react verbally to space invasion since due to politeness conventions verbal reaction is too direct (Knapp and Hall 2000:207). The simplest method would be to take a step backward or forward to adjust physical distance accordingly. However, people prefer subtler nonverbal ways of protecting their personal space. The correlation of physical distance with other nonverbal and verbal aspects of communication is discussed below.

## **2. Correlation of Physical Distance with Other Nonverbal Behaviours**

Nonverbal signals will be discussed under two groups: kinesics and paralanguage. The former does not use the vocal channel and is received by the conceptualiser via the visual channel. **Kinesics** includes bodily movements, such as orientation, posture, eye contact, gesture, touch and facial expression (Grove 2000:122). The latter uses the vocal channel and is received by the conceptualiser via the auditory channel. **Paralanguage** covers intonation, stress, accent and voice qualities, such as speed, pitch and loudness (van Dijk 1981:235).

### **2.1 Kinesics**

The fundamental information clearly communicated through nonverbal signals is a positive or negative attitude towards the interlocutor, i.e. a degree of psychological distance. Sending positive signals is an important interpersonal skill, a lack of which may lead to social incompetence. Human beings are socialized not to show enmity signals; they also know who likes them but are not so good at decoding who does not like them

(Argyle 1999:82). A positive attitude (and close psychological distance) is expressed through **open body language**, such as direct eye contact, a fairly relaxed posture, elimination of nervous fidgeting, bodily orientation and a slight lean towards the interlocutor, head nodding, etc. **Closed body language**, which creates a physical barrier to a person and signals a psychological barrier, is communicated through crossed legs, avoidance of eye contact, arms folded across the chest, etc. (Calhoun and Acocella 1990:350). The concept of closed and open body language is based on the conceptualisation of interlocutors as containers which can open up and provide access to their inside (PEOPLE ARE CONTAINERS THAT OPEN UP).

**Bodily orientation** and **posture** play an important role in the evaluation of body language as open or closed and contribute to the overall experience of communicative distance. Orientation is connected with the shape of personal space which, as already noted above, is longer in front of an interlocutor and smaller at his/her sides. It is why interlocutors tolerate proximity more if they stand or sit side-by-side and face in the same direction than when they stand vis-à-vis. When physical distance is too close, interlocutors may turn sideways or lean backwards to increase the perceived distance. Analogically, when the interlocutor leans forward, the perceived physical distance is smaller. It seems that interlocutors do not assess physical distance from feet to feet but rather between the upper parts of their bodies (or even between their eyes).

Eyes allow the conceptualiser to assess the physical distance to his/her interlocutor. **Eye contact** establishes a connection between the interlocutors and opens the channel for communication by signalling their readiness to start a conversation. Mutual gaze is experienced as a special type of intimacy accompanied by physiological reaction, such as arousal and a higher frequency of heart beats (Argyle 1999:48). This feeling of intimacy is reduced when gaze does not focus on the eyes but on other points of the face. Gaze

intimacy may be explained by the conceptual metaphors SEEING IS TOUCHING and EYES ARE LIMBS (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1980:50), by way of which gaze is comprehended as touching and physical contact. Eyes are also conceived of as a container for emotions<sup>63</sup> which are revealed through the frequency and length of gaze, gaze synchronisation, pupil dilation or contraction, blinking rate, change of gaze direction, opening of the eyes, mimic expression around the eyes, etc. (Argyle 1999:45). Because of their expressiveness, eyes are an important source of information in conversation. They not only send information about the speaker's emotional state but at the same time they function as chief sensory receptors which provide the speaker with feedback from the hearer. Gaze patterns change when the speaker becomes a hearer: interlocutors look twice as often when they listen than when they talk (Argyle 1999:45).

One type of information expressed through eyes is a degree of psychological distance between the interlocutors. It was found that people look more often at those they like and when the relationship between interlocutors is unfriendly, eye contact is usually reduced (Argyle 1999:46). Direct gaze is associated with sincerity, trust, liking, intimacy and self-confidence while people who avoid eye contact are regarded as insincere, impolite, cold or shy (Brehm and Kassin 1996:88). Enmity may be communicated through both visual ignorance and insistent gaze (staring), which invades the interlocutor's privacy (Knapp and Hall 2000:460) and generates a high level of physiological arousal (Argyle 1999:46). Since men tend to reduce eye contact when listening while women look straight in the eye and maintain a longer gaze (Hannah and Murachver 1999), it may be assumed that women need to establish closer psychological distance through gaze. Gaze patterns also reflect social distance between interlocutors: speakers most often look at partners of moderate status, less frequently at high-status

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<sup>63</sup> e.g. *his eyes were filled with anger, love showed in his eyes* (cf. Lakoff and Johnson 1980:50).

interlocutors and least frequently at those of low status (Grove 2000:128). It is explained by the fact that a high-status speaker does not need to monitor the interlocutor's behaviour so often as a low-status speaker does (Knapp and Hall 2000:457).

Since eye contact expresses social and psychological distance between the interlocutors, it may change the perceived physical distance. Physical distance and eye contact are mutually adjusted to reach an equilibrium: approach on one channel is balanced with avoidance on the other (cf. Argyle 1999:57). When physical distance is too far, eye contact is intensified. When physical distance is too close, eye contact is reduced; hence, it may function as a protective mechanism against space invasion. Even if physical distance is very close, eye contact is not reduced completely because interlocutors need feedback to adjust the flow of conversation. Gaze is also correlated with other nonverbal signals which communicate psychological distance. For example, the speaker maintains lower eye contact when the interlocutor is smiling or when they discuss intimate topics (Argyle 1999:47).

Another intimate channel of communication is **touch**, which may include ritualised social touch (e.g.: hand shake at the beginning or end of conversation), more spontaneous friendly touch (e.g. pat on the shoulder) or touch as nervous mannerism. Touch is a strong social signal because it is a direct physical contact with the body. This contact often translates into positive emotions, such as support, affection, appreciation or inclusion (Brehm and Kassin 1996) and may increase powers of persuasion and liking (Argyle 1999:54). It is because physical closeness of touch reflects psychological closeness between the interlocutors. However, when touch is inconsistent with the conceptualiser's expectations, it may be interpreted negatively as space invasion, undue familiarity or dominance. A person who initiates touch has more power and when touch is initiated by a lower status interlocutor, it is perceived as a lack of tact or an affront

(Knapp and Hall 2000:551). Furthermore, evaluation of touch may differ depending on the conceptualiser's gender: women, who generally touch more than men, are more likely to associate touch with personal warmth and expressiveness but they do not like being touched if it communicates dominance rather than warmth (Argyle 1999:56).

Touch is subject to cultural norms, which are different in British and Polish culture. The British are socialised to be self-controlled and to avoid touching: "not to touch other people is bred into you" (Watson 1970:108). As a contact culture, Polish culture is more expressive nonverbally. Touch which is present only within British personal distance may still be found in Polish social distance<sub>(PhD)</sub>. Thus, from a Polish perspective, the British are restricted in physical expressiveness: "In Anglo-Saxon culture non-sexual body contact is heavily restricted, as compared, for example, with Slavic and Mediterranean cultures: people seldom touch one another, hug one another, kiss one another, or seldom even shake hands" (Wierzbicka 1991:47). However, the informalisation of British culture is also reflected in changing patterns of nonverbal expression, and specifically, in the growing popularity of ritualised touch in the form of hugging and social kiss in the 90's (Rosiak 2001:12).

British self-control also impacts expressiveness through **gesture**: "Northern European cultures place a higher value on verbal messages and (...) consider excessive gesturing to be overly emotional, nonrational, and socially unsophisticated" (Ferraro 1990:75). As a result, the British use fewer and more controlled gestures than Poles do. However, it would be difficult, even for a Briton, to eliminate gestures completely from conversation. It is because speech is closely connected with gestures, which also symbolise the same conceptual content as speech does. There is a special class of **interactive gestures** which reflect the relation between the interlocutors and organise their conversation. The main function of interactive gestures is to engage the interlocutor

into an active participation in the dialogue (Knapp and Hall 2000:334). An increased number of gestures may signal the speaker's higher involvement in conversation, a strong emotional attitude towards the topic or emotional arousal, all of which result in lower self-control over bodily expressiveness (Argyle 1999:52). Interactive gestures on the part of the hearer, such as head nods, shakes and eye blinks, function as confirmation (or agreement) and encouragement for the speaker to continue his/her speech. This regulatory function impacts the flow of conversation and the overall conversational atmosphere. When conversation is perceived as collaborative, psychological distance may be reduced.

Finally, interlocutors pay close attention to **facial expression** because face falls within a direct eye focus and is the primary nonverbal communicator of emotions. It may express happiness, surprise, fear, anger, sadness, disgust, etc. (Argyle 1999:40) and such expression is filtered through culturally learnt display rules (Ferraro 1990:79). Face also shows attitudes towards the interlocutor (liking or dislike). In particular, smile is very expressive in this respect: it may range from friendly, polite, ironic, mocking to silly smile, but in most cases it is a type of social 'phatic' smile which communicates a positive attitude towards the interlocutor. As social smile reduces psychological distance between the interlocutors, it is also used to compensate for too large physical distance. Being a symbol of positive thinking, optimism and well-being, smile is used very frequently in the USA. Poles, as one of the most discontented nations in the world, do not smile as often. As already noted, Polish culture is marked by negative thinking and pessimism; hence, excessive smiling may connote silliness<sup>64</sup>, insincerity or superficiality. Polish smile is more genuine than American one: it is not practiced among strangers on the street but is frequent in interactions between friends. Given the positive axiological

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<sup>64</sup> e.g. *śmieje się jak głupi do sera*.

load of the English expression *stiff upper lip*, it may be supposed that British self-control also covers facial expression.

During conversation there are two types of synchronization: **autosynchronisation** where the speaker coordinates all his/her verbal and nonverbal behaviours and **interactive synchronization** where the speaker and the hearer mutually coordinate their behaviours (Knapp and Hall 2000:352). Argyle and Dean's research shows that in the course of conversation interlocutors aim at obtaining an **equilibrium** (a desired degree of intimacy) through the simultaneous use of approach and avoidance behaviours (Argyle 1999:57). If one channel of communication is violated, the equilibrium is restored through automatic **compensatory** adjustments on other channels. For example, if physical distance is too large, behaviours that decrease the perceived distance are applied: leaning forward, direct bodily orientation (*vis-à-vis*), intensified eye contact, more touching, smiling, more interactive gestures, etc. If physical distance is too close, behaviours that increase the perceived distance are applied: leaning backwards, turning sideways, reduced eye contact, no touch or self-touching, less interactive gestures and less smiling. These elements of nonverbal communication increase or decrease the perceived physical distance because they counterbalance psychological and social distance coded by physical distance.

Further research has shown that the conceptualiser tends to react with compensatory behaviours when the interlocutor's behaviour is inconsistent with his/her expectations. If the conceptualiser assesses nonverbal behaviours as consistent with his/her expectations, he/she repeats the interlocutor's behaviours through **symmetric** or **mirror** behaviours. Repetition of behaviours is perceived as a signal of understanding, identification and collaboration between interlocutors; hence, it creates closer



and British cultures are classified as low-context cultures while Polish culture is considered to be rather high-context<sup>66</sup> (Murdoch 1999). **High-context** cultures code most information in the external context (physical context) and/or in the internal context (information internalised in the speaker) rather than in vocal and verbal communication (Hall 2001:95). The role of communication is not to enhance the speaker's individuality but rather to promote harmony and social integration (Ferraro 1990:57). As a result, HC cultures differentiate in-group members from out-group members to a larger degree than LC cultures (Hall 2001:116). As a HC culture, Polish culture relies more on nonverbal non-vocal coding.

In LC cultures most of the message is transmitted via language and paralinguistics. Messages are overt and background information is often verbalised (Hall 2001:95). As a non-contact culture, British culture has limited physical expressiveness, fewer gestures, facial expression, touch, rituals, etc.; in consequence, it has to use other signals to code information other cultures express nonverbally. Thus, as a non-contact and LC culture, British culture relies more on vocal and verbal coding. This difference may be observed when Poles speak English: the British complain that Poles seem to be little involved in their speech and their voice is monotonous and flat (Murdoch 1999:55). High expressiveness of British English paralinguistics is also confirmed by the fact that, as pointed out by Hall, British English intonation sounds affected to Americans (1978:187). In conclusion, the role of paralinguistics is larger in English than in Polish.

Another reason why paralinguistics is more important in English is the fact that English is a fixed word order language. As a result, English marks given/new distinction with stress and intonation. In contrast, Polish has less constrained word order due to its

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<sup>65</sup> Psychologists admit that with the current state of research, it is sometimes difficult to predict whether interlocutors will react with compensatory or symmetric behaviours. In particular, it is problematic in well-developed intimate relationships, where interlocutors may show fewer nonverbal behaviours traditionally associated with attachment and intimacy (Knapp and Hall 2000:545).

inflectional system and; as a result, stress in Polish is not so strong and unstressed words are less blurred than they are in English (Bałutowa 1990:155).

In both Polish and English, paralinguistics significantly contributes to meaning construction during interaction. It provides interpretation cues because it signals emotions and a degree of their intensity. Thus, paralinguistics may colour an expression as ironic, mocking, impartial, affectionate, aggressive, etc. For example, the speaker may signal his/her interest or admiration through exaggerated stress: "What a *fantastic garden* you have!" (Brown and Levinson 1987:104). In Polish vowels may be prolonged for expressive purposes, e.g. to signal joy as in: *Witaj! A koogóz to...* (Ozóg 2001:90-91). Research shows that hearers decode the speaker's emotions from his/her voice with high accuracy: subjects from the USA, Poland and Japan correctly identified the expression of anger, sadness, joy, threat and impartiality in American speakers' voices (Knapp and Hall 2000:506). Furthermore, paralinguistics may support or contradict verbal and nonverbal messages. Emotions the speaker tries to hide nonverbally or verbally are often revealed at a vocal level (Argyle 1999:50). Another function of paralinguistics is speech management. This may be illustrated by stress and a rate of speech. A faster rate of speech demands attention from the hearer since he/she has to listen carefully to keep up with the conversation. Stress allows the speaker to guide the hearer's attention by assigning prominence to an item selected from several candidates (hence, stress allows the speaker to differentiate the figure from the ground).

Paralinguistics is also correlated with physical distance. In fact, Hall identified types of physical distance on the basis of changes in voice volume (1978:157). Ozga notes that voice audibility, subject to environmental conditions, determines which physical distance is adopted in conversation (1996:64). In general, the further the distance, the higher the

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<sup>66</sup> However, to a smaller degree than prototypical HC cultures, such as Asian ones.

voice volume, e.g. a loud voice is unpleasant at a close distance while a whisper is difficult to be heard at a far distance. Hall argues that whispering can extend the distance between the interlocutors in the close zone of intimate distance but a raised voice or shouting reduce social distance<sub>(Ph)</sub> to personal distance (1978:168). It was also noted that speakers use a faster rate of speech in intimate situations and a slower rate in official situations (Kita 2001:174). Furthermore, a tone of voice has an impact on the perception of physical distance during conversation. It is one of the compensatory behaviours: a warm tone of voice decreases the perceived physical distance because it reduces psychological distance while a cold tone of voice may counterbalance too close physical distance by decreasing psychological distance.

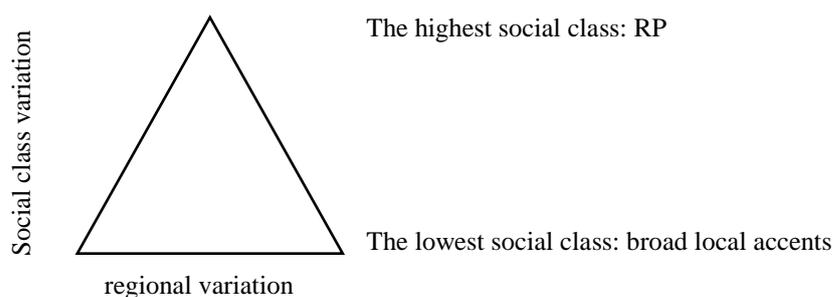
It was found by Mulac that the hearer evaluates the speaker's voice in three dimensions: 1. the speaker's social status, e.g. high/low social position, intelligentsia/working class, educated/uneducated, 2. aesthetic aspects, e.g. nice/unpleasant/ugly/sweet/sharp voice, and 3. voice dynamics, e.g. aggressive, nice, energetic, passive, strong or weak, loud or gentle (Knapp and Hall 2000:499). People believe that the voice (in particular the last two dimensions) carries cues to the speaker's personality and they **stereotypically** associate voice qualities with certain personality traits. For example, speakers with a high-pitched voice are perceived as nervous, immature, lacking in confidence or emotional. Speakers with a low pitch voice sound confident, calm and competent. Excessive loudness may be synonymous with rudeness, aggression, self-importance. An increased rate of speaking suggests that the speaker is more animated and involved in conversation. Psychological research shows that the speaker's personality may, to some extent, impact his/her voice qualities. For example, extroverts talk louder, faster and with a higher tone and fewer pauses; as a result, they are perceived as more assertive, competent and persuasive (Argyle 1999:50). Although stereotypical voice

assessments do not always reflect true traits of the speaker, they impact the nature of interaction (Knapp and Hall 2000:526).

The next part of this section will focus on the first dimension of voice evaluation, i.e. **the speaker's social status**. Research confirms that interlocutors are able to judge the speaker's social status from his/her voice with high accuracy, even on the basis of 15-second speech samples (Knapp and Hall 2000:503). Since voice qualities reveal the speaker's social status and the conceptualiser is able to identify it, they enable the conceptualiser to assess social distance to the speaker. In English a substantial part of such information is carried in the speaker's **accent**. Accent is connected with dialects, which are a variety "according to user" (...) determined by the user's geographic or social identity. Thus, accent is a permanent aspect of the speaker's ethnic, regional or social identity as a group member (Halliday and Hasan 1985:43).

Accents are distributed geographically in Poland and in the UK, and also socially in the UK. British English is unique in this respect because "social class takes precedence over geography as a determinant of speech" (Hudson 1980:43). Thus, accent may reveal the speaker's regional origin and is an index of his/her class affiliation and social status. As a permanent element of the speaker's language and social identity, accent is a linguistic status symbol. The relation between social and regional accents is often represented as a triangle (see Figure 7).

**Figure 7. Relation between social and regional accents in the UK**



Source: J.C. Wells (1982:14).

The base of the triangle represents geographical variation; it is broad because working-class accents display significant regional variety. The vertical dimension stands for social variation; the pyramid is narrow at the apex due to a lack of regional variation among upper-class accents (Wells 1982:14). Social variations develop because of social barriers: “social distance may have the same sort of effect as geographical distance: a linguistic innovation that begins amongst, say, the highest social group will affect the lowest social group last, if at all” (Trudgill 1983:35). It should be noted that accents carry a strong axiological load because stereotypical features of a given social group are attributed to accents and their speakers (Argyle 1999:51), which will be shown below.

The role of English accents in the coding of social distance will be illustrated with RP and Estuary English. **Received Pronunciation**, or RP (BBC English, Queen’s English, Oxford English), is a unique prestige variety at the apex of the pyramid. It is a regionless upper-class and upper-middle-class accent<sup>67</sup> associated with respectable social standing and good education (Crystal 1995:365). It is the accent of the public schools, which was adopted by the BBC. RP is still used by the Royal Family and the Establishment and it is spoken only by about 3% of the British population (cf. Trudgill 2001). RP is usually divided into conservative RP (the older generation, certain professions or social groups), general RP (the BBC) and advanced RP (upwardly mobile young people) (Wells 1986:279-8). RP speakers are stereotypically perceived as competent, reliable, educated and confident. Since the 70’s, the sociolinguistic status of RP has been changing: “RP, Queen’s English, Oxford English and Sloane Ranger English are all increasingly perceived as exclusive and formal” (Coggle 1993:85). RP speakers are also stereotypically assessed as snobbish, and are associated with lack of friendliness, companionability, sincerity and street creditability (cf. Trudgill 2001):

“An RP-speaker may be perceived, as soon as he starts speaking, as haughty and unfriendly by a non-RP speaker, unless and until he is able to demonstrate the contrary. He is, as it were, guilty until proved innocent.” (Trudgill 1983:139-140)

Conservative and advanced RP can even arouse hostility<sup>68</sup> (cf. Rosewarne 1984). Partly because of these connotations, RP has been losing its status of a prestige variety.

Instead, the growing popularity and prestige of **regional** speech features have been observed recently. Most educated people now use modified RP, which is a mixture of RP and various regional characteristics. Even the traditionally conservative BBC decided to introduce regional accents in the 90’s (Crystal 1995:365). One of the most popular ‘new’ accents is **Estuary English**<sup>69</sup>, the lower middle-class accent of the South East, which combines features of RP and London speech (Cockney). Estuary English is often associated with the lower strata of British society but in fact its speakers represent a wide social spectrum: business circles, members of the House of Commons, the Civil Service, the media, academics, the police (Coggle 1993:73-82). It is also an increasingly popular and fashionable variety among upwardly socially mobile people who would have earlier become speakers of advanced RP. Even young members of the Royal Family are reported to use glottalisation, a distinctive feature of Estuary English (Crystal 2000:365). Estuary English is spreading because it obscures sociolinguistic origins; hence, it is adopted as a socially neutral accent and a bridge between classes (Rosewarne 1984). Its popularity is also due to positive associations of solidarity, friendliness, down-to-earthness and street credibility. Estuary English projects an image of a relaxed, approachable and informal person: “Upper- and middle-class young people often feel that a flavour of Estuary identifies them as being more ordinary and less privileged than they

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<sup>67</sup> RP speakers themselves do not regard it as an accent: in their opinion speakers of other varieties ‘have accents’; they do not (Rosiak 2001:47).

<sup>68</sup> In American science-fiction and horror films sinister characters usually speak in RP accents (cf. Trudgill 2001).

<sup>69</sup> Its typical linguistic features include glottal stops for /t/, vocalised /l/, Cockney vowels (broad diphthongs), absence of h-dropping (Kerswill 2000:10).

really are. Women may feel that a hint of Estuary helps them come over as tougher and more positive” (Coggle1993:86). Estuary English may also be used deliberately in business circles to enhance communication with customers: Crystal cites a businessman who describes RP as a not consumer-friendly accent which has to be lowered to do business (1995:327). Moreover, Estuary English is often used in advertising because it can appeal better to certain groups of people<sup>70</sup>.

On the other hand, Estuary English still evokes strong purist reactions, in particular among middle-aged and elder people who perceive it as uncouth due to its associations with Cockney. One of the most stigmatised features is a glottal stop, which is mainly encountered in lower working class speech. As pointed out by Coggle, “there is a delicate path to tread between avoiding the negative connotations of conservative RP on the one hand and the totally different but equally negative connotations of broad Cockney” (1993:87).

The above changes in attitudes to accents show that the process of informalisation of British society has also affected its language. In the last century British English has undergone a process of dialect levelling and standardization. Furthermore, there is a greater tolerance of variety and growing respect for regional accents (cf. Kerswill 2000). Rural accents, such as those of Devonshire, Northumberland (*Geordie*) or the Scottish Highlands, are generally assessed as “pleasant, charming, quaint or amusing” (Wells 1982:30). However, according to Wells, “any non-standard accent will tend to have associations of provinciality and/or lower status” (ibid.:34). For example, urban accents (i.e. Birmingham, Newcastle or London accents) “smack of a lack of education and culture” (Coggle 1993:90) and are stereotypically considered by the British to be ugly, careless, unpleasant or annoying (Wells 1982:30). They are more negatively evaluated

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<sup>70</sup> Comfort and Lenor use RP-speaking women in their advertisements to create a delicate and subtle image (Coggle 1993:78).

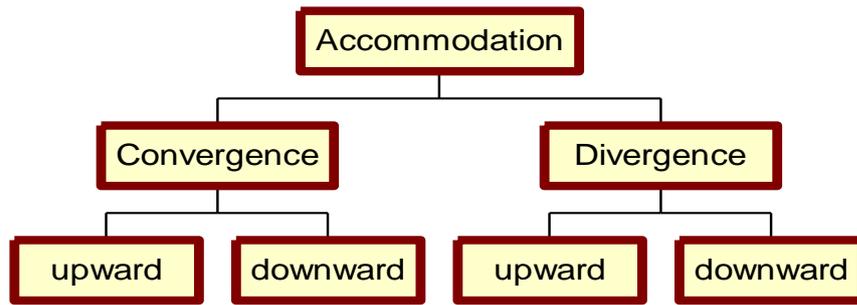
than rural or RP accents (Trudgill 1983). However, it should be stressed that speakers of stigmatised varieties do not adopt the prestige accent (even though they are capable) because their own group would reject them (Argyle 1999:92). Liverpool accent is exceptional here; once harsh and impenetrable, it is now seen as straight and friendly. As a result, 35 call centres employing 10,000 staff are run in Liverpool (cf. Ward 2000). Speakers with lower status accents are often attributed desirable features, especially by speakers of the same accent: 1. more honest, friendly, nice, generous, with a better sense of humour; 2. more manly in case of men 3. more genuine because educated accents are perceived as obscuring one's social origin (Argyle 1999:92).

Sociolinguists note that accents (and dialects) not only express but also maintain social hierarchy (Halliday and Hasan 1985:43). Linguistic behaviour between people of unequal social status is studied by the **accommodation theory**<sup>71</sup>. Accommodation is a process “whereby participants in a conversation adjust their accent, dialect or other language characteristics according to the language of the other participant(s)” (Trudgill 1992:7). It is based on the assumption that individuals consciously or subconsciously seek or avoid identification with others through language “depending on the extent to which they see social integration as beneficial or detrimental” (Hathaway 1982:185). Accommodation may involve all aspects of language structure, i.e. vocabulary, grammar, etc. but also nonverbal behaviour, such as paralinguistics and physical distance. Accommodation has two major forms depending on whether the speaker converges towards or diverges away from the conceptualiser (see Figure 8).

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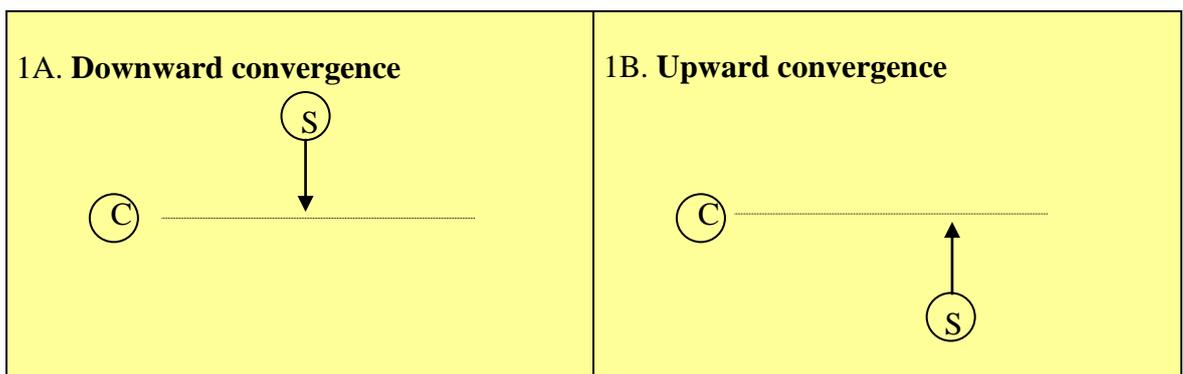
<sup>71</sup> This theory was developed by social psychologist Howard Giles in the 1960's and 1970's (Trudgill 1992:8).

Figure 8. Accommodation



**Convergence** is adaptive empathy where the speaker modifies his/her verbal and nonverbal behaviour to make it resemble more closely that of the conceptualiser. Convergence may be diagrammed as the speaker's (S) movement towards the conceptualiser (C) along the vertical axis<sup>72</sup> of the social conversational space. In the case of downward convergence the speaker's status is higher than that of the conceptualiser (1A), i.e. a higher status person accommodates to a lower status person as in a shift from RP to Estuary English. In upward convergence the speaker's status is lower than that of the conceptualiser (1B), i.e. a lower status person accommodates to a higher status person (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Convergence<sup>73</sup>



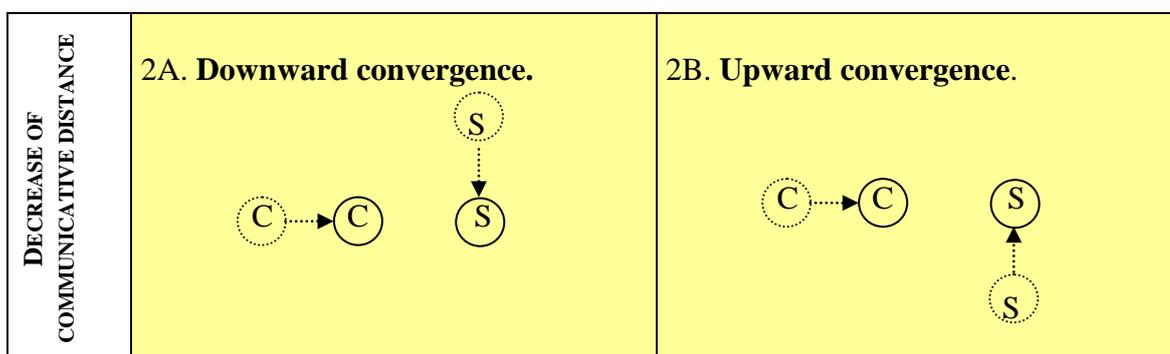
Converging up or down to the conceptualiser, the speaker wants to be perceived by him/her as closer and more similar (similarity is one of the factors that impact attraction

<sup>72</sup> As already noted, status is conceptualised both along the vertical and horizontal axis.

and in-group identification). As pointed out by Hathaway, “speech convergence is undertaken to reduce embarrassment between people of differing status and to prepare a common basis for the communication of ideas and feelings” (1982:189). In fact, Estuary English is often seen as the middle ground between RP and London speech resulting from upward convergence from local accents to increase one’s social status and downward convergence of the middle class to be in line with informalisation trends (Rosewarne 1984).

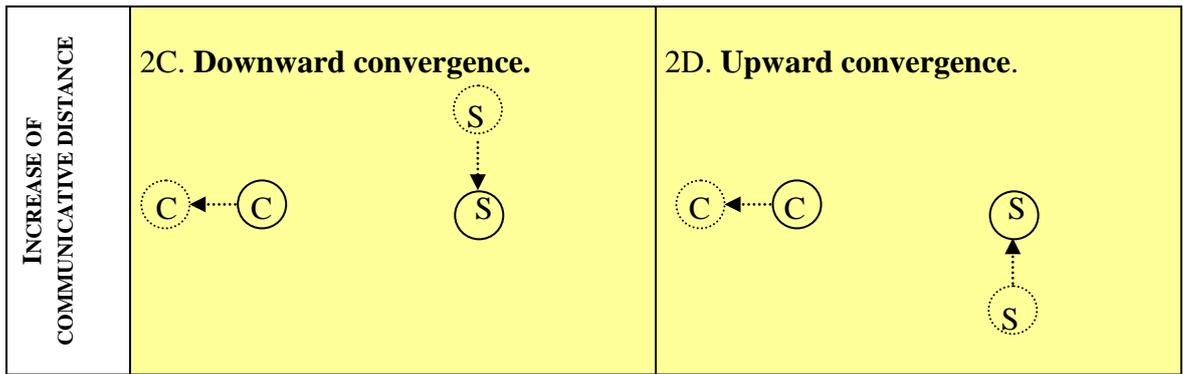
It should be noted that the accommodation theory focuses mainly on the speaker’s movement; however, it is also worth considering the conceptualiser’s reaction. An earlier discussion of the conceptualiser’s reactions to nonverbal behaviours shows, as confirmed by extensive psychological research, that his/her reactions are not only symmetrical, but also compensatory depending on the conceptualiser’s expectations. The former reaction will aim at decreasing communicative distance after the speaker’s convergence (example 2A and 2B in Figure 10). However, it is also possible that the conceptualiser will apply compensatory behaviours which increase communicative distance to counterbalance the speaker’s convergence (2C and 2D in Figure 10).

**Figure 10. Change of communicative distance in reaction to convergence<sup>74</sup>**



<sup>73</sup> The dotted line represents the conceptualiser’s own social status.

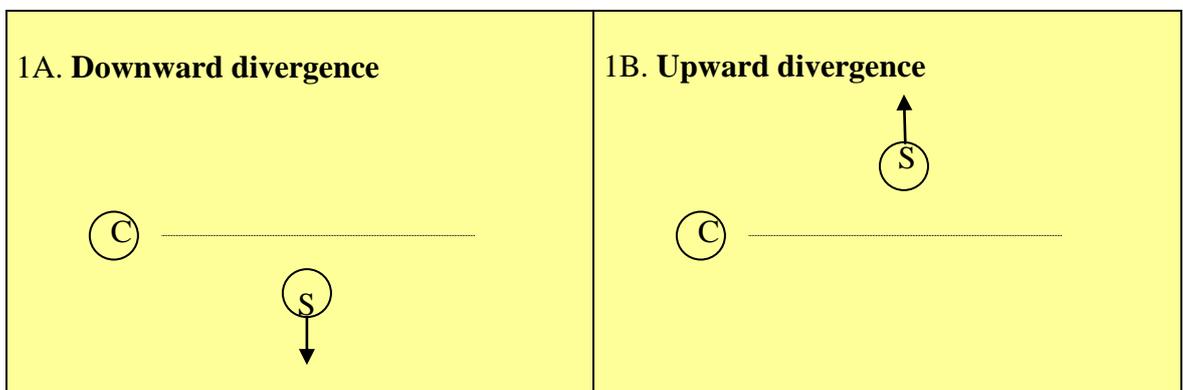
<sup>74</sup> Dotted lines stand for the speaker’s and the conceptualiser’s positions prior to downward and upward convergence.



It may be assumed that in a prototypical collaborative conversation, the speaker's convergence will result in the conceptualiser's decrease of communicative distance (2A and 2B), rather than its increase (2C and 2D).

**Divergence** is a distancing device by which the speaker makes his/her verbal and nonverbal behaviour more unlike that of the conceptualiser to signal social distance, disapproval or withdrawal (Trudgill 1992:7-8). Diverging, the speaker signals an out-group categorisation of the conceptualiser. Divergence may be depicted as the speaker's movement away from the conceptualiser along the vertical axis. In the case of downward divergence (1A), the speaker's status is lower than that of the conceptualiser, as in a shift to regional accent, slang or Black Vernacular English. In upward divergence (1B) the speaker's status is higher than that of the conceptualiser, e.g. a shift from a regional accent to RP or a use of Latinate words to an uneducated person.

**Figure 11. Divergence**



When they diverge, interlocutors exaggerate and amplify differences between themselves through linguistic distinctiveness. Hathaway notes that divergence can create a communicative distance between the interlocutors, who “create dimensions in which they make themselves distinct from the out-group, almost as if they wished to create a ‘communicative distance’” (Hathaway 1982:185). As in the case of convergence, the conceptualiser may react to the speaker’s movement with compensatory or symmetric behaviours depending on his communicative goals.

**Polish** is different from English in terms of accents since, as in most Indo-European languages, geography and education take precedence over a social class. Accent marks the speaker’s social identity to a much smaller degree and there is no variety / accent which has an equivalent status to RP in English. The most prestigious variety is Standard Polish (also called “the literary language”), which is used by the majority of educated people, both of urban, rural or working class background. Its relatively high status is connected with the fact that it is generally recognised as a language of educated people all over Poland. However, Standard Polish is not a regionless accent; it is a variety which carries the speaker’s regional features. Speakers of Standard Polish generally fall within two<sup>75</sup> main types of regional pronunciation: Warsaw pronunciation and Cracow-Poznań pronunciation. The most distinctive difference between them is that interword and endword voiceless consonants preceded by a vowel, e.g. *s* in PSL [pe-es-el], are not voiced in the Warsaw pronunciation and are voiced in the Cracow-Poznań region. In the official variety of Standard Polish the Warsaw pronunciation is the norm<sup>76</sup> recommended, for example, to TV presenters (Wierzchowska 1980:145). Nevertheless, both types of pronunciation have equivalent

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<sup>75</sup> The situation is different in Eastern Poland where Lvov or Vilnius pronunciation has a prestigious rank in certain communities.

prestige. It should be stressed that phonological differences between the two types of pronunciation are so minor that they are unrecognisable for non-linguists.

More differences exist within rural dialects (Wierzchowska 1980:143). These dialects, as well as urban dialects, have lower prestige than Standard Polish since they are perceived by Polish native speakers as a language of peasants and uneducated people (Handke 2001:211). An inclusion of rural dialect features into Standard Polish is considered by Polish linguists to be incorrect with the norm (Wierzchowska 1980:145). It should be noted, however, that the use of dialectal features may be the speaker's conscious or subconscious effort of downward convergence towards the conceptualiser to claim in-group membership and not to be perceived as different. Likewise, a switch from Standard Polish into the Silesian dialect may be a downward divergence because an average Polish hearer has difficulties with understanding these dialects.

Upward divergence is mainly connected with hypercorrectness and pretentious pronunciation, in particular in Standard Polish. For example, it applies to nasality, i.e. excessively careful pronunciation of nasal vowels  $\epsilon$  and  $q$  (Dunaj 2003:126). Such pronunciation is perceived as unnatural and pretentious by an average Pole, which is confirmed by the negative axiological load of the metaphor *ktoś jest  $\epsilon$ ,  $q$*  (fastidious, affected; lit. somebody is  $\epsilon$ ,  $q$ ). Here an aspect of pronunciation is mapped onto the speaker's personality to signal his/her haughtiness, assumed superiority or daintiness. In fact, the person does not necessarily have to pronounce strong  $\epsilon$ ,  $q$  but may use other pretentious linguistic elements, nonverbal behaviour (the head held up, theatrical gestures), etc. Other examples include excessively careful pronunciation of *trz*, as in "*trzeba*"<sup>77</sup>. Attitudes to language use may differ from speaker to speaker: what some

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<sup>76</sup> Polish pronunciation norms were developed nearly 80 years ago by a group of artists and linguists (Klemensiewicz 1967) and they have not been significantly modified since that time.

<sup>77</sup> SPP p. 795.

speakers find elegant and sophisticated may be perceived as pompous, posh and snobbish by others.

As a final example, I will analyse the pronunciation of Polish words of Greek or Latin origin as proparoxytones, e.g. *muzyka*, *fizyka*, *statystyka*, in particular by educated speakers of high linguistic competence, which is consistent with the prescriptive linguistic norm and tradition. However, a large number of contemporary Poles (including a substantial number of educated people) tend to pronounce these words as paroxytones, e.g. *muzyka*, *fizyka*, *statystyka*, as if they were completely assimilated into Polish<sup>78</sup>. There is also an opposite tendency, hypercorrection, to stress paroxytones as proparoxytones, e.g. *atmosfera*, *wizyta*, *krytycyzm*, *analiza*, *liceum*, *muzeum*, etc. This pronunciation is often stereotypically assessed as “blatant” (Bąk 1984:116-117) or “snobbish” (Doroszewski 1966:463), especially if the stressed syllable is pronounced as a strong syllable with a prolonged vowel. It may be interpreted by the conceptualiser as pretentiousness or haughtiness (upward divergence) even though the speaker may do it unconsciously without such intention.

Hypercorrectness takes place when “speakers of a lower prestige variety, in attempting to adopt features of a **higher prestige variety**, incorrectly analyse differences between the two varieties and overgeneralize on the basis of observed correspondences” (Trudgill 1992:37)<sup>79</sup>. Hypercorrectness may also stem from linguistic insecurity, i.e. the speaker’s negative feelings about his/her native variety and the resulting feeling of insecurity about its value or correctness, which may lead to accommodation to higher status speech (Trudgill 1992:48-49). This phenomenon has also been observed in Estuary

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<sup>78</sup> The latest Dictionary of Correct Polish (NSPP by Markowski) acknowledges this change by permitting paroxytonic stress in informal register (NSPP 1613), see also (Ozóg 2001:90). An earlier Dictionary of Correct Polish (SJP by Doroszewski 1996, first edition 1973) does not allow paroxytonic stress in these examples.

English, where it results from the incorrect generalisation of RP features. Coggle notes yod-insertion in places where it would not be used in RP, e.g. *soon* → [syoon]. Another example is a full value assigned to unstressed syllables at the end of words, such as *Friday, hurricane*. These examples indicate “a desire to err on the up-market side” and “to appear educated rather than ‘common’” (1993:53). In general, hypercorrectness is associated with the speaker’s attempt to sound more educated and dignified than he/she actually is. Thus, the speaker’s intention is to upgrade his/her social status.

The relationship between hypercorrectness and social distance may be seen in a wider perspective, covering linguistic correctness and incorrectness. In general, speakers who use correct and careful language project a self-image of an educated and well-mannered person, which communicates their high social status. Educated speakers generally have higher linguistic awareness; as a result, their speech differs from that of uneducated speakers. In some situations careful speech may be perceived as upward divergence, for example, by uneducated speakers whose speech is less correct and careful. Although such speakers may not be aware of the fact that their speech departs from the norm, nevertheless, they may feel a lack of similarity; hence, a communicative distance.

It is important, in conclusion, to emphasise that paralinguistic devices contain conventional ways of expressing social and psychological distance. British culture places more importance on vocal and verbal channels of communication. Thus, speakers of English are better equipped to code and decode social status through accent; hence, to express social distance. Polish, which focuses on nonverbal non-vocal channels, does not have similar paralinguistic devices by which the speaker may inform the interlocutor about his/her social status and express social distance.

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<sup>79</sup> An example from English is the faulty ‘correction’ of the north of England pronunciation of words, such as *look* from [luk] to supposedly **RP** [lak] by analogy with correctly observed northern versus RP

### 3. Correlation of Physical Distance with the Content of Conversation

The next two sub-chapters set out to discuss how physical distance is correlated with verbal communication, in particular with the content of conversation and registers. It has been noted earlier that nonverbal cues are crucial for communicating emotions and attitudes while verbal communication is important for factual information. However, the relationship between interlocutors may be also expressed through verbal communication, which will be shown below.

Conversations have different conceptual content, or topics the interlocutors talk about. Topics may range from **impersonal** to highly personal. The former typically includes the weather, current events, politics, sport or work-related issues. This type of friendly talk is often referred to as chatting or small talk. The interlocutors do not overtly talk about their relationship or about themselves; however, their relationship is constantly construed in the ground. It is because the very fact of talking has a **phatic** function: according to Bronisław Malinowski, speech ensures phatic communion between the interlocutors, which “arises out of the basic human need to signal friendship – or, at least, lack of enmity” (Crystal 1995:10). Thus, talk establishes and maintains the relationship with the interlocutor.

Conversation may focus on people other than the interlocutors. In this case both interlocutors view the stage with other participants but they themselves remain offstage. The most prototypical discussion about other people is gossip, which is stereotypically associated with females (Talbot 1998:81). Gossip requires mutual knowledge between the interlocutors: “relationship parties use their mutual understanding of network members as a resource in constituting their particular relationship” (Goldsmith and

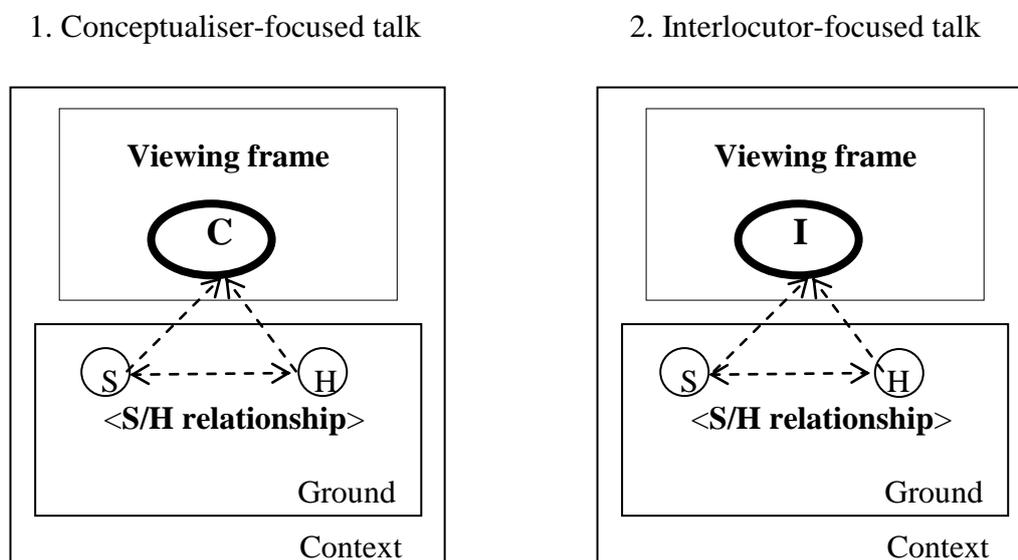
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correspondences such as *duck* [duk vs. dak] (Trudgill 1992:37).

Baxter 1996). The interlocutors' awareness that they share certain knowledge and opinions about other people creates a bond and psychological closeness between them.

In general, a topic must be adjusted to the degree of social and psychological distance between the interlocutors. For example, speakers whose social status is lower than that of the interlocutor should not raise personal topics by themselves. Speakers are usually careful not to reveal their feelings and opinions to strangers because it may be detrimental to them. Thus, the closer the relationship between the interlocutors, the more **personal** and less cautious conversation becomes. When the interlocutors shift from impersonal to personal topics, they move closer to each other in the psychological space. Personal talk may be conceptualiser-focused when the interlocutors' attention is directed at the conceptualiser or interlocutor-focused when the interlocutors' attention is directed at the participant other than the conceptualiser (see Figure 12):

**Figure 12. Personal topic of conversation and focus of attention**



C – the conceptualiser  
 S – the speaker  
 H – the hearer  
 I – the interlocutor

The conceptualiser has both the role of the speaker and the hearer in conversation. When talk focuses on the other participant (2), he/she becomes the onstage figure and the centre of attention. This happens when the conceptualiser talks about the interlocutor, asks him/her personal questions or when the interlocutor talks about himself/herself. Interlocutor-oriented personal questions help to shift the focus of attention from the conceptualiser or neutral topics to the interlocutor. Interlocutor-focus is one of the ways the conceptualiser may signal his/her direct interest in the interlocutor, which ensures rapport and decreases the distance between them in the psychological conversational space. Interlocutor-focused talk may vary in depth of intimacy: ranging from work-related discussions to his/her health, problems, attitudes, feelings. Politeness rules require the interlocutors to show verbal care demonstrated by avoidance of “matters that might be painful, embarrassing, or humiliating to the recipient” (Goffman 1967:65). However, when the conceptualiser focuses conversation excessively on the interlocutor, the interlocutor may feel that the conceptualiser is too inquisitive or is not open himself/herself. On the other hand, when the conceptualiser excessively focuses on himself/herself, it may signal egocentrism and lack of interest in the interlocutor, and consequently, increase psychological distance. It is important for the interlocutors to balance the focus of conversation accordingly.

When talk is conceptualiser-focused (1), he/she is the centre of attention and the onstage figure. In this case the scene is construed objectively since the conceptualiser is both the subject and object of conceptualisation (cf. Langacker 1990:316-8). If such talk is sufficiently intimate, it is called self-disclosure by psychologists. **Self-disclosure** is the conceptualiser’s opening up and revealing of the inner self; the conceptualiser provides access to himself/herself. This concept is based on the PERSON AS A CONTAINER metaphor. The container holds human experiences and can be opened to show the real self by means

of communication: COMMUNICATION BETWEEN FRIENDS IS SHARING ONE'S INNERMOST (EXPERIENCE) OBJECTS  $\Rightarrow$  THE MORE EXPERIENCE/OBJECTS ARE SHARED, THE MORE INTIMACY THERE IS BETWEEN THE TWO PEOPLE (Kövecses 1995:320). According to social norms, self-disclosure should be appropriate to the situation and to the stage of relationship. Psychologists emphasise that self-disclosure indicates trust, increases intimacy, and deepens the attachment between the interlocutors (Calhoun and Acecella 1990:370). People disclose to those they like; people like those who disclose to them and to whom they have disclosed (Brehm and Kassin 1996:208). For this reason self-disclosure may be used to escalate the relationship, e.g. to shift from a superficial acquaintance to a friend (ibid.:369). Self-disclosure will not result in smaller psychological distance when its intimacy is too high for the stage of relationship. Speaking about or asking for too intimate information is regarded as space invasion (Culpeper 1996:358).

The conceptualiser may expect that his/her self-disclosure will elicit self-disclosure from the interlocutor, which is called mutual revelation by Tannen (1984:80). Informing the interlocutor that one has similar experiences enhances perceived similarity between the interlocutors as conceptualised in the ground. Psychologists emphasise that one of the basic mistakes of lonely people is that they talk about impersonal topics, which does not allow them for self-disclosure (Argyle 1999:87).

The most personal type of talk is when the interlocutors explicitly talk about their relationship. In this case attention is focused on both the conceptualiser and the interlocutor, who are conceptualised as onstage figures. Talk about relationships involves abstract concepts; hence, the interlocutors will most probably apply relationship metaphors as demonstrated in Part I (e.g. *We are close/we are drifting apart*).

Polish and British conversations may differ in terms of content intimacy. Different cultural patterns were noted by Ronowicz in this respect. He notes that English-speaking Australians regard Poles as inquisitive due to their open manner of discussing personal and controversial matters (1995:31). Poles highly value negative self-disclosure and negative thinking; specifically, they like to talk about their problems with health, family, work, and earnings. As a result, they often grumble, whinge, criticise, think up nightmare scenarios, etc., which creates a feeling of communion between the interlocutors.<sup>80</sup> It should be noted that the British also like complaining; however, it concerns the weather, trains, the government, etc. and it is not so ubiquitous and personal as Polish grumbling. The British are more private than Poles: Wierzbicka notes that in Anglo-Saxon culture there is a taboo on personal remarks. She further claims that Polish culture values closeness manifested through telling the interlocutor negative remarks while Anglo-American culture values harmony manifested through avoidance of negative remarks and negative thoughts about the interlocutor (1991:110). However, her claim is not substantiated by any examples or data and it is unclear on what grounds she draws such conclusions.

The content of conversation is also correlated with physical distance. When people talk about personal intimate matters or share secrets, they maintain a shorter distance. When they talk about impersonal general matters, physical distance is usually larger (Knapp and Hall 2000:222). It means that in a collaborative conversation psychological distance coded through topic intimacy requires similar psychological distance coded through physical distance. However, if the conceptualiser feels that

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<sup>80</sup> Polish even has a special dative construction for communicating misfortunes which enables the speaker to present himself/herself as a victim. Wierzbicka calls it “the dative of misfortune” (e.g. *dziecko mi zachorowało*) – the speaker passively undergoes unpleasant feelings or emotions as a result of events which are beyond his/her control (1990:82-85).

physical distance is too close, he/she may counterbalance it by switching to a more impersonal topic.

The content of conversation, together with other factors, has an impact on the type of language used by the interlocutors: namely, registers. The next section discusses how the conceptual content of conversation is symbolised through registers.

#### **4. Correlation of Physical Distance with Registers.**

The spoken variety of Polish and English is not uniform but is differentiated geographically, socially and functionally. **Registers** involve the functional/situational differentiation of language and they are defined as a “variety according to use” determined by the situation of use (Halliday and Hasan 1985:41). The choice of register is made at the beginning of conversation with first selections of linguistic units (e.g. greeting formulae, forms of address). Both the content and register of conversation are superordinate categories which underlie further choices at lower levels of language. Registers are typically divided into formal and informal registers<sup>81</sup>.

##### **4.1 Formal and informal register**

**Formal register** is used in official public situations. Its main function is referential, i.e. to inform the hearer, rather than phatic, i.e. to manage the relationship between the interlocutors. It is an unmarked and prototypical choice if there is a large social and psychological distance between the interlocutors. Formal register assumes an **impersonal**, rational and normative vantage point (Bartmiński 1990:117). As a result, it is restrained in expression of emotions and feelings and demonstrates controlled

expressiveness on all channels, including nonverbal and verbal behaviour. For this reason, formal register is useful in institutional corporate settings as it depersonalises communication and keeps it businesslike (Morand 1998). Formal register resembles most the written variety of language (Ożóg 2001:87) and is more frequent in writing than in speech. Formal speech is highly standardized and shows fewer regional features. This register is connected with a careful use of language, observance of norms, more studied choice of words, indirectness and verbosity, careful pronunciation and more complex grammar, all of which point to its high cognitive complexity.

Formal register usually signals that the speaker **respects** the hearer and social norms; thus, it is **honorific** because it communicates respect for the interlocutor in a metamessage. This claim is also reflected in Haiman's views, who notes that physical distance between the interlocutors, which is an icon of social and psychological distance, has its linguistic parallel in formal registers employed by them. Haiman claims that there is an iconic<sup>82</sup> motivation between the function of formal register and its form. A formal utterance contains a greater amount of linguistic material and is more indirect than an informal one. It is stressed that "what is at issue is (...) the length of an entire message; and what is signaled is not the conceptual closeness or dependence among the ideas in the message, but a pragmatic relationship between the addressee and the contents of the message" (1983:801). This **verbosity** characteristic of formal registers is "a verbal icon of an envelope around the speaker's actual message". Its function is to protect the hearer "from the speaker's ideas in the same way that he is protected by physical distance from

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<sup>81</sup> There is no consensus among Polish linguists about the division of spoken language into functional varieties. Some linguists follow Pisarek's division of standard spoken Polish into formal (*staranna* - careful) and informal (*swobodna* - unconstrained) varieties, which are further divided into functional styles. This division is similar to Dunaj's recent taxonomy of Polish into official and unofficial register, modelled on British and American linguistics. The most popular division distinguishes three varieties: colloquial/unofficial language; *literary* Polish (the so-called "cultural" language, i.e. careful model Polish spoken by educated people – this register is not distinguished by British and American linguists) and official language (rhetorical and bureaucratic spoken language) (cf. Wilkoń 2000, Grabias 1997).

other emanations of a personality” (1983:801). It means that social and psychological distance between interlocutors corresponds to the length of the message. In consequence, the longer the message, the more polite and respectful it is. Because of this protective function, formal register is one of negative politeness strategies (cf. Brown and Levinson 1987). An increase of linguistic distance (length of the message) results in an increase of social/psychological distance. Haiman emphasises that formal register not only signals respect but has an instrumental function of maintaining a respectful distance between the interlocutors (1983:801). Thus, formal register is an icon and a guarantee of social and psychological distance.

Geertz compares register levels to walls which protect the speaker and the hearer from mutual infringements on their privacy (1972). This metaphor emphasizes another aspect of formal register: its protective function also extends over the speaker. The speaker protects the hearer, but he/she also protects himself/herself from the hearer. In general, formal register is a hedge (or a wall in Geertz’ terms) against getting too close and the speaker may use formal register to signal a **lack of intimacy**, rather than respect. Thus, formal register is not always evaluated positively by the hearer; there are cases when it may offend him/her by its lack of intimacy and large psychological distance. It happens, in particular, when register is inconsistent with the hearer’s expectations about the relationship between the interlocutors and the setting. For example, in conversations with family members or friends, formal register is evaluated negatively (cf. Blum-Kulka 1992:259); large psychological distance coded in formal register is inconsistent with close psychological distance existing between the interlocutors. Other negative aspects of formal register were noted by Leech and Short, who claim that formal register is a “sign

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<sup>82</sup> Within Cognitive Linguistics, iconicity is the correspondence between the structure of language and the structure of experience/conceptual structure (Ungerer and Schmid 1996:255).

of studied linguistic choice” and “suggests a lack of spontaneity, and hence by extension, a suspicion of insincerity” (1981:314).

The speaker’s ability to choose register in accordance with the pre-existing communicative distance and the setting is part of his/her communicative competence. Crystal emphasises the role of naturalness/unmarkedness in register selection: “an appropriate use of language is one which does not draw attention to itself” (1995:367). For example, formal register stands out on informal occasions or in less official situations and may be perceived by the interlocutor as an attempt to increase social distance: “‘talking posh’ or ‘getting on a high horse’” (ibid.:367). **Excessive formality** is associated with hypercorrectness and a wish to make one’s speech more dignified and educated. Typical examples include not only stylistic mistakes (mixing of registers), but also hypercorrect grammatical errors: *Whom shall I say is calling?* or *between you and I*; the use of specialist terminology or Latinate vocabulary to an uneducated person (to ‘show off’ with one’s linguistic competence) or complex grammatical constructions which may be difficult to process in real-time conversation. Social distance may be also created through the use of linguistic units which are stigmatised as uneducated and should be avoided in careful and formal speech, e.g. *szłem* instead of *szedłem* in Polish. In this case the speaker may unconsciously signal his/her lower social status, which allows the conceptualiser to assess social distance between them. Multiple negation has similar status in English: *She ain’t never given me no problems* (Biber et al. 1999:1121). Sometimes non-standard forms lack prestige and sound ill-educated but also have a “role in establishing and maintaining social solidarity among the speakers in selected groups, and in bringing vigour and colour into speech style” (Biber et al. 1999:1121).

It is **informal** register that is the most prototypical and unmarked choice for face-to-face conversation. Corpus-based statistical research confirms that the register of

conversation is predominantly informal (Biber et al. 1999:1050). It is an everyday variety frequently used in private, unofficial or noninstitutional settings by interlocutors who maintain close psychological distance. Informal language stands out in official situations; it “is stigmatised in such terms as ‘undereducated’ or ‘careless’” (Crystal 1995:367); however, it may be found in some corporate settings, in particular in the service sector to create a friendly atmosphere between the staff and clients (Morand 1998). **Informalisation** trends are also reflected at this level of language: informal register tends to replace formal register in certain usage events reserved earlier for formal registers, e.g. public or institutional settings, both in English and in Polish. This means that informal register widens its scope of use as a result of informalisation. Wierzbicka claims that Polish dislikes informality (evidence: excessive use of titles) (1991:57); however, this claim may be difficult to sustain in light of recent social and linguistic changes.

The major determinant of informal register is a degree of **psychological** distance between interlocutors: the smaller the distance, the more informal register is expected. The choice of informal register **signals** that the speaker conceptualises the hearer as psychologically close and wants to maintain small psychological distance; hence, it impacts a degree of communicative distance during conversation. Kita describes informal register as a language of **closeness**. She emphasises that closeness gives the privilege to use informal language and the use of informal register suggests closeness (2001:172).

Selection of informal register is motivated by the categorisation of the interlocutor as an **in-group** member. Similar observations were made about Colloquial Russian by Yokoyama, who writes that the central feature of this variety is “its *svoj* mode, in which the speaker assumes ‘short-interlocutor distance’ (SID) between him/herself and the addressee. *Svoj*-ness is motivated both psychologically and socially, and it is subject to fluctuations that depend on subtle shifts in the speaker’s perception of him/herself and of

the addressee” (1999:402). This is also true for Polish and to some extent for English. Yokoyama also notes that the in-group/out-group categorisation is a basic historical opposition in Slavonic cultures (ibid.:425). Thus, the in-group aspect of informal register is more important in Polish than in English.

Informal register involves an anthropocentric, naïve and common-sense view of the world (Ozóg 2001:96) and it employs highly **expressive** and evaluative lexicon that reveals different degrees of the speaker’s emotional stance towards the interlocutor and the world (Wilkoń 2000:51). Informal register is characterised by the relaxation of and lower observance of linguistic norms, less constrained nonverbal and verbal behaviour (spontaneity), more personal topics. This register has a collaborative floor rather than a singly developed floor as in formal register; hence, it is more direct, has more interruptions, shorter sentences, contractions, animated intonation, in-group speech patterns, such as non-standard and regional elements (Biber et al. 1999:1050).

Informal register enables the speaker to get closer to the hearer, who is not protected by any linguistic ‘obstacles’. This function also works in the other direction: the speaker is not protected by any linguistic material; hence, he/she signals his/her openness and psychological accessibility. Just as formal register is an icon of large psychological distance between the interlocutors, informal register is an icon of short psychological distance and has an instrumental function of maintaining it. Being direct and having less linguistic material, informal register enters the hearer’s personal zone, which may also be interpreted as a space invasion and/or disrespect, rather than intimacy, in particular when social or psychological distance between the interlocutors is large.

To sum up, the choice of register is determined by the **pre-existing** social and psychological distance between the interlocutors, as well as external factors, such as the setting. It should be also noted that the relation between register and communicative

distance is **bi-directional**: register not only reflects the pre-existing relationship between the interlocutors, but also shapes their ongoing relationship.

#### 4.2 Joos's Hierarchy of Styles

It should be stressed that functional varieties of language form a continuum and they are divided (and labelled) more or less arbitrarily. The boundary between formal and informal register is fuzzy and there is large variation within each register. A more detailed five-level hierarchy of styles was proposed by Joos, who distinguishes between frozen, formal, consultative, casual and intimate style (1961) (see Table 5).

**Table 5. Comparison of Joos's hierarchy of styles with formal/informal registers**

Registers	Joos's Styles	Description
Informal register	Intimate	It is the most grammatically and phonologically reduced style and it is almost entirely emotional in content. In this variety, people often apply their own intimate codes (Joos 1961:29-32).
	Casual	This is a normal, relaxed style reserved for psychologically close people, such as friends, acquaintances. Information about shared experience is left out or is elliptical (Joos 1961:23-29).
	Consultative	It is a plain everyday style: "our norm for coming to terms with strangers - people who speak our language but whose personal stock of information may be different". Therefore, it is necessary for a speaker to provide background information (Joos 1961:23).
Formal register	Formal <sup>83</sup>	It is an official level of language, used mainly for informative purposes, characterised by a lack of personal involvement on the side of both the speaker and the hearer (Joos 1961:33-8)
	Frozen <sup>84</sup>	It is the most careful and elegant variety reserved for very important or symbolic moments. It is addressed to people who are to remain social strangers (Joos 1961:39-67).

The consultative style is the most neutral level which may be regarded as a fuzzy boundary between informal and formal register. This style is also a transition zone between in-group (intimate and casual) and out-group (formal and frozen) language. In-

<sup>83</sup> As shown in the Table, Joos's term *formal style* has narrower application than *formal register* which covers part of consultative, formal and frozen styles.

group conversations require a more informal register than out-group conversations. There are linguistic units which are offensive when used to strangers but are bonding when used to in-group members (e.g. vulgar terms of address).

It is evident that Joos's typology is based on a degree of social and psychological distance between interlocutors. For example, consultative style is addressed to strangers while casual style to friends and acquaintances. As Joos notes, it is difficult to treat the listener as a stranger for a long time; as a result, the speaker will "try to form a social group with him" (1961:23). This may be achieved by a shift into a **casual** style which makes a stranger an insider (ibid.:23). As pointed out by Joos, slang is a defining feature of a casual style (1961:23). Linguistic descriptions of **slang**<sup>85</sup> emphasise that it is a type of in-group speech "claiming group membership" and solidarity (Spolsky 1998:35). It means that the speaker may use slang to bond with a given social group or to emphasise his/her membership in such a group. Thus, slang signals close psychological distance between interlocutors if both of them speak it. It creates an informal atmosphere (entertaining function: it is often playful, witty, creative), creates a feeling of togetherness and projects an image of easy-going person. NSLPA notes that slang lexicon focuses on the negative assessment of people and objects and pejorative categorisation of other nations, social classes, professions, etc. (1998:IX). Negative assessment of other people is bonding because it assumes shared knowledge and attitudes.

Slang may also be **exclusive** if the hearer does not speak, understand or identify with it. This distancing role of slang has been suggested by Joos: "the utility of any slang expression for classing the addressee as an insider (or excluding an unwanted listener as an outsider) depends on the fact (...) that only a minority of the population understands

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<sup>84</sup> Excluded from discussion as a monologic form of spoken communication and written variety.

this bit of slang” (1961:26). Slang may not be easily understandable (due to its exclusiveness) or socially acceptable, in particular if it is marked by high vulgarity. It may be used by the speaker to alienate himself/herself from the hearer or to revolt against the existing social order (NSLPA 1998:IX<sup>86</sup>). In this case, the speaker’s selection of slang is a downward divergence to signal his/her distinctness and ‘otherness’ from the hearer, i.e. social and/or psychological distance.

Joos notes that slang does not have to be used in intimate style: “intimacy does not tolerate the slang imputation that the addressee needs to be told that she is an insider” (1961:32). In intimate style interlocutors develop their own communicative codes. This idea resembles Basil Bernstein’s restricted and elaborated codes. The former is used between intimates and has specific linguistic features (ellipsis, broken sentences) and “stresses the speaker’s membership of a group” while the former emphasises the speaker’s “unique nature as a person” (Trudgill 1983:133).

During conversation interlocutors may **shift style levels** to adjust their speech to the current psychological or social distance or to compensate for uncomfortable physical distance. However, it may happen only within conventional limits. Joos notes that speakers usually shift neighbouring styles but “it is anti-social to shift two or more steps in a single jump, for instance from casual to formal” (1961:19). Such a larger shift signals an increase of psychological distance.

### **4.3 Impact of Physical Distance on the Choice of Register and Style**

Polish linguists often discuss varieties of Polish with reference to Lubaś’s typology of contact. He distinguishes three dimensions of linguistic contact: national contact (no direct contact between the interlocutors, the mass media, written language),

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<sup>85</sup> Increasing slang standardisation resulting from the relaxation of linguistic norms (NSLPA 1998:XI) is in line with informalisation trends: slang is absorbed into higher register.

<sup>86</sup> NSSPA.

local contact (direct but monologic contact: collective audience, lectures, small communities) and **individual contact (face-to-face conversation** - direct and dialogic contact, spoken form of language, high variation of language) (1979:140-142). Kita juxtaposes Hall's typology of physical distances with Lubaś's types of contact: intimate and personal distance → individual contact; social distance → local contact; and public distance → national contact (Kita 2001:172; see also Table 6).

The first inconsistency that may be noted is the fact that Hall's physical distances apply solely to **direct** contacts between the interlocutors while Lubaś's dimensions cover both indirect and direct types of contact. The parameter along which Lubaś distinguishes contact is not physical distance, but rather directionality of contact and audience design. A national contact may not be included in the public distance because it does *not* constitute an interaction. As Lubaś claims, the exchange of roles between the addressor and the addressee is usually not possible because contact is indirect (1979:140-141). Only individual contact is a joint activity and face-to-face conversation; thus, it has a wider scope which also covers social distance<sub>(Ph)</sub> (4-12 feet). Even the far zone (up to 12 feet) enables normal interaction, e.g. at a business meeting. Local contact correlates well with public distance. The next table presents a modification of Kita's proposal.

**Table 6. Hall's physical distances and Lubaś's types of contact**

Physical distances	Phase	Kita's correlation of contact types with physical distances	Modification of Kita's correlation of contact types with physical distances
Intimate distance	Close	Individual contact	Non-linguistic contact
	Far		
Personal distance	Close		Individual contact
	Far		
Social distance (Ph)	Close	Local contact	
	Far		
Public distance	Close	National contact	Local contact
	Far		

National contact is excluded because it does not pertain to face-to-face interaction and local contact is excluded as predominantly monologic. The blue-shaded fields represent distances where face-to-face conversation takes place: a range from the close zone of intimate distance to the far phase of social distance<sub>(Ph)</sub>.

The next issue concerns the relationship between Hall's physical distances and registers. Kita claims that informal register is preferably used in individual contact, i.e. in intimate and personal distance (2001:172). First of all, conversation is rather uncomfortable within intimate distance. Secondly, informal register is also used in the close phase of social distance<sub>(Ph)</sub>, which, according to Hall, is used between acquaintances, work colleagues, at casual social gatherings and informal business meetings while the far phase is used at formal business and social meetings (1978:166-8) (see Table 7).

**Table 7. Hall's physical distance and prototypical choice of register**

Hall's physical distances	Phase	Prototypical choice of register
Intimate distance	Far phase	Informal register
Personal distance	Close phase	
	Far phase	
Social distance <sub>(Ph)</sub>	Close phase	Formal register
	Far phase	

The above table shows that in face-to-face conversation informal register is typically used in intimate distance, personal distance and the close phase of social distance<sub>(Ph)</sub> while formal register tends to be used only in the far phase of social distance<sub>(Ph)</sub><sup>87</sup>. Thus, in face-to-face conversation informal register has a wider application than formal register.

However, the above correlation is too general since language used in the close phase of personal distance will differ from that in the close phase of social distance<sub>(Ph)</sub>.

<sup>87</sup> Formal register is also frequently used in the public distance which is not covered in the table, being a monological use of spoken language.

Hall himself correlates types of physical distances with Joos's style levels; however, this correlation is imprecise (see Table 8).

**Table 8. Hall's physical distance and Joos's style levels**

Physical distance	Phase	Hall	Modification of Hall's proposal
Intimate	far	Intimate style	Intimate style
Personal	close		
Social <sub>(Ph)</sub>	far	Casual / Consultative style	Casual style
	close		Casual / Consultative style
Public	far	Formal style	Consultative / Formal style
	close		Formal / Frozen style
	far	Frozen style	

Hall assigns formal style to the close phase of public distance (1978:171) while it should start in the far phase of social distance<sub>(Ph)</sub>. Casual style is typically used among friends; hence, it is assigned to personal distance. In the close phase of social distance<sub>(Ph)</sub> consultative style is a norm; in this phase casual style may also be used among acquaintances. Thus, three different styles (i.e. casual, consultative and formal) may be found within social distance<sub>(Ph)</sub>. The above discussion shows that physical distance is correlated with style levels selected by interlocutors for their conversation.

To **sum up**, physical distance is a conventionalised way of expressing psychological and social distance which is correlated with other nonverbal and verbal ways of expressing the same, including kinesics, paralanguage, topic of conversation and register. All such ways of expression contribute to the overall feeling of communicative distance in conversation. The remaining sections of Part III focus on verbal coding of social and psychological distance.

## **2. PERSON DEIXIS: LOCATING USAGE EVENT PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONVERSATIONAL SPACE**

Both English and Polish forces its users to define the relationship with who they converse with. One group of such devices is **person deixis** (cf. Levinson 1983). Deixis is the Greek word for pointing or indicating (Lyons 1977:636); it structures conversational space relative to the Origo (the deictic centre), i.e. the speaker. Langacker defines deixis as an expression which “includes some reference to a ground element within its scope of predication” (1987:126). Thus, person deixis is reference to the speaker and the hearer, who constitute elements of the ground as usage-event participants. As a pointing device, person deixis encodes a distance at which the hearer is located by the speaker relative to the speaker. Another type of deixis is social deixis. It may be seen as a type of person deixis because it encodes social identities of participants and social distance between the interlocutors. Fillmore describes social deixis as “the study of that aspect of sentences which reflect or establish or are determined by certain realities of the social situation in which the speech act occurs” (1975:76). Levinson restricts social deixis to linguistic units that refer to “participant-roles, particularly aspects of the social relationship holding between speaker and addressee(s)” (1983:63). The term person deixis is wider and encompasses social deixis, as well as references to psychological distance between the interlocutors.

### **1. Self-reference**

This section deals with how the speaker locates himself/herself in the conversational space through self-reference. When the speaker refers to himself/herself, he/she views himself/herself objectively. It is called an egocentric viewing arrangement: “this is the arrangement presupposed by deictic expressions that designate either a

ground element or a relation in which a ground element functions as a major participant” (Langacker 1987:130-1). An example of such egocentric viewing arrangement is the pronoun *I* where the speaker is both the object and subject of conceptualization. This pronoun “designates the speaker, who thus puts himself on stage as the focal point within the objective scene” (ibid.:131). Levinson notes that the category of first person is the grammaticalization of the speaker’s self-reference while the second person is the speaker’s reference to the hearer (1983:62). The speaker may also refer to himself/herself in third person, which is connected with mental transfer and high speaker objectivity: “*Don’t lie to your mother*” (Langacker 1987:131). This form of self-reference is frequent when adults talk to young children.

One of the characteristic features of Polish address forms is that Polish allows for pronoun drop. Kashima and Kashima claim that languages with **pronoun drop** represent less individualistic cultures than languages without pronoun drop and that a language with pronoun drop “enables its speaker to manipulate the prominence of the self and the other in discourse” (1998). Lyons notes that in many languages person deixis is grammaticalised by the inflection of the main verb (1977:639). This enables pronoun drop in Polish because the category of person is also marked implicitly through verb inflection. Sentences with pronoun drop are usually unmarked. When a pronoun which functions as a subject is not dropped, the sentence becomes more expressive by directing the attention at the entity denoted by such a pronoun. In English, personal pronouns are never dropped because English verbs do not encode the category of first or second person. It should be also noted that the speaker’s prominence is generally higher in English than in Polish also due to the fact that English *I* is capitalized in writing, which points to its larger importance in the highly individualistic British culture.

## 2. The Speaker's reference to the hearer

This subchapter discusses Polish and English address systems. Forms of address are deictic linguistic units by way of which the speaker addresses his/her interlocutor. An address form is a grounding predication because it introduces an element of the ground (i.e. the hearer) onstage: “Conceptually, it profiles the hearer as the focused element in the objective situation. Hence the viewing frame is directed at the ground itself, i.e. a facet of the ground appears onstage as the focus of attention” (Langacker 2001:148). Compared to English, Polish has a highly-differentiated system of address forms with more options of hearer conceptualisation, which will be shown below.

### 2.1 Pronominal address system: *you* versus *ty* and *pan(i)*

Most Indo-European languages, including Polish, have a two-choice system of pronominal address forms which code respect and intimacy/informality<sup>88</sup>. Kashima and Kashima note that two second-person singular pronouns serve the function of differentiating self-other relationship and, as a result, native speakers of such languages have to pay more attention to their relationship with the hearer in order to select an appropriate address form (1998). Thus, Polish requires the speaker to assess social and psychological distance to the interlocutor when the speaker makes a choice between (i) an intimate form *ty* used with the second person verb form and (ii) respectful pronouns<sup>89</sup> *pan(i)* prototypically used with the third person verb form. Both forms designate the hearer but “they do so against the background provided by contrasting conceptions of the affective and social context”<sup>90</sup> (Langacker 1991:496); hence, they are indicative of how the speaker conceptualises the speaker-hearer relationship in the ground.

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<sup>88</sup> I do not use the classic terminology introduced by Brown and Gilman, i.e. pronouns of power and solidarity or T/V pronouns (1972) because it applies neither to Polish nor to English.

<sup>89</sup> I adopt the term “pronoun” after Huszcza (1996); some linguists also use the term “pronominalised noun” (cf. Head 1978).

<sup>90</sup> Langacker’s observation concerns French pronouns *tu* and *vous*; his statement is also true for Polish.

The second-person pronoun *ty* automatically categorises the interlocutor as an in-group member: as the speaker's friend, acquaintance, relative. It is also an indicator of **generational and professional community** (Grybosiowa 1990:90) and of perceived similarity between the interlocutors. Kita calls *ty* a linguistic marker of closeness (2001:173) because *ty* locates the interlocutor at a close distance from the deictic centre in the conversational space. When the second person pronoun is dropped, the hearer's prominence is reduced as in 1a:

- 1a. *Co sobie wyobrażasz?*  
 What yourself think-2<sup>nd</sup> per. SG  
 "What are you imagining?"
- 1b. *Co ty sobie wyobrażasz?*  
 What you yourself imagine-2<sup>nd</sup> per. SG  
 "What are YOU imagining?"

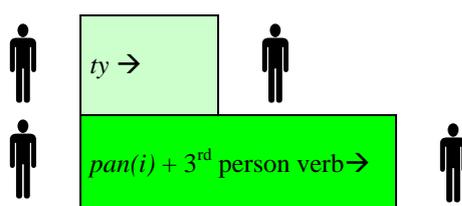
compared to a sentence with *ty* (1b), which highlights the prominence of the hearer.

As noted by Huszcza, the pronoun *pan(i)*, which codes a higher degree of honorification, is never dropped (1980:185). *Pan(i)* is used to address interlocutors conceptualised by the speaker, in accordance with the convention, as socially or psychologically distant or as strangers (familiarity, which is one of the major determinants of psychological distance, is an important factor in Polish address rules). This form automatically categorises the relationship as formal and the interlocutor as an out-group member. Historically, *pan(i)* was used solely to interlocutors of noble birth (Kielkiewicz-Janowiak 1992:75). Klemensiewicz emphasises that its basic and primary meaning was a person of higher social and economic status (i.e. an equivalent of English *lord/lady*). The contemporary widespread use of *pan(i)* is a linguistic indicator of democratisation through ennoblement (1946:38-39) and not an acknowledgement of the interlocutor's social origin. Nowadays each user of Polish is entitled to be addressed as *pan* (or *pani*), regardless of his/her social status. This form is conventional linguistic

flattery because the speaker treats the hearer as if he/she were a nobleman (and this meaning is still activated in the base of predication). It suggests that Polish pays attention to upgrading the interlocutor's social status<sup>91</sup> as an expression of the speaker's respect for the interlocutor categorised as an out-group member.

As already noted, *pan(i)* is typically used with the third person verb form. Haiman convincingly argues that third person polite address forms are motivated iconically because they create “the pretense that the addressee is absent”, which is an icon of distance (1980:530). The third person means that “the addressee is not so much addressed (where address is a kind of verbal aggression), as referred to” (Haiman 1994:1631). Head makes a similar observation that the third person is “notionally more distant than the second” and represents greater social distance, which in his opinion symbolically represents an analogy between physical and social distance (1978:194-5). Thus, *pan(i)* and the third-person verb form locate the hearer at a significant distance from the deictic centre (the speaker) in the conversational space (see Figure 13).

**Figure 13. Communicative distance from the Origo and singular address forms in Polish**



The Polish system of address forms has an impact on how speakers think about interlocutors as it requires its users to categorise relations as close (*ty*) or distant (*pan(i)*). Thus, *ty* and *pan(i)* foster the importance of in-group (*swój*) versus out-group (*obcy*) categorisation in Polish. In Kamio's terms of the territory of information (cf. 2001), *ty*

<sup>91</sup> It is interesting to note that in written Polish, i.e. in letters, direct references to the addressee have to be capitalised to show the writer's respect: *Ty / Pan* (“you”), *Twój / Pański* (“your”). The capital letter is a

falls in the hearer's territory while *pan(i)* is located outside the hearer's territory and beyond the conversational space proper (see Figure 14).

**Figure 14. Kamio's territory of information and Polish 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular pronouns**

Ja	Ty (in-group)	Pan(i) +3 <sup>rd</sup> person verb (out-group)
 S's territory	H's territory 	Distal part of general space

If reciprocal, *pan(i)* protects both the speaker and the hearer because it is a two-directional barrier against intimacy with a person categorised as an out-group member. As the relationship between the interlocutors develops over time, they may decide to cross the in-group/out-group boundary by changing address forms from *pan(i)* to *ty*. Traditionally, such a switch requires the *Bruderschaft* ceremony<sup>92</sup>, which has nearly died out among younger generations of Poles. Changes in linguistic reference to the interlocutor reflect changes in the conceptualisation of social and psychological distance between the interlocutors. A switch into mutual *ty* communicates that the interlocutors grant each other the right to cross this boundary and to reduce communicative distance. This is possible because, as noted by Keown, *ty* “can be viewed as a single space small enough to be located near or even within the realm of the *ja*-space” (2003). Generally, there is only one direction<sup>93</sup> of switch, i.e. from *pan(i)* to *ty* and such a switch is irreversible (Kita 2001:173).

To sum up, the basic meaning of *ty* is close communicative distance between interlocutors while *pan(i)* codes far communicative distance between interlocutors. As shown in the chapter on physical distance, expression of close/far social and

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metaphor of greatness. The Polish capitalisation of reference to the addressee contrasts with the capitalisation of *I* in English.

<sup>92</sup> Including vodka, hand twisting and a kiss on the cheek.

<sup>93</sup> The speaker may also switch from *ty* to *pan(i)* for sarcastic purposes or to signal an increase of psychological distance by rejecting “previous assumptions of emotional solidarity with his conversational partner” (Fillmore 1975:78); however, this happens very rarely.

psychological distance may be evaluated both positively and negatively depending on the pre-existing distance between interlocutors. *Ty* is evaluated negatively when it denies respect due to the interlocutor who should be referred to as *pan(i)*. Ożóg rightly argues that such *ty* reduces the interlocutor's prestige (1981:182); hence, it is contemptuous and insulting. For example, it is sometimes observed between strangers in public places (cf. Grybosiowa 1990:91), e.g. *Jak jeździsz?* (lit. "How are you driving?"). On the other hand, *pan(i)* is not always interpreted as an expression of respect, but also as a denial of intimacy and exclusion because it treats the interlocutor as an outsider.

Polish grammaticalises respect and intimacy through pronoun variation and variation of person category in verb **agreement**. As already noted, *pan(i)* is used with the third-person verb form while *ty* is used with the second-person verb form (see 2a).

- 2a. *Jak się czujesz, babciu?*  
 How yourself feel-2<sup>nd</sup> per. SG, grandma  
 "How do you feel, grandma?"
- 2b. *Jak się babcia czuje?*  
 How herself grandma feel-3<sup>rd</sup> per. SG  
 "How does grandma feel?"

The speaker may replace *ty* with a noun (e.g. *babcia*, as in 2b) and use the third-person marking to increase communicative distance in order to be more respectful. This usage is sometimes observed when younger speakers address an elder member of their family, e.g. grandparents. However, this form (2b) has nearly died out. In some urban dialects *pan(i)* co-occurs with the second-person verb form, as in *widzisz pan* (lit. "you see") or *co pan wygadujesz* (lit. "what are you talking about"), instead of third-person marking. The second-person verb form is regarded as impolite due to its directness (cf. NSPP:634 and 1649) although it was neutral till the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The third person verb form was once used only to people of low social status, in particular to servants, e.g. *Jan*

*pójdzie* (lit. “Jan will go”). The third person verb marking was later adopted as neutral and polite in *pan(i)* reference (Pisarkowa 1984:17).

Interestingly, when plural equivalents of *pan(i)*, *państwo*, are used with the second person verb form (3a):

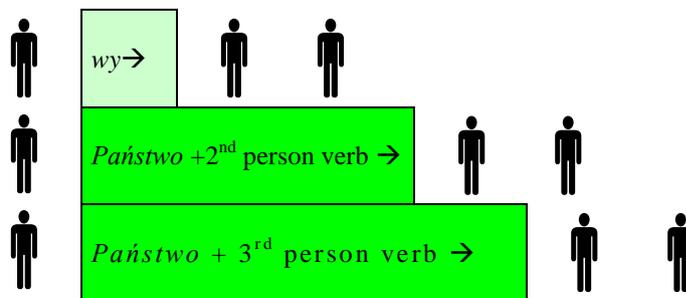
- 3a. *Czy byliście już Państwo na tej sztuce?*  
 (to be-Past-2<sup>nd</sup> per. PL)  
 “Have you already seen this play?”

they are not evaluated as impolite or incorrect any longer<sup>94</sup> but as a friendly intention to decrease communicative distance. The second-person plural marking is felt as a respectful intermediate form between the informal pronoun *wy* (plural equivalent of *ty*) and *Państwo* with the third person verb form (3b):

- 3b. *Czy byli już Państwo na tej sztuce?*  
 (to be-Past-3<sup>rd</sup> per. PL)  
 “Have you already seen this play?”

which is prototypical in polite, careful and formal speech (3b) (see Figure 15).

Figure 15. Communicative distance from the Origo for plural address forms in Polish



The Figure shows that Polish locates interlocutors at varying degrees of distance. *Wy* places the interlocutors at a short communicative distance from the speaker, *Państwo* with the second-person marking locates them much further than *wy* but closer than *Państwo* with the third-person marking, which creates the furthest distance from the speaker.

<sup>94</sup> This form, however, is acceptable only in spoken and informal register (cf. NSPP:1640).

In most languages it is the category of number that is used to differentiate address forms; the interlocutor is addressed with non-singular pronouns which are more respectful than singular ones<sup>95</sup> (Head 1978:151). Nonstandard Polish (rural dialects) also applies **variation in number**, the so-called *pluralis maiestaticus*. It is the second person plural pronoun *wy* and the second person plural verb form used as a singular form of address towards elders and is more honorific than *pan(i)* (e.g. in Little Poland dialects; cf. Kaś and Sikora 1994:89-90). Haiman notes that such a plural form means “in a simple physical sense, ‘there is strength in numbers’, so it is an icon of POWER”<sup>96</sup> (1980:530). The respectful *wy* pronoun gradually disappears from rural dialects and is replaced by *pan(i)*. Furthermore, after the Second World War the Communist authorities unsuccessfully tried to replace *pan(i)* with *wy* modelled on the Russian address system because *pan(i)* was inconsistent with the new political ideology (Klemensiewicz 1946:41). *Wy obywatelu/towarzyszu* (lit. “you citizen/comrade”) was used only in formal language, between party officials or in situations where power was manifested towards citizens, e.g. by the police (Pisarkowa 1979:15). After the fall of Communism, this form completely disappeared from Standard Polish; hence, respect is no longer coded through plurality.

The above changes are not the only ones which affect the Polish system of address forms. The changes are in line with the informalisation of registers and consist in the spread of informal forms in place of formal ones, which has been observed since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These changes were particularly intense in the last decade. In the 50’s and 60’s, an entry into a student group was effected through the noun *kolega/koleżanka* (“colleague”) and the third-person verb form: “*Świetnie kolega*

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<sup>95</sup> e.g. French, Russian, Danish.

<sup>96</sup> The solidarity/power terminology applies to languages which apply variation in number.

*wiosłuje. (...) Mówmy sobie po imieniu, chcesz? Anna. Naprawdę świetnie wiosłujesz.*”<sup>97</sup>

As early as in 1979, Pisarkowa notes that this address form was replaced among students by *ty* and the second-person verb form (1979:6). The **spread of *ty*** into contexts which were formerly reserved for official *pan(i)* affected all younger generations of Poles. When the interlocutors are relatively young and are of similar age, they tend to use the informal pronoun *ty*. In informal situations *ty* is a preferred form: if a friend the speaker is on *ty*-terms with brings his/her friends, the speaker will also address them as *ty* unless there is a large generational gap or the speaker is conservative in this respect. Some speakers quickly replace *pan(i)* with *ty* while others are reluctant to do so in similar contexts (Grybosiowa 1990:90). The 2002 opinion poll conducted by Pentor asked whether respondents want to replace *pan(i)* with *ty*. Only 14 per cent of educated responders answered yes, compared to 44 per cent of responders with primary education<sup>98</sup>. It suggests that educated people have higher linguistic awareness of the role of *pan(i)* and value the possibility of coding social and psychological distance through this form.

Besides age, another factor which impacts the use of *ty* is the setting. For example, one may expect *ty* in the bar, at a discotheque or a pop concert. Whenever the contact is institutionalised, *pan(i)* tends to be used more frequently. For example, in trade establishments sales assistants address customers with *pan(i)* when they want the customer to feel valued and respected. In some types of shops which target young customers (snowboard shops, jeans shops, music shops, etc.) customers are often addressed as *ty*. In such contexts *ty* does not express intimacy but informality and creates a sales-enhancing relaxed atmosphere.

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<sup>97</sup> Myśliwski, Wiesław. 1998. *Widnokrąg*. Warszawa: Warszawskie Wydawnictwo Literackie MUZA SA: p.548; (emphasis mine – L.B.).

<sup>98</sup> The poll was conducted on the representative sample of 800 adult Poles from 29-30 Oct. 2002; Wprost, 10 October 2002, p. 75.

Kita distinguishes the affectionate *ty* used between friends and in the family from the corporate *ty* which does not code closeness (2001:173). From the perspective of 2003, it may be stated that Pisarkowa rightly envisaged in the 70's that *ty* would win over *pan* in occupational groups (1979:6). This tendency is in particular visible in young private or foreign companies. The *ty* form is used among employees who significantly differ with age but have similar professional status. However, *ty* is also reciprocated in the case of unequal social status, i.e. between superiors and subordinates in some companies. The use of corporate *ty* depends on how formal the company structure is: *pan(i)* is used more often inside banks, public institutions or in state-owned enterprises. Furthermore, *ty* is used within the company; customers are rather addressed respectfully as *pan(i)*.

Another reason for the spread of *ty* is the impact of mass media which promote informal forms of address. In most entertainment broadcasts with the highest viewership (e.g. *Familiada*, *Milionerzy*, *Jaka to melodia*), the host addresses participants with *ty*. Radio presenters address callers with *ty* (RMF, Radio ZET), even in the case of large age differences. Another widespread use of *ty* is found in advertising (4):

4. *Nie trać czasu, zadzwoń!*<sup>99</sup>.  
 Not waste-IMPER.+2<sup>nd</sup> per. SG time, call-IMPER.+2<sup>nd</sup> per. SG  
 Don't waste your time, call us!"

In the above example, the *ty* form is a direct appellation which decreases distance to the hearer and creates a more informal and nicer atmosphere of friendliness, familiarity, and closeness. Dąbrowska notes the use of mixed address forms, i.e. both *ty* and *pan(i)*, to the same addressee within one text, which points to the recent instability of the Polish address system (2001:189). A mixture of address forms is a result of search for a sufficiently polite and respectful form and, at the same time, a form which is direct and

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<sup>99</sup> Advertisement of treasury bonds, Gazeta Wyborcza, 02.06.2000, p. 25.

familiar enough to decrease distance to the addressee (ibid.:194). This usage of Polish address forms in advertisements resembles the use of accents in British advertisements, where Estuary English creates an atmosphere of closeness and familiarity while RP is used to create an atmosphere of respect, elegance, etc. (cf. Coggle 1993:78).

The expansion of *ty* in place of *pan(i)* suggests a decreasing degree of honorification in the Polish address system and that Poles nowadays attach less importance to the categorisation of interlocutors as the in-group and the out-group or that the in-group is wider than in earlier times. It is possible due to the shift in the meaning of *ty*, which tends to express informality rather than intimacy as some time ago. This shift also shows the changing conception of interpersonal relationships: people aim at more informal and closer relations with a much larger group of people, which is enabled by *ty*. Similar changes have been observed in most Indo-European languages with two-choice pronominal systems of address (e.g. French, German, Italian, Spanish, Danish), where in Brown and Gillman's terms solidarity wins over power (1972:280). It is unlikely that *pan(i)* will totally disappear from the Polish address system; however, it may be predicted that its use will be more restricted than nowadays.

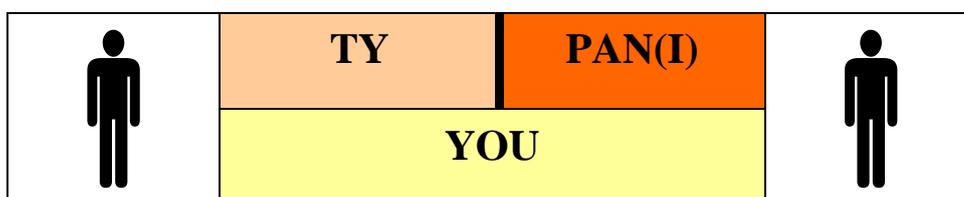
**English** is unusual among Indo-European languages because it has only one second-person pronoun *you* which does not allow for respect/intimacy differentiation and for number differentiation. *You* is used both as a singular pronoun to address one interlocutor and as a plural pronoun to address a group of interlocutors, both in symmetrical and asymmetrical relations between the speaker and the hearer.

Head does not consider English as "a language without number distinction in the second person" because this distinction is found in Nonstandard English (1978:160); for example, in some dialects, such as Northern Ireland English, Liverpool English, Geordie (Newcastle English), *yous* is an informal form of plural *you* (e.g. *For once in your lives*

*can yous not be nice in this house*, Biber et al. 1999:1123) but it is very rarely, if ever, used in reference to a single person<sup>100</sup>. Head claims that in Southern American *you all* is a polite singular form of address where a plural marker was added to the singular form and such a new “double” plural was used as a respectful singular address form (1978:162). However, other authors have doubts whether this form is singular (cf. Maynor 1996). Historically, *you* was the accusative of *ye*, the second person plural pronoun, which also functioned as a respectful form of address to a single person as a result of French influences. In time *you* replaced *ye* as the nominative plural and next it replaced the second person singular *thou* (Brown and Gilman 1972:266-267). Thus, the original plural and respectful form of address ousted a singular pronoun of solidarity. This etymology is nowadays not visible and *you* is not conceptualised as a polite address form but as a **neutral** singular and plural address form.

Huszcza notes that most Poles are wrongly convinced that English *you* is an equivalent of Polish *ty* (1996:140). In fact, *you* corresponds to both *ty* and *pan(i)*, as well as to plural address forms *wy* and *panowie/panie/państwo*, depending on the context (see Figure 16).

**Figure 16. Comparison of singular *you* with *ty* and *pan(i)***



Another misconception of *you* may be found in Wierzbicka’s writings. She claims that *you* is a very democratic “social equaliser” but also a distance-building device: in the absence of the T/V contrast “*you* can’t convey the intimacy signaled by the choice of a T-form. An intimate form allows the speaker to get psychologically close to the hearer, to

<sup>100</sup> See discussions on the Linguist List, e.g. 4.732, 4.785: [www.linguistlist.org](http://www.linguistlist.org).

penetrate the wall surrounding each individual. The English *you* keeps everybody at a distance” (1991:47) and disables access to the interlocutor (ibid.:48). This claim, however, is not true: *you* is not a distance-building device but, as shown in the Figure above, a **neutral** reference to the interlocutor which does not allow the speaker either to get close to or far from the hearer because *you* does not activate social distance or psychological distance scales at all. Since *you* is used indiscriminately to everybody, it is unable to code intimacy, informality, solidarity or respect and power.

Wierzbicka claims that due to universal *you* Anglo-Saxon culture does not value intimacy highly and that “it is extremely difficult to be intimate in English” (1991:106). However, a lack of the two-choice **pronominal** system of address forms does not prevent speakers of English from being intimate at other levels of language<sup>101</sup>. As rightly noted by Ervin-Tripp: “if one compares an isolated segment of two sociolinguistic systems, one cannot legitimately conclude that a given social variable is more important in one system than in the other. It may simply be realized through a different form of behavior” (1972:239). For example, a Pole may say *ty* to signal closeness while a Briton may opt for lexical choices and say “*we are so close*”. The question arises whether, as Wierzbicka claims, Polish *ty* is really a marker of intimacy. As noted above, the use of Polish *ty* has recently undergone significant changes and it more often expresses informality and familiarity. Jaworski rightly emphasizes that “a shift from *pan/i* to *ty* significantly decreases distance between interlocutors along the dimension of formality, but not so much of intimacy” in contrast to a shift from *pan/i* to a first name, which decreases distance along the dimension of intimacy (1992:102). For example, when the shop assistant addresses the customer he/she sees for the first time with *ty* or when the speaker uses *ty* indiscriminately to all his/her peers (even to strangers), *ty* does not signal the

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<sup>101</sup> Wierzbicka in fact claims that English has no devices to signal intimacy, i.e. “an especially close personal relationship between the speaker and the addressee” (1991:48).

existence of any “special relationship”. Furthermore, as rightly noted by Marcjanik, a degree of intimacy in the speaker-hearer relationship depends on the speaker’s personality, individual experiences and gender rather than on whether he/she addresses the interlocutor as *ty* or *pan(i)*. Some speakers are not intimate with *ty*-addressed interlocutors while others may be very intimate and self-disclose to *pan(i)*-addressed interlocutors (2000:139fn).

To sum up, in contrast to English, Polish is well equipped to code different degrees of communicative distance through pronouns and verb agreement. It attaches significant importance to the clear-cut division of interlocutors into the in-group (*ty*) and the out-group (*pan(i)*); however, recent changes of the Polish address system show the expansion of *ty* in place of *pan(i)*; hence, the shortening of communicative distance.

## **2.2 First names, last names, titles and other nominal terms of address**

A lack of pronominal distinction in Standard English is, to a certain degree, compensated for with variation in nominal address forms. The most important opposition which codes different conceptions of social and psychological distance between interlocutors is (i) a **first name** (FN) versus (ii) a **title with last name** (TLN) or other respectful titles. However, the boundary is not so well defined as it is in Polish due to a lack of grammatical barriers (no change of person category, pronouns or verb endings). In consequence, a switch from TLN to FN is relatively easy compared to Polish. Jakubowska notes that the British address system differs from the American one in that a shift from reciprocal TLN to reciprocal FN takes place at a slower pace (1999:47).

Social distance is often marked by **non-reciprocity** of address forms, i.e. an exchange of non-equivalent forms. In most cases, the interlocutor’s reply with a non-reciprocal form means that he/she conceptualises the relationship as asymmetric and their status as unequal. Non-reciprocity may be realised through a referential address form

(TLN) by a lower status speaker and a familiar form (FN) by a higher status speaker. Wolfson notes that non-reciprocal address forms are often used by US physicians who first-name patients and expect to receive TLN. Patients of equal social status do not often like this usage and demand reciprocal TLN or first-name the physician (1989:85).

**Titles with last names** indicate respectful distance; they are used to seniors and superiors in institutional and formal settings. Titles without a name, such as *Sir*, *Madam*, *ma'am*, are used to show respect when the speaker does not know the hearer's name, when the speaker is considerably younger than the hearer or to male customers in a shop (Jakubowska 1999:45). Titles alone signal larger social distance than TLN because they are depersonalized: "Address by title alone is the least intimate form of address in that titles usually designate ranks or occupations (...). They are devoid of 'personal' content" (Wardhaugh 1986:259). On the other hand, TLN "requires a degree of familiarity linked with the knowledge of the target person's surname" (Wierzbicka 1992:311). In most cases, *Miss*, *Mrs* and *Mr* must be used with the last name (*Mr Brown*). Exceptions may be found in schools, where pupils address female teachers as *miss*, *missis*, and male teachers as *mister* or *sir* (Jakubowska 1999:46). There are also professional titles, such as *Captain*, *Doctor*, etc., which acknowledge the interlocutor's respectable profession; however, their usage is very limited: Ervin-Tripp notes that a title alone may be addressed only to a priest, physician, dentist or judge (1972:228). Furthermore, English does not use *Mr/Ms* with professional titles, with few exceptions, such as *Mr Speaker*, *Mr Chairman*, *Mr Justice*, *Mr President* (Wojtasiewicz 1996:112fn).

Another group of **honorific** address forms is used solely in formal and institutional contexts to people of high social status (members of the nobility, bishops, judges) when social distance between the interlocutors is large. These terms include: *My Lord/Lady*, *Your (His) Lordship*; *Your (His) Honour*; *Your (His) Grace*, *Your Excellency* and royal

forms of address: *Your Majesty Your Royal Highness* (Bałuk-Ulewiczowa and Jodłowiec 1995:231-233). These titles are preceded by possessive pronouns which show variation in person: *My, Your* or *His/Her*. Since the third person singular is an icon of distance, *His/Her* signals larger distance than *Your*<sup>102</sup>. The titles are used rarely in everyday conversations, except for sarcastic purposes. For example, *Your Lordship/His Lordship* may be used to a lazy or pretentious person (Bałuk-Ulewiczowa and Jodłowiec 1995:231), i.e. *Would Her Highness come to work tomorrow?*. They may be also used humorously, as in “*Would His Highness contact me privately, I lost your e-mail*” or flirty “*Would Her Highness care for a walk?*”.

English forms of address may reflect whether the speaker estimates social distance to the hearer and his/her social standing as inferior (*sir, professor*), superior (*woman, cabbie*) or equal (*guys, man*) (Zwicky 1974:795). Wierzbicka claims that *Sir* codes distance, respect, deference, TLN distance and respect while FN - lack of distance and familiarity (1992:311).

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century English **first names** were used only within family and between close friends. The pronoun *you* did not entitle the speaker to use the hearer’s first name because at that time being on a first-name basis was a sign of significant intimacy. Wouters notes that the initial use of first name was like ice-breaking between people of opposite sex (1995). The rapid spread of first names between interlocutors who liked each other was observed before the Second World War. Since the 80’s the use of first names has been generally accepted as the norm, rather than an indicator of intimacy or liking (ibid. 1995). As a result, first names are used between social equals, e.g. among young people. They are required among colleagues at work,

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<sup>102</sup> Honorific titles are nearly absent in modern Polish, except for reference to church hierarchs. Old Polish honorific titles have number and person differentiation: between 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, i.e. distance: *Jego Świątobliwość* (“His Holiness”), *Jej Królweska Mość* (“Her Royal Highness”) and 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural (i.e. power: *Wasza Wysokość* (“Your Majesty”).

“even though they may not like each other” (Wardhaugh 1986:260). Ervin-Tripp notes that “familiarity is not a factor within dyads of the same age and rank” in English; hence, an American professor calls a new colleague of the same rank and age by his first name, not as *Professor X* or *Mr X* (1972:227).

First names are also used reciprocally among interlocutors of unequal status and different age, e.g. employees first-name their bosses, students first-name their professors (in particular in the USA) and in such relations nonreciprocal TLN was expected earlier. Reciprocal TLNs are used relatively rarely in contemporary business; they were replaced by reciprocal first names inside corporations<sup>103</sup>. The role of first names is to reduce status differences between employees. Psychological research shows that reciprocal first-naming increases job satisfaction and trust, creates better communication and team work, impacts interpersonal relationships (Morand 1995). However, it was shown that subordinates often adopted no-naming since they felt discomfort with first name (excessive familiarity) and TLN (subservience) (Morand 1995). It is possible for the speaker of English to avoid any term of address by “staying with the uncommitted ‘you’” (Brown and Gilman 1972:270).

Changing address norms may be interpreted as part of informalisation trends which affect social and linguistic behaviour. In the case of English, informality replaces formality: in the first part of 20<sup>th</sup> century reciprocal first-naming was a signal of intimacy (and the categorisation of interlocutors as the in-group) in contrast to TLN, which signalled lack of intimacy (and out-group categorisation). This distinction is absent now. The essence of recent changes is a shift from nonreciprocity in status-marked situations to reciprocity, which means that overt coding of status differences was, to a large degree, eliminated at the level of address forms. The recent spread of first names in English

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<sup>103</sup> Global companies with first-name policies include: Hewlett-Packard, Mars, Xerox, UPS; first-naming policies are often written down in personnel manuals (Morand 1995).

resembles changes in the Polish address system, where *ty* expands its range of application because it reflects similar motivation of reducing the formality of interpersonal relations.

In view of the above changes, it is disputable whether being on a first name basis is intimate in English. Wardhaugh claims that “knowing and using another’s first name is, of course, a sign of considerable intimacy or at least a desire for such intimacy” (1986:260). Wierzbicka has an opposing view: “it is not ‘intimate’ in English to call somebody John rather than Dr. Brown” (1991:106). Certainly, English first names are not as intimate as Polish ones because their use is much more widespread. On the other hand, ubiquitous first-naming is sometimes perceived by speakers of English as presumed ‘unwanted’ intimacy/ informality, in particular in the case of large age differences. Some elder Britons are uneasy to first-name strangers, which may indicate that the first-naming process is not complete yet. It should be also noted that in the presence of TLN option, first names have still retained some (but relatively small) power to acknowledge status differences between the interlocutors. As rightly noted by Korzeniowska and Kuhlaczak, except for brief casual encounters, “it is essential to learn, remember and use properly the names of people we meet as this knowledge makes it possible to differentiate between ‘you’ as *Pan/Pani/Państwo* and ‘you’ as *ty* or *wy*” (1994:54).

Close psychological distance between the interlocutors may be signalled by the use of nicknames, pet names or the diminutive form of first names, e.g. *Robert-Rob-Bob-Bobby*, *Ann-Nancy*. English diminutive names are used even in official and public contexts where Poles would use a full version of a first name: *Tony Blair*, *Bill Clinton*, *Jimmy Carter*<sup>104</sup>, *Andy Warhol*, etc. According to Wierzbicka, diminutive first names, e.g. *Jim*, *Kate*, do not imply intimacy but informality or friendliness (1991:48) while

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<sup>104</sup> Huszcza notes that American presidents sign official documents with their full names: *James Earl Carter*, *William Clinton* (1996:142).

forms, such as *Bobby* or *Timmy*, are child-oriented rather than affectionate (ibid.:106). This view may be confirmed by the fact that some people never use the full form of their name and in the lack of contrast between the full form and the diminutive form, the latter cannot express intimacy. Another situation where English allows for the manipulation of psychological distance scale is when a mother addresses her misbehaving son as “John Smith”, which functions as a rebuke (Wardhaugh 1986:260). The ‘official’ full name signals large psychological distance and contrasts with the expected first name alone. It was also reported that American English speakers sometimes upgraded the address form from FN to TLN when they were angry with the interlocutor (Wierzbicka 1991:106).

The use of **last name** only (LN) was frequently practiced between boys in boys’ British schools prior to the Second World War as a sign of in-group membership. Nowadays this form is used in sports and in the army among males: it may signal camaraderie without intimacy to counterbalance physical closeness between males or may function as a non-reciprocal and impolite signal of power.

First names, last names and titles are used differently in **Polish**. Their use parallels the *ty/pan(i)* distinction: *ty* terms generally entitle interlocutors to use first names while *pan(i)* require the use of respectful titles if they are known. Poles are slower than the British and the Americans to use **first names**<sup>105</sup>; and the use of FNs involves a higher degree of intimacy in Polish (Jaworski 1992:103). The inclusion of first name makes an appellation more personal and intimate: *Stuchaj* (“Listen”) versus *Stuchaj Aniu* (“Listen + FN”). First names are used reciprocally among young people, peers, good friends, colleagues at work. Owing to the spread of *ty*, it is becoming more popular in corporate settings to be on first-name terms (inside the company). Jaworski argues that being on *ty* terms is not always equivalent to being on first-name terms and that a shift to reciprocal

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<sup>105</sup> cf. the EPD dictionary: CII.

FNs expresses not only larger informality (as a shift from *pan(i)* to *ty*) but mainly larger intimacy (1992:102).

First names may be morphologically modified with diminutive or augmentative suffixes. Wierzbicka notes that tenderness, cordiality and affection that may be achieved by the expressive derivation of personal names in Polish are unparalleled to any other language. For example, the first name *Ania* may be diminutivized in a number of ways: *Ania, Aneczka, Anusia, Anuśka, Anusieńska, Anulka, Anuchna, Anusiątko* (1991:51). Diminutive forms of first names are used as basic-level forms for children and for adults in close relations, among friends and within family. Non-diminutive forms are mainly reserved for official and formal situations<sup>106</sup>. Owing to American influences, public figures sometimes use **diminutive** first names in public life<sup>107</sup>, e.g. *Radek Sikorski, Czarek Pazura, Kasia Kowalska*<sup>108</sup>. Listeners who call radio programmes introduce themselves with diminutive first names: *Basia, Kasia*. Diminutive first names may be found even in obituaries. This points to a decrease of formality in public life.

Jaworski notes that diminutives code close psychological distance between the interlocutors since they “mark a decrease in the actual distance within a relationship between the addressor and the addressee, and/or an increase in the intimacy between them” (1992:99). In the diminutive the prototypical physical smallness is transferred from the spatial domain (size of a person) to the non-spatial domain of positive emotions (affection) (cf. Taylor 1989:147). The mapping is based on the SMALL IS LOVABLE metaphor (Tabakowska 1993:108). Inchaurrealde claims that the use of diminutive is based on the following rule: when the speaker feels close to an entity, he/she may allow

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<sup>106</sup> Statutory ban of granting children diminutive names (Article 50 of the Registry Office Records Act of 29 September 1986 (Journal of Laws of 1986, No. 36, item 180).

<sup>107</sup> Prescriptive linguists maintain this is incorrect: in formal and official contexts diminutive first names should not be used in introductions (cf. Miodek 2002:31).

<sup>108</sup> The song “*Olek, Olek, wygraj*” in Aleksander Kwaśniewski’s presidential campaign used the diminutive first name to present the candidate as informal and relaxed.

it to enter his/her personal space by reducing its size: “we do not feel threatened by the object and, therefore, it is included as part of our private territory by making room in it” (1997:138). Thus, the diminutive first name reduces the interlocutor’s size and allows him/her to enter the speaker’s personal space.

The speaker may use the **augmentative** to create the impression that he/she is tough or daring (not afraid of large objects); this usage contrasts with diminutives, which may be perceived as infantile, overemotional or effeminate in some situations. To avoid such connotations, male friends (especially young males) rarely address each other with diminutive FNs (e.g. *Krzysiu, Andrzejku*), but rather with the augmentative (*Krzychu, Krzysiek*), nicknames, LN-derivative nicknames (*Bieluch* from *Biel*, *Szabla* from *Szabelski*) or last names alone.

In appellations, first names may be in the Nominative or in the Vocative. The former is informal, unmarked, natural in conversations while the latter is marked and signals prestige and respect towards the interlocutor. Jaworski (1992:98) argues that full names are less frequently used in the Vocative (5a) than in the Nominative<sup>109</sup> (5b):

- 5a. *Barbaro!* (Barbara-Voc)
- 5b. *Barbara!* (Barbara-Nom)

The full name in the vocative (5a), which is disappearing in modern Polish, sounds rather formal and official and creates psychological distance. It does not apply to diminutive first names:

- 5c. *Basia!* (Barbara-DIM-Nom)
- 5d. *Basiu!* (Barbara -DIM-Nom).

Diminutive first names (5c and 5d) are used frequently in both cases (Jaworski 1992:98). The Vocative (5d) marks slightly larger psychological distance: “the possibility of using

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<sup>109</sup> Prescriptive linguists maintain that the Nominative is incorrect in appellations (cf. Miodek 2002:31).

either the nominative case or the vocative case with a diminutive allows the addressor to manipulate the degrees of distance and respect expressed symbolically in a form of address even further” (ibid.:99).

First names may also combine with respectful nouns *pan(i)* and the third-person verb form. It is an intermediate address form before a switch from *pan(i)* to *ty* because *pan(i)* codes formality and respect while FN expresses intimacy. In the address form *pan(i)* +FN, first names are always in the Vocative, which makes them more distancing and respectful than the Nominative (Jaworski 1992:99). Again, first names may be in the full form (6a), in the diminutive (6b) or in the double diminutive (6c):

- 6a. *Pani Barbaro!* (Ms + Barbara-Voc)
- 6b. *Pani Basiu!* (Ms + Barbara-DIM-Voc)
- 6c. *Pani Basieńko!* (Ms + Barbara-doubleDIM-Voc)

but not with an augmentative suffix or in the Nominative. Options in the form of first name code different conceptualisations of psychological distance along the intimacy/affection scale, 6a being least affectionate and 6c being most affectionate. As noted by Wierzbicka, respect may combine with cordiality and affection in Polish, which is quite unusual in other languages (1991:57). *Pan(i)* with FN is used among people who know each other relatively long but who, due to status or age differences, remain on *pan(i)* terms: “by social superiors to social inferiors in situations when (...) the power gap is too great for reciprocal, informal exchange of FNs, and the superior recognises a degree of solidarity but not intimacy with the inferior” and by inferiors who are uneasy to address their superiors with FN alone (Jaworski 1992:99). Recently, this form has become more popular in the service sector to decrease a psychological distance between the service provider and the client because it increases powers of persuasion. For example, a taxi driver may ask the approaching client he sees for the first time: *Pani Łucja?*.

The next table presents a summary of Polish address options involving first names which are arranged according to the decreasing degree of psychological and social distance (Table 9).

**Table 9. Polish and English address options with first names**

**POLISH**

<i>Proszę pani</i> <i>Pani Barbaro</i> <i>Pani Basiu</i> <i>Pani Basieńko</i>	<b><i>Pani-terms</i></b>	 <p>Large social and psychological distance</p> <p>Small social and psychological distance</p>
<i>ty (without first name)</i> <i>Barbaro</i> <i>Barbara</i> <i>Bacha /Baśka</i> <i>Basiu</i> <i>Basia</i> <i>Basieńko / Basiuniu</i> <i>Basieńka / Basiunia</i>	<b><i>Ty-terms</i></b>	

**ENGLISH**

<i>Madam</i> <i>Mrs. Brown</i> <i>Ann</i> <i>Annie</i>	<b>You</b>	 <p>Large social and psychological distance</p> <p>Small social and psychological distance</p>
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To sum up, it has been demonstrated that Polish offers more address options than English. A wide range of such options reflects varying degrees of social and psychological distance between the interlocutors. Another crucial difference is that the

English address system does not require the conceptualiser to categorise the interlocutor as in-group or out-group.

Standard Polish does not use **titles** in combination with last names. The TLN form, i.e. *pan(i) + LN*, is stigmatised as impolite or domineering. It is used to address subordinates treated officially and is characteristic of the working class and rural areas where it sounds more dignified than *proszę pana* (Miodek 1980:178). Pisarkowa argues that the impossibility to use LN with *pan(i)* in Standard Polish provides grounds for the Polish-specific frequent use of titles<sup>110</sup> (1979:7). Because the use of *pan(i)* alone is depersonalised and unfamiliar while *pan(i)* with FN is intimate, Polish frequently uses professional or scientific titles with respectful *pan(i)*: *panie dyrektorze* (*Mr Director*), *panie magistrze* (*Mr MA-holder*), *panie profesorze* (*Mr Professor*). In contrast to English, Polish titles with *pan(i)* show higher grammatical flexibility because they are used not only as vocatives but also as a clausal subject (Wojtasiewicz 1996:113). If the speaker wants to signal his/her debasement, he/she uses the interlocutor's title as often as possible (7b) instead of its single initial use (7a):

7a. ***Panie prezesie***, czy będzie ***pan*** jutro w firmie?

7b. ***Panie prezesie***, czy będzie ***pan prezes*** jutro w firmie?

Titles are used in official and semiofficial contexts to address interlocutors with whom the speaker is on *pan(i)* terms. In this way the speaker publicly acknowledges the interlocutor's professional status, rank or academic degrees by placing them in the focus of attention. Wierzbicka claims that titles are used "even between 'equals' who know each other very well, and who have known each other for years (for example, between workmates)" (1991:57). However, her claim is no longer valid: due to recent informalisation trends and the growing popularity of *ty*, Poles opt for informal address

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<sup>110</sup> The so-called "*tytułomania*", i.e. obsession with titles.

forms and use titles less frequently. In particular, titles are nearly absent among equals, except for very formal occasions or situations when the speaker signals psychological distance. For example, if the speaker is on a first-name basis with the hearer, but instead of using the hearer's first-name in disagreement (8a):

8a. *Marku, nie zgadzam się.*  
FN, I don't agree.

8b. *Panie Dyrektorze, nie zgadzam się*  
Mr Director, I don't agree.

the speaker uses the hearer's title (8b), he signals a shift from friendly to official relations and makes his disagreement more formal and definite. This usage of titles always increases psychological distance between the interlocutors.

In general, titles are a form of linguistic flattery. Dąbrowska notes that the interlocutor's rank is sometimes euphemistically heightened, e.g. prefixes: *wice-* (*Panie Dyrektorze* to a deputy director) and *pro-* (*Panie Dziekanie* to a vice dean) are politely deleted from address forms that denote a subordinate function. In this way the speaker emphasises that the hearer has a higher 'full' value (1993:155); also by referring to the interlocutor's former function (Pisarkowa 1978:10). This linguistic device is consistent with other respect-coding Polish devices which profile and enhance the interlocutor's status.

### **2.3 Familiarisers, terms of endearment and invectives**

This section discusses the remaining nominal terms of reference. For purposes of this analysis, they are divided into familiarisers, endearments and invectives. These expressions are often highly expressive of "attitude, politeness, formality, status, intimacy or a role relationship and most of them mark the speaker" (Zwicky 1974:796).

The first group, called **familiarisers** by Biber et al., includes: *man, mate, bud* (1999:1048). These expressions may be indicative of the speaker's social class: "British

*love/ducks* are lower or lower-middle class, as are American *toots/mac*” (Zwicky 1974:795). Coggle notes that *mate* is generally used by Estuary English speakers at the Cockney end of the spectrum and it is dropped with the speaker’s advancement on the social ladder. In Estuary English *mate* is a form of address that is “normally intended to create a bond of solidarity with the person being addressed” but not necessarily, as in *Wotch i’, may’!* (*watch it, mate*) (1993:60). *Mate* is mainly addressed to men, women receive *love*, which is an indicator of working-class dialects and of close relationships (Weatherall 1996). *Love* may be also a neutral form of address, for example, used by train conductors to address passengers (Dickey 1997:256). Polish has similar terms of reference, e.g. *kolego, koleś* (to young strangers) or *stary, facet* (to male-friends). Generic nouns are often used when the speaker does not know the interlocutor’s name: *Help me with this bag, here, will you luv/son/pal?* and they soften Face Threatening Acts (Brown and Levinson 1987:108). In Polish it is possible to use *pan(i)* alone; therefore, Poles will tend to use a respectful pronoun to strangers: *Czy może mi pan pomóc z tą walizką?* (“Can you help me with this bag, sir?”).

**Terms of endearment** are affectionate and intimate forms of address which are mainly used in close relationships between lovers, family members or very close friends, in particular in intimate situations. Perlin and Milewska call them intimate nicknames because they are used by two interlocutors solely in their mutual relations and not within any larger group (2000:165). Thus, these expressions are part of an intimate and private code between two interlocutors and are rarely used in the presence of other people, in particular strangers. In the presence of strangers one is expected to switch to first names because publicising one’s private language is considered immature.

Polish terms of endearment are often used in the **Vocative** and with **diminutive** suffixes. They are marked by a large number of animal-related nicknames: *misiu/misio*

(bear-DIM), *niedźwiadku* (bear-DIM), *kotku* (cat-DIM), *koteczku* (cat-double DIM), *żabko/żabciu* (frog-DIM), *żabusi* (frog-double DIM), *tygrysku* (tiger-DIM), *rybko* (fish-DIM), *rybeńko* (fish-double DIM), *myszko* (mouse-DIM), *osiołku* (donkey-DIM), out of which *misio/misiu/misiak*, *kotku*, *rybko* have the highest frequency and rank (Perlin and Milewska 2000:166-167). Other most typical and frequent semantic fields include: lexemes standing for “darling” and “sweetheart”: *kochanie*, *najdroższa*, *luby*, *serdeńko*; expressions related to something precious: *złotko* (gold-DIM), *skarbie* (treasure), *perelko* (pearl-DIM) and psychophysical features: *gruby* (fat), *stary* (old), *młody* (young), *leniuszku* (crazybone-DIM), *wariacie* (weirdo-DIM) (ibid.:167).

Another remarkable feature is the use of pejorative expressions in this function, e.g. *tłuscioszku/grubasku* (fatso-DIM), *brzydalu* (ugly-DIM), *potworze* (monster-DIM), or names of animals which are generally considered to be repulsive: *szczurku* (rat-DIM), *robaczku* (bug-DIM), *świnko* (pig-DIM)<sup>111</sup>. Negative axiological load is often neutralised by diminutive suffixes which also contribute to the affectionate meaning of such expressions (Perlin and Milewska 2000:167). In fact, a majority of Polish endearments have diminutive suffixes or even double diminutives: *koteczku* (cat-doubleDIM) or *pysiaczku* (snout-doubleDIM). Augmentative suffixes are also sometimes used, e.g. *michol/misiak* (bear-DIM). They enlarge a person; they may be used in reprimands or may express the speaker’s positive attitude. They are less effeminate or mawkish as the diminutive is sometimes perceived. Animal terms of endearment are rarely used in the basic neutral form: *niedźwiedź* (bear) or *pies* (dog), which is not affectionate and may be even derogatory.

English also uses terms of endearment; however, their frequency in conversations is much lower than in Polish. Typical English terms of endearment include lexemes

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<sup>111</sup> Polish is not unusual in this respect. This phenomenon has also been observed, for example, in French and Dutch (Perlin and Milewska 2000:172).

standing for “darling”: *love, darling, dear, deary*; lexemes involving sweetness: *honey, hon, honey-cakes, sugar, sweetheart, sweet, sweetie, sweets, sweetie-pie, sweet-thing, sweet-patootie, baby-cakes; babe, baby* and a few names of animals *lamb, lambie, angel lamb, duck, duckling, pet, petkins, lovey-dovey*<sup>112</sup>, *honey-bunny*. As terms of endearment, English animal metaphors are much less productive and are related to animals that have positive connotations and are stereotypically conceptualised as innocent and safe. It may be because English does not have a similar productive category of diminutive that may neutralise negative connotations. A few diminutives may be found, though: *sweetie, deary, lambie* or metaphors that are associated with smallness: *baby, kiddo, pet, munchkin*. It seems that English makes up for the lack of diminutive (and the possibility of mapping smallness on positive emotions) with lexemes based on the metaphor LOVE IS SWEETNESS (e.g. *You’re the sweetest person I know*), which is confirmed by the high frequency of sweetness-related terms of endearment (high rank of *sweetie* and *honey*) to express affection. Interestingly, this metaphor is rarely used in Polish, except for *cukiereczek* (candy-DIM) and *pączuszek* (doughnut-DIM) but these expressions often sound too affected.

The main function of endearments is to signal the speaker’s affectionate attitude towards the hearer; hence, they signal psychological proximity between the interlocutors. In particular, affectionate nicknames are characteristic of female conversational style. Moreover, it has been reported that women receive more terms of endearment: in the service sector female clients are often addressed with *hon, honey* or *dear* in contrast to male clients addressed with *Sir* (Weatherall 1996). In Polish young women are sometimes addressed by elderly shop assistants as *kochana/kochanie* (darling), *złotko* (gold-DIM).

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<sup>112</sup>NSSPA and RIT.

**Invectives** are usually spontaneous expressions which are to offend or insult the interlocutor by showing the speaker's negative attitude towards him/her or by attacking the hearer's self-concept (Grochowski 1996:18). In Polish and English folk knowledge, words can harm physically: A WORD IS A WOUNDING OBJECT and EMOTIONAL EFFECT IS PHYSICAL EFFECT and they sometimes substitute a direct fight and open physical attack (Maćkiewicz 1999:111). Thus, verbal aggression inflicts psychological pain through words and it is frequently used during quarrels, high feelings, heated discussions. When people are offended, they often avoid showing their feelings openly but they prefer to attack the offender verbally by insults, swearing, etc. (Aronson 1994:476-7). By analogy to physical aggression, verbal aggression infringes the interlocutor's personal space; hence, it means that the speaker approaches the interlocutor with weapon (words) along the respect axis and gives a blow. The hearer may respond with similar infringement (aggression) or may be put off by lack of respect and move backwards to increase psychological distance between them. Invectives break social norms of polite conversational behaviour and they also send a message that the speaker is rude. The **negative** axiological load is shown through:

1. **Expletives/epithets** attribute certain negative characteristics to the hearer (Table 10):

**Table 10. Negative characteristics attributed to the hearer in expletives**

<b>Negative characteristics</b>	<b>Polish</b>	<b>English</b>
<b>Limited intellectual abilities/mental retardation</b> <sup>113</sup>	<i>debil, idiota, dureń, glupek, kretyn, matol</i>	<i>nerd, dimwit, moron</i>
<b>Personality disorders</b>	<i>czubek, wariat, psychol</i>	<i>nut, whacko, weirdo</i>
<b>Physical features / looks:</b> - height	<i>-kurdupel, tyka</i>	<i>-dwarf, bean-pole</i>

<sup>113</sup> One of the most frequent types of insults.

- weight	<i>-tłuścioch, spaślak, szkieletor, szczapa</i>	<i>- fatso, skinny, walking corpse, bag of bones</i>
- age	<i>-szczeniak, dziecko, małolat, pryk, ramol</i>	<i>- old fart, fossil, snotnose</i>
- other salient physical features	<i>-nochal, kłapouch, łysa pała, czupiradło</i>	<i>-cueball, baldy, bug-eyed, carrot-head</i>
<b>Clumsiness</b>	<i>frajer, oferma, niedorajda</i>	<i>loser, goofball</i>
<b>Laziness</b>	<i>leń śmierdzący, leser, nierób, obibok</i>	<i>bum, lazybones, skiver, loafer</i>
<b>Egoism and conformism</b>	<i>egoista, karierowicz, samolub, wazelina</i>	<i>apple-polisher, arse-licker, arse-kisser</i>
<b>Meanness</b>	<i>centuś, skapiradło, sknera, chytrus</i>	<i>miser, penny-pincher, cheapskate</i>
<b>Alcohol or drugs overuse</b>	<i>pijak, pijaczka, ćpun</i>	<i>drunkard, soak, junkie</i>
<b>Lack of morals, general evaluation</b>	<i>zero (Panie Pośle, jest pan zerem), degenerat, prymityw, prostak</i>	<i>zero, nobody, lout, rake, degenerate</i>
<b>Peasant origin</b>	<i>cep, miotek, wieśniak, wsiok, wieśniara</i>	<i>(country) bumpkin, hick, yokel</i>

Source: Ożóg (1981:184) and NSLPA.

The above Table shows that English and Polish use lexemes from similar semantic fields to function as an offensive reference to the interlocutor.

**2. Vulgarisms** are directed against the hearer and are often used when the hearer irritates the speaker. They involve taboo expressions: the hearer may be metonymically conceived via sexual organs (*dick, prick, ass-hole, cunt* / PL: *dupa wołowa, dupek, kutas*) or may be accused of incest (*mother-fucker, father-fucker*<sup>114</sup>), promiscuousness (*wench, slut, whore* / PL: *dziwka, kurwa*), homosexuality (*fag, queer* / PL: *pedał, ciota, lesba*). Another frequent type of insults is directed against the hearer's mother: *Bastard! Son of a*

<sup>114</sup> These insults are absent in Polish.

*bitch!* (Polish equivalents: *Skurwysyn! Sukinsyn! Skurwiel!*) because mothers play an important role in all cultures<sup>115</sup>.

Sometimes **offensive sexual terms** are used as **intimate terms** of reference between psychologically close people (*nigger* among Afro-Americans, *bitch*, *wench*, *bastard*, *bugger*, *mother-fucker*, *shithead*, etc.) (cf. Zwicky 1974:795). In this context they have a bonding function as they signal familiarity and friendliness. They communicate that the interlocutors are so close that they may use such expressions and the other person is not offended. These expressions were discussed by Leech as mock impoliteness (banter) and they are subject to the Banter Principle: “in order to show solidarity with *h*, say something which is (i) obviously untrue, and (ii) obviously impolite to *h*” because the more intimate the relationship, the less important it is to be polite. Hence lack of politeness in itself can become a sign of intimacy; and hence, the ability to be impolite to someone in jest helps to establish and maintain such a familiar relationship” (1983:144). Evaluation of expletives often depends on whether the hearer perceives the speaker’s attitude as friendly or hostile. Such primarily offensive terms are often modified to reduce their offensive force, e.g. with *old* (9a)<sup>116</sup>, *poor* (9b), *little* (9c):

- 9a. *Hey, **you old** mother-fucker. How you been?*  
*Happy Birthday. You turned 19 yesterday, you **old** mother fucker.*  
*Buy me a beer, you **old** rascal.*  
*Cheer up, you **old** bugger.*
- 9b. *You **poor**, poor bastard/fool/man/folk/dear/chap.*
- 9c. *How did you get two of those phones, you **little** devil?*

In the above examples, vulgarisms are not offensive but bonding. In particular, this behaviour is frequent among males and it helps the speaker to create a masculine self-

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<sup>115</sup> The Polish expletive *kurwa mać!* has a similar origin.

<sup>116</sup> in some cases *old* emphasises the negative load of a word, as in *old bag*, *old hag*, *old tart*, etc. addressed to women.

image. The use of offensive sexual words as endearments is very rare in Polish and it is limited to a few isolated examples in the diminutive, e.g. *dupcia* (arse-DIM) and *cipka* (cunt-DIM). However, the use of non-sexual epithets as endearments is used more frequently among young people: *serwus matoły* (lit. “hi morons”) or *ściskam cię debilku* (lit. “hugs to you, dimwit”) (cf. Ożóg 1992:55).

3. **Words that degrade the interlocutor in the Great Chain of Beings** (God–humans–animals–plants–inorganic things) by lowering the interlocutor’s position in the hierarchy (Krzeszowski 1997:68). These include **animal-related words** (*cow, pig, worm, weasel / świnia/wieprz* (pig), *żmija* (viper), *baran* (ram)) but if they combine with the diminutive, they become terms of endearment in Polish. Likewise, the English expression *you cow* is used as a mild and jocular rebuke among female friends. The role of metaphor is to provide mental access to one domain via another and to highlight certain aspects of the target domain. Langacker notes that in metaphorical expressions “the extended or ‘figurative’ sense functions as the active node – it represents the actual notion to be conveyed – while the basic or ‘literal’ sense is activated secondarily” (Langacker 1988:69). Krzeszowski notes that figurative senses often have a larger axiological load than literal senses (1997:54). Other expressions that degrade the interlocutor in the Great Chain of Beings are related to:

- **plants:** *coach potato, cabbage, carrot, nut*; PL: *grzyb* (lit. “fungus” / met.: an old person), *szczaw* (lit. “sorrel”/ met.: youngster), *głęb* (lit. “stump of a cabbage” / met.: dimwit);
- inorganic things, such as **objects** and **instruments:** *old bag, battle-axe, milktoast, chump, clod* / PL: *trąba* (lit. “trumpet” / met.: ninny), *młot* (lit. “hammer” / met. dimwit);

- **illness:** *pain in the neck, headache, scurvy / wrzód* (lit. “ulcer” / met.: irritating person), *cholera/cholernik* (lit. cholera / battle-axe) (cf. Ozóg 1981:184-5).

It may be seen in the above examples that Polish and English create offensive metaphors on the basis of similar source domains. It is worth noting the high frequency of *idiot* and *fool* in British English. Murdoch claims that *you idiot* is not as pejorative as the Polish *ty idioto*, but it reflects a British-specific sense of humour and is a warm and jocular equivalent of *ty niezdamo* (lit. “you clumsy person”) (1999:155). Expletives can also combine with **silly**: *Come on you silly cow/sod* and with **pathetic**: *you pathetic loser /idiot/moron*, which is quite offensive.

Speakers may also use grammatical devices to modify the meaning of such words. Insults are often used in the **Vocative**, as in *You idiot!* This construction is stronger in Polish when “*ty*” is addressed to a stranger who is entitled to *pan(i): ty swinio*. In English, there is a considerable difference between: *You are stupid* and *You are being stupid*, where the former is more offensive as it suggests that it is a permanent condition while the latter suggests only a temporary condition. Polish does not make such a distinction through tenses but it has a distinction between the nominative and instrumental case. As noted by Tabakowska, the instrumental construction (10b) is neutral while the nominative construction (10a) has a strong axiological load:

- 10a. *Jesteś osioł.*  
You are a donkey + NOM.
- 10b. *Jesteś osłem.*  
You are a donkey + INS.

The instrumental case reflects the rational and unemotional categorization process (categorises the interlocutor into the category of donkeys) while the nominative case equates the interlocutor to a donkey, and such an attribution process is more emotionally charged (2001:6). As a result, the nominative construction is more offensive.

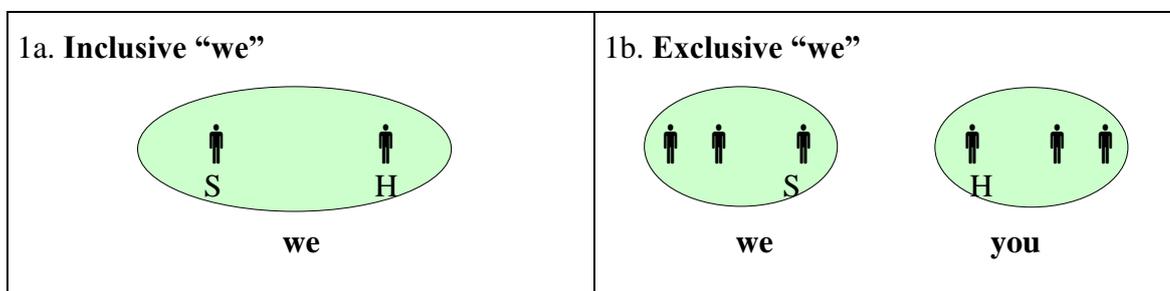
### 3. Inclusive reference: the pronoun *we* / *my*

The speaker may also refer to himself/herself through the first-person plural pronoun *we* (En) / *my* (Pl). Plural self-reference indicates that the speaker conceptualises himself/herself as part of a larger group. This group may be **exclusive** of the hearer when it does not refer to him/her (e.g. royal *we*) or **inclusive** when it refers both to the speaker and the hearer (e.g. editorial *we*). It should be noted that inclusive reference is more frequent in conversation than exclusive reference when the speaker identifies himself/herself as part of a group distinct from the hearer (see 1b in Figure 17): We think that. In the following exchange:

- 11        *What were you doing last weekend?*  
            We were in Paris.

*We* means the speaker and his partner but excludes the hearer. Kamio analyses similar usage in English where *we* is located in the speaker's territory (2001:1116). Similarly, the inclusive *we* covers both the speaker's and the hearer's territory because the speaker conceptualises himself/herself and the hearer together, as one group consisting of at least these two interlocutors (see 1a in Figure 17).

Figure 17. Inclusive and exclusive “we”



Inclusive *we* creates a link between the interlocutors and involves the hearer in the conversation and/or the speaker's actions. It may also function as a polite invitation

(*Let's go to the cinema*) and such *we* is called *pluralis sociativus* (Dąbrowska 1993:157). Quirk et al. emphasise that *we* may also be motivated by the speaker's modesty to avoid egotistical *I* (1985:350).

*We*-reference may also be exclusive of the speaker and fall solely in the hearer's territory. The flagship example is a conversation between a doctor and a patient: "*How are we feeling today?*" / PL: "*Jak się dziś czujemy?*", where *we* refers solely to the hearer but it is a way of signalling close psychological distance by doctors, to get inside the patient's feelings; hence, the possibility to feel empathy and show interest in the hearer's problems.

The use of first-person plural address forms may be illustrated with the following examples. When the speaker meets a stranger, he/she has a number of address options:

- 12a. *Dzień dobry panu.*  
Good morning sir.
- 12b. *Witam pana.*  
(I) welcome (you) sir
- 12c. *Witam / Witamy!*  
(I) welcome / (We) welcome
- 12d. *Witaj!*  
Welcome +2<sup>nd</sup> per. SG object marking (you)

Greeting 12c directs the focus of attention at the speaker, rather than at the hearer while in 12a, 12b and 12c the speaker introduces the hearer onstage. The third form is not as formal as 12a and 12b and not so informal and direct as 12d. 12c allows the speaker not to differentiate between *ty* and *pani* terms and creates an informal atmosphere without offending the interlocutor. Another example is taken from bank negotiations with the company president (13):

- 13. *Panie Prezesie, czy macie problemy ze ściąganiem należności?*  
(you) have-2<sup>nd</sup> per. PL  
"Mr President, do you have problems with debt collection?"

*Możemy*      *więc* *Wam* *pomóc.*  
can-1<sup>st</sup> per. PL      you-PL-informal  
“We can help you.”

The exchange started with the respectful appellation *Panie Prezesie*, including honorific “*pan*” plus an acknowledgement of the interlocutor’s position (i.e. company president). Instead of remaining on the honorific *pan* terms, the negotiator switches into informal *my-wy* terms: The direct *wy* terms are possible because they refer generally to the entire company and not solely to the company president. This device decreases communicative distance between the interlocutors; hence, it allows the negotiator to be more persuasive.

#### **4. Impersonalisation**

The speaker may avoid direct reference to himself/herself or to the hearer through impersonalisation. Impersonal constructions are usually associated with institutional formal register and are much more frequent in writing than in speech. This section will briefly discuss the passive voice, impersonal pronoun *one*, Polish *-no/-to* and *się* constructions.

The **passive** is used much less frequently than active sentences; it is usually avoided in speech. Givón explains this phenomenon by a cultural norm: “in relating states and events, humans tend to topicalize - i.e. talk about - the more human-like, agent-like participant” (1990:573). The passive represents a marked coding with respect to the choice of clausal subject. In a prototypical active clause the agent, the head of the action chain, is “volitional, controlling, initiating i.e. salient cause of the event” (ibid.:565). He/she is the most prominent participant coded by the subject while the patient is coded by the object. The passive reverses this figure/ground alignment: “the markedness of a passive construction (...) resides in the fact that the participant otherwise expected to be the subject is bypassed in favour of a less qualified candidate” (Langacker

1991:335). It is the direct object (normally a participant of secondary salience) that is usually selected as the most prominent participant.

The main function of the passive is to ‘defocus’ the agent (cf. Langacker 1991:336). The agent is removed to the background and is usually left unspecified. As a result, the passive “suppresses the identity of the active’s agent/initiator in the passive clause” (Givón 1985:203) and is used when the speaker does need or does not want to identify the agent (Zandvoort 1962:53). In most cases the use of passive and other impersonalisation strategies is motivated by the speaker’s wish to avoid direct personal responsibility for transacted information. According to the hazardous information principle, new information may generate risk and socially expose the speaker (Givón 1990:824). Brown and Levinson list the passive as a politeness strategy: it is “the means of avoiding reference to persons involved in Face Threatening Acts” (1987:194-197). The passive is also used in reference to the hearer. This usage is distancing because it removes him into the background. Tabakowska provides the following example: *Na jutro te zadania mają być rozwiązane* (“These exercises are to be done for tomorrow”), where a teacher wants to maintain distance to his/her students (2001:23).

The Polish language does not ‘like’ the passive (cf. Brajerski 1995c:373-381) and it has a number of other impersonal constructions which defocus the agent but do not foreground the referent of the direct object. The impersonal *-no/-to* construction is considered to have a similar function to that of the English passive (cf. Tabakowska 1993:51). The *-no/-to* construction is not used in informal register (Linde-Usiekniewicz 1987:525), but rather in the literary style (Brajerski 1995b:484) and in formal ‘bureaucratic’ language. Its function is to defocus the agent and suppress his/her identity. Although the agent is not marked syntactically, he/she is semantically accessible: it is a person or an unspecified group of people excluding the speaker and the hearer (cf. Linde-

Usiekniewicz 1987:525; Wierzbicka 1966:186; Koneczna 1955:386). In the phrase *Postanowiono, że* (lit. “it was decided that”), the speaker distances himself from decision-makers although he/she might have participated in the decision-making process. The agent is construed schematically and is non-salient. As a result, the salience of event is enhanced and it is promoted to the status of the figure.

The *verb + się* construction has no apparent grammatical subject. As a result, the agent is non-salient and left unspecified although he/she is semantically accessible. Polish grammars (cf. Brajerski, 1995a:499; Jodłowski 1976:77; Wolińska 1978:76) define him/her as human, indefinite or general, and including the speaker and the hearer. The *się* construction obliterates the agent and creates the impression that he/she does not transmit the energy to the patient. As a result, the process appears endogenous and as if it was self-engendered, e.g. *mleko się wylało* (“the milk spilt itself”). It gives the speaker an ‘out’ to avoid responsibility. In the majority of cases, the *się* construction has the effect of distancing the speaker from the hearer because the former places himself/herself in the background.

The above Polish constructions are to a certain degree similar to English constructions with the generic pronoun *one*. It is “a rather <formal and impersonal> pronoun, meaning ‘people in general’, including you and me” (Leech and Svartvik 1975:57). Zandvoort claims that “sometimes the emphasis is on ‘the speaker’ rather than on ‘people in general’” and then “(...) *one* becomes a substitute for *I* or *me*, either from modesty or affectation” (1962:180). The pronoun can also appear pretentious and therefore it is usually avoided (Goodman 1997:198).

The egocentric *one* “has become a marked and widely recognized stereotype associated with the Queen and some upper social classes”; in satirical media programmes she is parodied by the frequent reference to herself as *one* (cf. Goodman 1997:201). *One*,

as an impersonal pronoun, suppresses the identity of the agent; A. K. Sinha calls it a “faceless” pronoun (1974:633). The speaker does not mark his/her presence overtly but masks it with *one*. As a subject, *one* exhibits lower cognitive salience: it is indefinite, vague, nonreferential, third person, and unlocalized (cf. Wallace 1982:212-214). As a result, it does not function as the figure within the profiled relationship. The choice of *one* as the subject and the resulting reversal of the canonical figure/ground alignment turn attention away from the speaker. As Goodman notes, *one*, being marked as a feature of the King’s English, frames its user as an outsider: the pronoun “maps the in-group and out-group both linguistically and socially” (1997:202). Brown and Levinson stress that “the introduction of ‘one’ for ‘I’ has a significant point-of-view effect of distancing” (1987:198). It is a device used in negative politeness to satisfy the need for personal face: “the output is social ‘distancing’ - it is used whenever the speaker wants to put a social brake onto the course of the interaction” (ibid.:130).

As shown above, the main function of impersonalisation is to defocus the agent and to obscure his identity. Impersonal self-reference allows the speaker to remove himself/herself to the background; hence, to avoid responsibility or to be modest. When the speaker impersonalises reference to the hearer, it may function as a face-saving device or as a signal of psychological distance.

**To sum up**, person deixis locates the hearer at a certain distance from the speaker in the conversational space and this distance is indicative of psychological and social relationship between the interlocutors. It has been demonstrated how forms of address are frequently used in conversation to establish or reflect and shape the relationship between the interlocutors. The changing address patterns were noted both for English and Polish. Linguistic changes show the significant informalisation of address forms; hence, informalisation of interpersonal relations. It has been shown that the parameter of

distance is of special importance in the Polish address system which contains multiple address options that reflect and create varying degrees of social and psychological distance. Polish requires the categorisation of interlocutors into the in-group or the out-group. This division is very important in Polish because it prompts the speaker into different conceptualisations of his/her interlocutor's orientation in the conversational space. Polish pronominal forms of address are built on the category of distance: *ty* with the second person verb agreement codes close distance while *pan(i)* with the third person verb agreement upgrades the hearer's status and locates the hearer at a far distance from the interlocutor. The out-group hearer's status is also upgraded or acknowledged through the extensive use of titles. In in-group relations, Polish requires the speaker to locate the hearer at a close distance (*ty*) and to reduce his/her size (diminutives). The English pronoun *you* is neutral and it does not activate the distance scale. Although English has the opposition between first names and titles with last names, it is losing its status as the use of first names becomes the norm. English compensates for the lack of honorific address forms with other devices, which will be shown in the next section.

### **3. LINGUISTIC ETIQUETTE: DISTANCE TOWARDS THE MESSAGE**

This chapter discusses Polish and English ways of expressing distance towards the message; however, only such devices which be analysed where distance towards the message reflects social/psychological distance between the interlocutors.

#### **3.1 Politeness and Impoliteness**

**Politeness** is a set of socially-sanctioned rules how to optimise interpersonal communication and, consequently, the relationship between the interlocutors: "politeness is a system of interpersonal relations designed to facilitate interaction by minimizing the

potential for conflict and confrontation inherent in all human interchange” (R. Lakoff 1990:34). There are different theories of politeness within linguistics, the most notable one being developed by Brown and Levinson. Their theory of politeness is based on the concept of face which is “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself” (1987:61). They assume that during conversation people cooperate in maintaining each other’s face (ibid.:67). There are two types of face:

- **Negative face** is “the want of every ‘competent adult member’ that his actions be unimpeded by others” (ibid.:62). Negative politeness is oriented towards negative face needs.
- **Positive face** is “the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others” (ibid.:62). Positive politeness is oriented towards positive face needs.

Duszak notes that the concept of face assumes the co-existence of contradictory human needs. On the one hand, people seek approval, acceptance and liking, which depend on their ability to open up and be accessible to other people. On the other hand, people want to protect their territories, privacy and, consequently, maintain distance between the self and others (the concept of negative face) (1998:261). Thus, positive politeness strategies are aimed at attracting the interlocutor towards the speaker, i.e. decreasing communicative distance while negative politeness strategies are protective and keep the interlocutor at a respectful distance.

For want of space I will not embark on the criticism<sup>117</sup> of politeness theory; however, it is worth noting that the most frequent objections concern universality of politeness and “a strong anglocentric bias” of the politeness theory (Wierzbicka

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<sup>117</sup> See Wierzbicka (1991), Reynolds (1995), Jakubowska (1999) for a detailed criticism of Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory.

1991:67). It was often demonstrated that actual realisations of politeness differ from culture to culture. Furthermore, the politeness theory ignores the fact that interlocutors may be, and often are, impolite to each other (Culpeper 1996). Leech notes that politeness is less important in intimate relationships where mock impoliteness (banter) often communicates intimacy. In general, underpoliteness communicates familiarity (1983:144). Culpeper notes that genuine impoliteness is more frequent in very intimate relationships because the interlocutors “know which aspects of face are particularly sensitive to attack, and one may be able to better predict and/or cope with retaliation” (1996:354). Thus, the use of politeness and impoliteness depends on a degree of psychological and social distance between the interlocutors.

### 3.2 Formulae

Biber et al. note that due to real-time processing and time pressure “conversation is repetitive in a more global sense, in that it relies more on stereotyped, prefabricated sequences of words (...), e.g. *Can I have a..., Do you know what?*” (1999:1049). Such conversational routines are referred to as formulae. They are “stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar” (Wray and Perkins 2000:1).

A large number of Polish and English formulae are quite similar; however, English shows a higher degree of formulaicity. It is often emphasised in the literature<sup>118</sup> that Poles complain about the insincerity of English formulae and the flagship example is the conversational opening with inquiries about the hearer’s well-being (*How are you? I’m fine, thanks*). *How are you* questions are similar in English and Polish, but Britons and Poles provide different answers to them. English answers are conventionally short and positive: *Fine; I’m fine, thank you; Good*. As noted by Jakubowska, if the social

distance between the interlocutors is large, answers are positive. When the social distance is small, it is possible to receive a sincere negative response (1999:214). She notes that Polish responses are also highly conventional: *Jakoś leci* (so-so), *Stara bida* (old poverty), *W porządku* (all right), *Nie narzekam* (I don't complain), *Ujdzie* (fair to middling) and "there is a strong tendency to downgrade the positive self-report" (ibid.:58). Pessimistic or moderate responses help create the common ground between the interlocutors. As noted in the section on cultural differences, Poles are becoming more success-oriented; hence, responses are slowly becoming more positive and optimistic to create a successful self-image.

Another "insincere" English formula occurs at leave-takings and has a form of invitation: *We must meet up sometime; Let's get together again; Call on me*, but functions as a conversational closing which signals good intentions, rather than is a genuine invitation. Similar Polish expressions, e.g. *Musimy się kiedyś spotkać* ("we must meet sometime"), *Wpadnij do mnie* ("call on me") are less frequent and less formulaic (Jakubowska 1999:60).

Lower formulaicity of Polish conversational routines may result from the grammatical variation imposed by Polish address forms, verb and noun endings, verb agreement patterns, etc. which change depending on social distance between the interlocutors. Barzycka explains the lower formulaicity of Polish with "cultural norms regulating the amount of talk appropriate for any encounter". She notes that:

It is not customary in Poland to greet strangers, even if they are not complete strangers and we see them occasionally at the greengrocer's or in a lift. Thus where the English would say *Hello*, we would rather remain silent, where we would say *Dzień dobry*, they would already add *How are you*. The point here is that in Poland the affective formulae occur when the interactants are at least on speaking terms (2000:14).

In light of the above discussion, Wierzbicka's conclusion that "Polish culture values sincerity" (1991:116) is controversial. Polish formulaic expressions may also be

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<sup>118</sup> cf. Wierzbicka 1991, Reynolds 1995.

‘insincere’, e.g. modern hellos: *Cześć* (lit. reverence), *Czołem* (lit. (to bow down) with forehead down), *Kłaniam się* (lit. I bow down), *Moje uszanowanie* (lit. my respects). All these greetings used to signal reverence for the interlocutor in the past and nowadays this meaning is not retrieved (Jakubowska 1999:55). Likewise, it is not sincere to downgrade one’s wellbeing or give falsely pessimistic answers to “*How are you*” questions as Poles conventionally do.

### **3.3 Indirectness: euphemisms, hedges and question tags**

Directness and indirectness are correlated with registers: indirectness is generally associated with formal register while directness is connected with informal register. However, this section focuses on indirectness achieved through euphemisms, question tags and hedges in informal register. In terms of distance, directness is a close approach towards the interlocutor while indirectness is keeping at a distance through verbosity. Thus, indirectness is associated with politeness (cf. Leech and Short 1981:312), but also with a lack of involvement/detachment, which introduces more formal and cold relations between partners (Duszak 1998:268). The speaker provides access to certain knowledge structures but leaves it to the hearer to decide which specific structures he/she is to activate. For this reason indirectness is less confrontational: the speaker avoids commitment and may not be challenged or held accountable.

#### **3.2.1 Euphemisms**

Speech communities have their taboos (usually related to sex life, physiology, death, illnesses) and strict conventions how to talk about them. Because these concepts are usually evaluated negatively, words that directly refer to them also carry a negative load. Euphemisms, which are usually emotionally neutral or positive words, are socially acceptable ways of referring to taboos. They replace *verbum proprium* because they are

indirect, vague or represent a higher level of specification (cf. Dąbrowska 1993). Women use euphemisms more often than men do because it is less socially acceptable for women to use taboo expressions.

Euphemisms are found at various levels of language: phonological, morphological, lexical, grammatical, etc. (Dąbrowska 1993). A special group of euphemisms are expressions that replace swearwords: these are mainly phonological distortion of the basic word (Pl. *kurwa* vs. *kurde*) or (En. *damn* vs. *dash*) or pronunciation of the first syllable or letter *kur..*, *do d...*, (En.) *f...* (Dąbrowska 1993:269-274). Such indirect reference does not evoke the taboo concept in the foreground but in the background, which makes it less offensive. Litotes is another type of euphemism, defined by the Dictionary of Literary Terms as a form of understatement in which something is affirmed by stating the negative of its opposite. For example, instead of saying *stupid*, the speaker may use *unwise*. The latter is more polite because it capitalises on positive connotations implicit in *wise* in contrast to *stupid*, which foregrounds negative connotations.

Euphemisms are usually longer than direct expressions and are derived from a higher register. As Haiman notes, formal registers and euphemisms have an instrumental function as they protect the hearer from the content of the speaker's message:

“The euphemism does not increase the distance from addressee to speaker, but rather (...) the ‘epistemic distance’ between the physical message and its embedded referential content. By wrapping up his content in excess verbiage, the speaker effectively puts his verbal emanations in a protective package. If the verbiage is sufficiently high-flown, the package may be almost opaque; i.e., the hearer may really not recognize the contents of the message thrust under his nose, or he may choose to misinterpret them” (1983:801).

Thus, a euphemism increases the distance between the hearer and the message: “prolixity is an icon of concealment; concealment is motivated by the need, for whatever reason, to estrange a hearer from the facts” (Haiman 1994:1631). When the speaker uses a euphemism, he/she signals to the hearer that he/she is **polite** and he/she **respects** the

social convention and/or the hearer himself/herself, which means that he/she maintains proper large psychological and/or social distance through epistemic distance. Haiman's idea expresses **the essence of linguistic etiquette**: it consists in the protective packaging of the message.

### 3.2.2 Hedges and Understatement

Biber et al. note that underspecification and lack of lexical elaboration are in general characteristic of face-to-face conversations, including vagueness about quantity and quality through the use of hedges, superordinate-level nouns (*thingy*) and vague coordination tags (*or something like that, and stuff, and things like that*) (1999:1045). One of these devices - **hedges** - are defined by R. Lakoff as modifiers that "reveal distinctions of the degree of category membership" and define an element's relationship to the prototype (1972:183-228). Hedges say of "that membership that it is *partial*, or true only in certain respects, or that it is *more* true and complete than perhaps might be expected" (Brown and Levinson 1987:145). This function is realised through: *a kind of, a sort of, a bit of*.

Some hedges code the speaker's judgement about the truth of a hedged message and show a degree of information incorporation. Suzuki explains the process of the incorporation of information through psychological distance between the speaker and the message: "when the evidence is the inner feeling of the speaker, when the speaker is strongly convinced of the truth of the information, and/or when the speaker is emotionally attached to the information (...), the psychological distance between the speaker and the information is small." The psychological distance is large when the speaker is emotionally detached from the information, for example, because he/she disapproves of it or regards it as false or when it was obtained from an outside source (1998:432). A degree of information incorporation signals the speaker's epistemic

commitment. Such hedges may range from strong epistemic commitment (*certainly, undoubtedly, definitely*), lower commitment (*probably, possibly*), weak commitment (*perhaps*) or no commitment (*seemingly, supposedly*). Hedges may also function as “an appeal to a framework of shared understanding which makes absolute explicitness unnecessary” (Montgomery 1995:114), i.e. they invite the hearer to share the speaker’s point of view.

In general, hedges allow the speaker for a degree of imprecision or verbal inexplicitness; hence, to disclaim responsibility for a hedged message. “In many cultures (...) claiming direct personal responsibility for transacted information may be a serious social error, to be strictly avoided in any but most intimate - thus well protected - social contexts” (Givón 1990:824). When the speaker talks to a higher-status interlocutor, he/she usually maintains **epistemic deference**, i.e. the speaker claims he/she knows less than he/she does, which is called by Givón **the modesty principle**: “speakers tend to scale down their expression of certainty, by using hedges that place assertions in a lower - *irrealis* - epistemic range. Toning down is a hedge against the *possibility* that the higher authority *might* hold a contrary belief” (1990:822). As a result, the statement becomes less definite and dogmatic. **Social distance and respect are signalled through epistemic distance towards the message.** The larger social distance between the interlocutors, the more hedges the speaker uses: *I hope you don’t mind my saying that...* to signal respect. One type of such devices which reduce the speaker’s certainty and soften the force of a declarative is hedging with verbs of thinking: *I suppose, I think, I guess, I believe* (R. Lakoff 1972:918fn). This device is particularly frequent in English.

**Understatement** is a type of euphemism achieved, for example, through hedges, and is characteristic of British culture. It consists in the frequent use of lexical underspecification and avoidance of explicit statements: *mildly retarded, less developed*

(Dąbrowska 1993:365). According to Leech, understatement adds “a downtoning effect” to the message (1983:145). The most typical hedges connected with understatement are *rather* and *quite* in contexts where they mean “very” or “completely”. *Rather* is stronger than *quite* and in combination with positive adjectives it means “more than expected”: “If a film is quite good, you are recommending it: it is not the best film ever made, but it is certainly worth seeing. (...) If a film is rather good, it is better than most” (Swan 1991:232). The convention requires the speaker to verbalize less than he/she thinks (by avoiding *very*). Wierzbicka suggests that understatement is connected with the taboo on displays of emotion in British culture and that **overstatements**, such as *you’re too, too kind; she gave me the most beautiful ring*, are characteristic of “rich women, private-school girls, homosexuals, actors, etc. who are popularly supposed to engage in public displays of emotion, especially affection, or hysteria” (1991:279). Polish prefers overstatement: *strasznie*<sup>119</sup> *fajny film* (lit. “a terribly good film”). However, as noted by Dąbrowska (1993:366), it is also possible to say euphemistically: *Mamy nieco roboty* (“We have a little work”).

Wierzbicka notes that English favours understatement and hedges in opinions and evaluations while Polish prefers overstatement (e.g. because of uninhibited display of emotions and a rich system of expressive derivation). She argues that “opinions are typically expressed fairly forcefully” and in definite terms without hedges in Polish (1991:41-43). However, it is also not so infrequent to hear a Briton say: “*oh, it’s bullshit/nonsense/rubbish*” or use positive adjectives with expletives: *fucking good*. Furthermore, as noted by Kalisz, “the use of hedges is the subject of dialectical, idiolectal and group differences” (1993:114). For example, hedges are typically associated with the female conversational style (cf. Talbot 1998); males are also indirect but they prefer

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<sup>119</sup> American English “*awesome*”: *we had an awesome conversation about life; an awesome freestyle bike*.

understatement. This is also true for Polish: Marcjanik has demonstrated that Polish women use more hedges (14a) than men do (14b and 14c) (2001:288):

- 14a. *Czy bylby pan uprzejmy skasować mi bilet?*  
be-conditional-3<sup>rd</sup> per. SG you (sir) kind  
Would you be so kind as to punch my ticket, sir?
- 14b. *Może pan skasować?*  
*Can-3<sup>rd</sup> per. SG you (sir)*  
Can you punch (it), sir?
- 14c. *Można?*  
*Can-impersonal*  
Can (you)?

All the three examples are in the interrogative form, which is also a hedge in itself. The difference between the female and male request is that 14a is more elaborate and longer; hence more polite. A higher degree of politeness in 14a is also achieved through the conditional. In fact, 14a is very similar to English hedged expressions. Male examples are more direct, shorter and have fewer hedges (e.g. modal verbs).

Duszak notes that from the Anglo-Saxon point of view Polish communicative behaviours may seem direct and unceremonious. She explains it with such values as emotionality, involvement or desire to overcome social distance: directness gives more expressiveness to a statement and more spontaneity and closeness to social contacts (1998:272). However, it should be emphasised that directness is applied in contacts with the in-group (especially one's family and close friends) and is more frequently used by male than by female Polish speakers. In respect of the out-group, one may expect to find a larger number of hedges in Polish. Marcjanik provides numerous examples of Polish hedges: *Pozwolę sobie przypomnieć* ("I will allow myself to remind (you)"); *Gdyby pani zechciała poszukać* ("If you were so kind as to want to search for"); *Jeżeli pan pozwoli* ("If you allow me, sir"); *Czy nie sprawiłoby panu kłopotu* ("Wouldn't it be a problem for

you, sir, to”); *Wybacz, że zapytam* (“Forgive my asking”) (2001:282). For these reasons, the claim that Polish favours directness is only partly true.

### 3.2.3 Question Tags

Question tags are more syntactically elaborate hedges. These structures are very productive and frequent in English: “among the types of interrogative structure in conversation, about one in four questions are question tags” (Biber et al. 1999:1046). Biber et al. further emphasise that question tags are evidence of conversational interactiveness: “they add an interrogative force to a declarative one, combining assertion with a request for confirmation, thus illustrating the characteristic ‘negotiation’ or co-construction of meaning between interlocutors” (ibid.:1046). This view is also expressed in Robin Lakoff’s article:

... a tag question is really intermediate between a statement and a question: a statement assumes that the addressee will agree, and a question leaves the response of the addressee up to him, but a tag-question implies that, while the speaker expects a certain sort of response, the hearer may not provide it... The effect of the tag, then, is to soften the declaration from an expression of certainty, demanding belief to an expression of likelihood, merely requesting it ... (1972:917-918)

Thus, question tags are another form of epistemic deference. They realise Givón’s modesty principle since they reduce the speaker’s certainty. They may be also used to solicit the hearer’s confirmation or agreement:

15a. *Mary is coming along, isn’t she?* (Expected answer: - Yes)

15b. *Mary isn’t coming along, is she?* (Expected answer: - No)

The meaning of a question tag changes with intonation. With a rising intonation, the sentence is more like a real question (Swan 1991:515) which may tend towards affirmation (15a) or towards negation (15b), depending on the modality (affirmative or negative) of the sentence preceding to the tag (Leech and Svartvik 1975:112). “The tag with a rising tone invites verification, expecting the hearer to decide the truth of the

proposition in the statement. The tag with the falling tone (...) invites confirmation of the statement, and has the force of an exclamation rather than a genuine question” (Quirk et al. 1985:811).

Question tags were divided by Janet Holmes into referential and affective tags (see Figure 18). The **referential** question tag (*John is American, isn't he?*) tends to have a rising intonation at the end, signals uncertainty about the information content of utterance and is employed to check on the accuracy of utterance (qtd. in Talbot 1998:41). These are the most prototypical uses: the speaker formulates a hypothesis and asks for confirmation about what has been previously said (Cuenca 1997:3).

The **affective** tag, which tends to end with falling intonation, is used when the speaker does not normally need information but wants to decrease distance to the interlocutor or minimize potential imposition. Affective tags are further broken down into:

- The **facilitative tag**: it expresses solidarity, interest or concern. It often encourages the interlocutor to join in:  
*It's about your back, isn't it?* (Talbot 1998:41).  
*It's at the far end of the street, the last house on the left, isn't it?* when giving directions to a stranger unfamiliar with the town. They presuppose the common ground (Brown and Levinson 1987:119).
- The **softening tag**: it softens the potential threat of a criticism or request:  
*That was silly, wasn't it?* (Talbot 1998:41).  
*You couldn't lend me a pound, could you?* (Swan 1991:515).  
*You don't have any envelopes, do you by any chance?* polite pessimism (Brown and Levinson 1987: 175).

A question tag is also a “persuasive softener of the imperative” and it may code a varying degree of persuasiveness, as in examples 16 (Quirk et al. 1985:813):

16a. *Open the door, won't you?* (rising intonation)

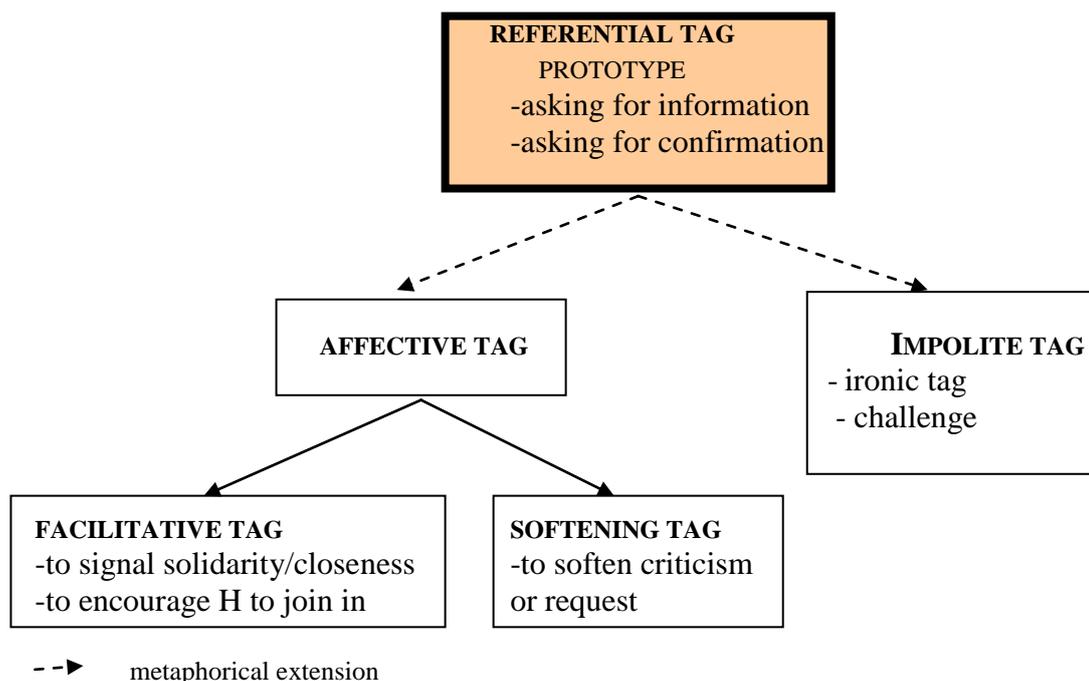
16b. *Open the door, won't you?* (falling intonation)

16c. *Open the door, will you?* (rising intonation)

16d. *Open the door, will you?* (falling intonation)

Example 16a is least insistent while example 16d is most insistent. Quirk et al. call sentence 16d “very peremptory and (...) ill-mannered” (1985:813). It shows that English question tags are not only used to show consideration for or solidarity with the interlocutor or to be polite: “often, they are used as a tool of confrontation, challenge, putdown, verbal violence and verbal abuse” (Wierzbicka 1991:40), e.g. *You think you're funny, do you?* In negative sentences same-way tags sound aggressive: *So you don't like my cooking, don't you?* (Swan 1991:515). Tag questions are also frequently appended to ironic statements: *You really showed him, didn't you?* (if the interlocutor lost an argument) or *Wow, that was really hard, wasn't it?* (Kreuz 1999:1688). For these reasons, it is necessary to extend Holmes's model of question tags by psychologically distancing questions tags called “the impolite tag” (see Figure 18):

**Figure 18. Types of English question tags**



The Figure treats the affective and impolite tag as a metaphorical extension of prototypical referential tags.

Women have been found to use more question tags than men do and they use them more with men than with women (Hannah and Murachver 1999). Women use more of the facilitative type of tag to express solidarity. Men tend to use referential tags to indicate uncertainty or press for agreement (Talbot 1998:41).

Question tags may also mark the speaker socially. It is noted that question tags, such as *isn't it?* and *don't I?*, are more often used in Estuary English than in RP (cf. Rosewarne 1984, Crystal 1995:299). This feature of Estuary English was adopted from Cockney, in particular *ain't I?*, where statements often end with a question: *I've got problems, ain't I?* or *She's really nice. You know what I mean?* (Coggle 1993:35). Coggle also notes the high popularity of "short snappy tags", such as *so righ'?*, and in general adoption of *right* in Estuary English; "narrations of recent events are frequently peppered with this tag" for a dramatic effect: *And there I was wai'in' a'the bus stop, righ'?* when this car draws up, *righ'?* (ibid.:66). Another popular tag is Cockney *inni?* (*Nice day, inni'?*), which is a reduced form of *isn't it?* and "a general purpose tag, meaning "Is that not the case?" instead of a number of tags: *aren't they?*, *don't they?* (ibid.:67).

The use of tag questions is culture-specific. From the Polish perspective, English speech is marked by an all-pervasive presence of tag questions (Wierzbicka 1991:37; Oleksy 1977, Fisiak 1978:186). The Polish system of tag questions is not well developed. It has a limited number of tag questions: *prawda?* (true?), *tak?* (yes?), *nie?* (no?), *no nie?* (eh no?), *co?* (what?), *dobrze?* (good?), *nieprawdaż?* (not true?), *O.K.?*, *zgadza się?* (Is it so?), which are similar to the English invariable tags *okay?*, *right?*, and *eh?* (Wierzbicka 1991:38). However, Polish tags are used far less frequently and with the rising

intonation. They are mainly employed in the referential function or in situations when the speaker expects confirmation or agreement. As Fisiak notes (1978:186), the choice between the two forms:

17a. *On pił,                   nieprawdaż?*  
He was drinking, not true?

17b. *On pił,                   prawda?*  
He was drinking, true?

does not depend on the negative or positive character of the statement. It is also possible to find the ironic use of question tags in Polish, as in: *No to im pokazałeś, no nie?* (“You showed them, eh no?”).

According to Wierzbicka, the limited use of question tags in Polish stems from the fact that “Polish cultural tradition does not foster constant attention to other people’s ‘voices’, other people’s points of view, and tolerates forceful expression of personal views and personal feelings without any consideration for other people’s views and feelings” (1991:40). She contrasts Polish tags with English tags: in her opinion the latter reflect “the deep-rooted habit of acknowledging possible differences between individual points of view” (Wierzbicka 1991:37). Wierzbicka’s interpretation of Polish tags is untenable and seems to be based on stereotypes. First of all, it has been demonstrated that besides the referential function, English question tags have a range of other functions, including the impolite tag, which does not reflect the speaker’s awareness of different points of view, e.g. *Look mate, just fuck off, will you?* (cf. Kalisz 1993:112). Furthermore, the fact that Polish uses fewer question tags does not mean that it does not pay attention to the interlocutor’s views because the functions of English tag questions are realised differently in Polish. For example, they are frequently translated as interrogatives, e.g. *Ridiculous, isn’t it?* would become *Czy to nie śmieszne?* (i.e. “Isn’t it funny?”) (Oleksy 1977: 106). Similarly, Grzesiuk’s research shows that rhetorical

questions are one of the most frequent syntactic means of emotional expression in Polish (1995:56-98), which also contradicts Wierzbicka's claim about the forceful expression of views and feelings in Polish.

To sum up, indirectness involves epistemic distance, i.e. it creates a distance between the speaker and his/her message: the message is protectively packaged in prolixity. In this way the speaker protects the hearer from the message and at the same time he protects himself from the hearer. Thus, epistemic distance towards the message signals psychological/social distance towards the interlocutor. Euphemisms, hedges and question tags are a way of expressing epistemic deference to the interlocutor, in particular to the higher-status interlocutor, by reducing the speaker's certainty.

### **3.4 Face Threatening Acts**

This section discusses selected **face threatening acts** (i.e. communicative acts that threaten the face needs of usage event participants; cf. Brown and Levinson 1987) which show the largest disparities between Polish and English. These include: disagreements and refusals, directives and compliments.

#### **3.4.1 Disagreements and Refusals**

Ronowicz claims that in all English-speaking cultures speakers tend to avoid confrontation, be authoritarian, opinionated, impolite and avoid imposing their opinions on the interlocutor. Grammatical and lexical devices (e.g. **hedges, question tags**) offered by English enable the speaker to achieve this aim: *It looks like, Maybe, It's possible that, I would say that* (1995:33). As already noted above, similar views are maintained by Wierzbicka, who claims that British and American cultures are oriented towards harmony because they discourage interlocutors "from saying 'what you think is bad', 'I don't won't you to think this', 'I think something bad about you'" (1991:114). According

to Ronowicz, English disagreements are formulated so as not to offend the interlocutor: “by either changing the subject, asking a supplementary question to make the speaker realize that he/she may be wrong, or volunteering a different opinion, solution, explanation as equally possible rather than to contradict an opinion that has already been voiced” or when it is impossible not to disagree, disagreements are preceded by “*I am afraid that...*”, “*I am sorry but...*” (1991:34). However, the research conducted by Biber et al. shows that English conversations contain a high number of negation and the adversative conjunction *but* (1999:1047). My observations of conversations on the LBC London radio show that it is not so infrequent to hear callers or presenters abruptly disagreeing with the interlocutor, for example:

18. *Not really, not.*

*Are you mad?*

*No, you fool.*

*Oh Clive, don't be silly / Don't be a moron.*

*No, no, no, you're entirely wrong. I'm sorry. You're entirely wrong.*

*I can't believe you're making such a ridiculous point.*

*I don't know if you've been drinking or are on drugs but you talk like an idiot.*

Some of these disagreements attack the hearer by attributing limited mental abilities to him/her: e.g. *a moron, a fool, an idiot, mad, silly*, which will not help the interlocutors achieve harmony. The above examples show that English disagreements are sensitive to social distance between the interlocutors: one may expect more indirect and veiled disagreements towards high-status interlocutors.

Ronowicz notes that Poles are rather direct when they express their opinions or disagree “since, an argument, as long as it is not abusive, is not only considered a good way of exchanging ideas, but also an enjoyable form of conversation” (1995:34). Opinions are formulated in a straightforward way: *Jestem aboslutnie pewna, że* (“I am

absolutely sure that”), *Nie mam najmniejszych wątpliwości* (“I have not the least doubts”). If the speaker is less convinced, he/she may use the conditional or hedges: *chyba* (“perhaps”); *przypuszczalnie* (“probably”); *Jestem prawie pewien* (“I am nearly sure”); *Mam wrażenie, że* (“I have the impression that”) (ibid.:34). Similarly, according to Ronowicz, disagreements are formulated in a straightforward way: *Nie, wcale nie!* (“No, not at all”); *Nieprawda!* (“Not true”); *Mylisz się!* (“You are wrong”) (1995:29). According to Wierzbicka, Polish culture is oriented towards closeness because it encourages disagreements, overt saying of bad things to the interlocutor and values a “forcefully, pointedly, and painfully expressed difference” of opinions. This view is formulated on the basis of the proverb *Kto się czubi, ten się lubi* (“those who quarrel, like one another”) (1991:115). However, a single proverb is by no means reliable evidence and this view does not take into account that Polish imposes a different form of disagreement towards the in-group and out-group interlocutor. It should be noted that formal disagreements are more polite and elaborate and include honorific pronouns *pan(i)* with the honorific verb marking when there is large social distance between the interlocutors or when they are strangers.

Ronowicz claims that Polish **refusals** are frequently formulated in definite terms: *Nie* (“No”), *Nie mogę* (“I can’t”), *Mowy nie ma* (“No way”); however, they are often combined with a diminutive first name or a nickname to make them more friendly (1995:39). Gałczyńska’s recent research on the honorific differentiation of refusals shows surprising results about the definiteness of Polish refusals. She distinguishes three honorific levels: a familiar, neutral and polite one. The familiar level is used within the family and between friends: these refusals are formulated in the imperative (19a) or as a rhetorical question (19b):

19a. *Spadaj!* (“Go away”)

- 19b. *Rozum ci odjęło?* (“Are you out of your mind?”)  
*Z byka spadłeś?* (“Have you fallen down the bull?”)  
*Pokopało cię?* (“Have you been struck (by electric current)?”)

They may be also accompanied by swearwords and expressions that attribute negative cognitive qualities to the interlocutor (19b). This convention is not always offensive because it is often consistent with the interlocutor’s expectations (Gałczyńska 1999:17-19). Refusals at the familiar level constitute only 2.6% of all refusals collected by Gałczyńska (ibid.:19).

The second, neutral level, which includes neither impolite nor polite refusals, constitutes 22.7% of all refusals. At this level, the speaker informs the interlocutor that he/she will not do what is requested of him/her, without providing any explanation or apology for this fact, e.g. *Nie, nie oddam* (“No, I will not give it back”) (Gałczyńska 1999:19-20). The speaker does not make the refusal more polite because he/she conceptualises his/her status or rank as equal to that of the interlocutor (ibid.: 20).

At the highest, polite level of honorification there are polite hedged refusals accompanied by apologies and explanations:

20. *Przepraszam bardzo, ale niestety nie mogę tego zrobić,*  
 I am very sorry but unfortunately I cannot do it  
*bo dzisiaj wyjeżdżam do Warszawy.*  
 because I leave for Warsaw today.

The speaker conceptualises the interlocutor’s status as higher than his/hers; hence, hedges communicate respect and indirectly acknowledge the interlocutor’s high status. According to the Polish etiquette, such an interlocutor should be informed about reasons of refusal and apologised for behaviour inconsistent with his/her expectations. According to Gałczyńska’s statistics, polite refusals account for about 75% of all examples collected by her (1999:21-22). Thus, it may be concluded that social distance between interlocutors impacts the selection of refusal form in Polish. If the refusal is at the familiar level, the

speaker has conceptualised the interlocutor's status as lower than his/hers; if at the neutral level – as equal and if at the polite level – as higher than his/hers.

Gałczyńska's results shed new light on Polish refusals and contradict Ronowicz's and Wierzbicka's descriptions based on stereotypes rather than on real-life research. Polish refusals are direct towards in-group interlocutors, but may be as elaborate as English ones towards the out-group.

### 3.4.2 Directives

Directives are speech acts, a form of which depends on social distance between interlocutors and the speaker's power over the hearer. As in the case of refusals, the higher the hearer's status, the more polite form is expected. Politeness may be realised through indirectness and the length of the message:

- 21a. *Open the window.*
- 21b. *Open the window, **will you?***
- 21c. ***Please** open the window.*
- 21d. ***Could** you open the window?*
- 21e. ***I wondered** if you **could** open the window?*
- 21f. ***I was wondering** if you **could** open the window?*
- 21g. ***I wonder whether you would mind** opening the door?*

The relationship between the length of the directive and social/psychological distance between the interlocutors is iconic. The above sentences show a gradation of politeness: to make a directive more polite, the speaker may add *please / kindly* to the imperative (21c), past-tense hedges as a signal of past intention (21e: *I wondered*), or the progressive tense to signal temporariness of the speaker's intention (21f: *I was wondering*). Givón notes that the imperative (e.g. 21a) has the highest manipulative strength while sentences, such as 21g, have the lowest manipulative strength. Persuasiveness of a directive is reduced by: "increased length, using question form, overt mention of the manipulee

pronoun, use of irrealis modality on the verb, use of negation, embedding under modality or cognition verbs” (1990:807-8). When the directive is less manipulative, it becomes more polite because the speaker reduces a degree of imposition on the hearer.

The word *please* is frequently applied in the case of social distance between the interlocutors, where potential threat to the face is quite high due to age or status differences. As noted by Wolfson, *please* is more often used by females, who in general make requests in an apologetic manner, or between interlocutors of equal status when “the request is outside the scope of the addressee’s normal obligations” (1989:92). Bare imperatives are more frequently used by blue-collar workers (ibid.:92). Thus, the use of imperatives versus more elaborate forms is subject to gender and social class differences in English.

Wierzbicka argues that in contrast to Polish, the use of imperatives in directives is limited in English, which shows preference for interrogative forms (1991:30). Biber et al. note for English that “the preference for questions, as being less confrontational in many situations than other sentence types, is also suggested by the fact that questions are at least twice as common as imperatives in conversation”; however, they emphasise that polite interrogative forms are not used most of the time and that the bare imperative is not so infrequent (1999:1047). Wolfson notes that “the directness of request forms covaries with increased familiarity” (1989:94): direct requests are uttered to interlocutors of subordinate status, to equals and family members (Ervin-Tripp 1972:228) and when there is “less likelihood that they could be met, when less solidarity, compatibility, and familiarity between interlocutors existed, and when there was a lack of shared territoriality” (Wolfson 1989:93). Less polite directives include exclamative utterances with a stressed subject *you*, e.g. *You be quiet!*, *You mind your own business!*, which often signal the speaker’s strong irritation or insistence (Quirk et al. 1985:828). When the

English native speaker gets angry with the hearer, he/she will use the bare infinitive: *Get out of here! Shut up! Stop bitching!*

The use of directives in Polish is also subject to psychological and social distance between the interlocutors. If there is close psychological distance, the bare imperative form is allowed: *Zamknij drzwi* (“Close the door”). As noted by Marcjanik, imperatives are often accompanied by prosodic or lexical hedges on the illocutionary force (examples 22), which is to a large degree conditioned by the speaker’s idiolect (2000:159-160).

- 22a. *Daj mi, **Zosiu**, chusteczkę.*  
Give me, FN-DIM, a handkerchief.
- 22b. ***Renatko**, zapal **może** światło.*  
FN-DIM, put on maybe the light.
- 22c. *Daj mi jeszcze jeden koc, **dobrze?***  
Give me one more blanket, right?
- 22d. *Zabierz te papiery, **jeśli możesz.***  
Take these papers away, if you can.

Lexical hedges include the following: first names in the diminutive or endearments (22a and 22b); the question tag *dobrze?, dobra?, OK?* (22c) and devices which give an “out” to the hearer, i.e. the speaker assumes that the hearer may refuse: *może* (“maybe” – 22b); *jeśli możesz* (“if you can” – 22d); *z łaski swojej* (“out of your kindness”). Imperatives are usually uttered in a soft voice, which is a paralinguistic hedge in itself.

Wierzbicka claims that Polish prefers imperatives and very rarely formulates requests as interrogatives: “the interrogative form is not culturally valued as a means of performing directives” (1991:33). As rightly argued by Kalisz, Wierzbicka’s claim is controversial and Polish directives do not differ so drastically from English ones (1993:110). The use of interrogative forms in Polish requests was extensively documented by Marcjanik. She claims that a question is the most frequent form of Polish requests and is used regardless of a degree of intimacy between the interlocutors.

Interrogative requests are more frequently used by females, even if it is highly unlikely that the hearer will refuse the request. Marcjanik provides a large number of interrogative constructions used by Poles (2000:161-7):

- Requests which have the interrogative or negative interrogative form and in which the speaker asks the hearer whether he/she has a given object:

23. *Ciociu, czy ty masz duże nożyczki?*  
Auntie, do you have large scissors?

*Masz może rozkład jazdy trzynastki?*  
Do you have perhaps the timetable of bus no. 13?

*Nie masz czasem / przypadkiem fajek?*  
Don't you have by any chance fags?

This type of requests is used very often in Polish; they are face-saving devices because they do not expose the speaker in the case of refusal. They may be negative; where the speaker overtly admits the possibility of refusal, or may be softened by hedges to reduce imposition (Marcjanik 2000:161).

- Requests in which the speaker inquires whether the interlocutor wants or is able to do a given act:

24. *Mogłabyś potrzymać mi na chwilę parasolkę?*  
Could you hold an umbrella for me for a moment?

*Kasiu, czy możesz mi zrobić herbaty?*  
FN-DIM, can you make me tea?

*Czy nie mógłby pan sprawdzić, czy nie ma w bibliotece tych książek?*  
Couldn't you check, sir, if these books are not in the library?

*Czy byłby pan tak uprzejmy i włożył na półkę ten bagaż?*  
Would you be so kind, sir, as to put this luggage on the shelf?

It is the most polite form of Polish interrogative requests (Marcjanik 2000:165). It contains hedges, such as modal verbs in the conditional or the negation.

▪ Requests in which the speaker asks the hearer for permission:

25. *Przepraszam, mógłbym pożyczyć długopis?*  
Excuse me, could I borrow your ball pen?

*Czy mogę prosić o dwa żetony?*  
May I ask for two counters?

The speaker introduces himself/herself on the scene. The request is softened with the modal verb.

▪ Non-elaborate questions:

26. *Otworzysz mi drzwi?*  
Will you open the door for me?

*Nie poszłabyś ze mną w środę po zakupy?*  
Wouldn't you go shopping with me on Wednesday?

*Czy dostanę jakąś reklamówkę na te rzeczy?*  
Will I get any bag for this stuff?

These are direct questions which are mainly used to the interlocutor with whom the speaker is on *ty* terms (Marcjanik 2001:168).

Huszczka describes a communicative role of **decision-maker** or 'acceptor' assigned to the hearer in the Polish etiquette. This role is realised through the following expressions: *za pozwoleniem* ("with your permission"), *jeśli pan pozwoli* ("if you permit me, sir"), *proszę mi pozwolić* ("please permit me") which ask for the hearer's permission or acceptance, and the verb *zechcieć* ("to vouchsafe"): *Jest nam miło, że zechciał pan do nas przyjechać* ("We are happy that you vouchsafed to come to us"), which emphasises the good will shown by the hearer (1996:210-212).

Wierzbicka claims that Polish interrogative requests are formal, elaborately polite, tentative, lack in confidence and are incompatible with swearwords (1991:34). A wide range of interrogatives presented by Marcjanik contradicts this claim. Similarly, as noted by Kalisz, Polish interrogative requests may also be impolite: *Przestanieś kurwa bębnić?* ("Will you the fuck stop drumming?") (1993:113). In view of Marcjanik's

extensive presentation of polite interrogative forms in Polish requests, one may not agree with Wierzbicka's claim that "in Polish, politeness is not linked with an avoidance of imperative, and with the use of interrogative devices, as it is in English" (1991: 34). This claim is an oversimplification: Polish makes a sharp distinction between very polite directives addressed to interlocutors categorised as the out-group or as a high-status interlocutor and direct directives addressed to interlocutors categorised as the in-group (in particular within the family to children). Huszcza notes that the basic division line of the Polish imperative paradigm is along the familiar level and non-familiar level (1996:201-202).

The above presented directives, i.e. the imperative and interrogative requests, are not the only request forms available in Polish. One of such polite forms is the construction with the performative verb *proszę* ("to ask" / "please"): *Proszę cię, nie mów tego nikomu* ("I ask you not to tell it anybody") or with the infinitive: *Proszę stąd wyjść* ("Please go out of here"). This form, as noted by Marcjanik, expresses distance between the interlocutors and is mainly used in commands given by superordinates to subordinates (2000:170). Other request forms include the verb "*chciałem*" ("I wanted") with the infinitive: *Chciałam zapytać, czy* ("I wanted to ask if...") (ibid.:173-4). Wierzbicka claims that when the speaker is angry, he/she may use the bare infinitive to make his/her request more definite, i.e. *Wynosić się stąd* ("Get-infinitive out of here") (1991:36). However, this form sounds archaic in modern Polish; Wierzbicka's examples are in fact taken from the film adaptation of the 1906 Polish play *Moralność pani Dulskiej*.

The above analysis shows that the form of directives depends, to a large degree, on social distance between the interlocutors. This regularity is observed in both English and Polish. Both languages often employ the interrogative form for polite requests.

### 3.4.3 Compliments and Self-praise

Compliments are often uttered at the beginning of conversation (*Hi! You look great!*) to set the friendly frame for further interaction. It is emphasized by linguists and psychologists that compliments are a positive politeness strategy employed to maintain and consolidate solidarity or closeness, to signal approval and admiration: “they function as social lubricants, creating or maintaining rapport. (...) Complimenting is a way of making the recipient feel interesting, valued, and approved of” (Talbot 1998:90). The speaker shows that he/she is friendly and sociable. Compliments are uttered “to make the addressee feel good by saying something nice to him/her, in this way possibly satisfying the addressee’s expectations rather than expressing a positive judgement for a referential or informative reason (...). When this solidarity is meant to be exploited as a means of satisfying some goals intended by the speaker, a compliment may be used as a pre-act to prepare the ground for another act” (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 1989:75). Compliments often help to break the ice to remove initial distrust. Pisarek notes that it is good tactics to start argumentation with compliments to calm the opponent’s alertness (1985:122). Similarly, in order to effectively ask for a favour, the speaker may use compliments to win the interlocutor’s friendly attitude.

Since people like more those who evaluate them positively than those who assess them negatively (Aronson 1994:430), compliments generally enhance liking. Compliments are ego-boosters; for this reason people often seek flattery. Flattery does not have to be true to be effective. Cialdini claims that people tend, as a rule, to believe praise and to like those who provide it, often when it is probably untrue (1999:164). The speaker’s creativity makes the compliment more sincere and persuasive: “When the compliment is less formulaic, less stereotypical, the speaker appears more objective, i.e.

more sincere. (...) To increase the success of praising, elements of fun and hyperbole are admissible, but well-balanced, too” (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 1989:85).

Complimenting and praising are also subject to cultural differences concerning their frequency, reaction to, etc. While American English is marked by a complete freedom of compliment distribution, it is more constrained for Polish and British English (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 1989:75). Compliments are also subject to gender differences. According to the research carried out by Janet Holmes, compliments are far less frequent from men, especially between men. Women more often engage in complimenting to enhance closeness and solidarity (Talbot 1998:93; Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 1989:76). Compliments are also related to power and status. Holmes found that people of equal status uttered much more compliments than interlocutors of unequal status (Talbot 1998:94).

In the Polish folk knowledge compliments and flattery are often evaluated negatively due to the belief in their deceptiveness and the speaker’s intention to obtain hidden benefits, e.g. a negative axiological charge in: *podlizywać się komuś* (“lick somebody”), *kadzić komuś* (“incense somebody”) (Maćkiewicz 1999:114). In English, the exchange of benefits and deceptiveness are also present: *pay sb a compliment; fool to the top of one’s bent, sweet/honeyed words, pretty lies*. Compliments may threaten both positive and negative face. Since they are also associated with insincerity and some hidden purpose, the hearer may interpret them as targeted at his/her autonomy. On the other hand, the hearer may feel embarrassed if he/she thinks that complimenting was too explicit an attempt at fraternization on the part of the speaker. In such a case, praising may create a social distance instead of establishing closer links with the hearer. Compliments may be offensive despite the speaker’s intention: *You look great for your*

age or may hide intentional criticism: *Your new boy-friend is fantastic. Not such a bore like the last one* (Tannen 1999:181-181).

Typical responses to compliments are acceptance, rejection and deflection (Talbot 1998:95). As far as gender patterns are concerned, women have been found to reject compliments by disagreeing with them (*I'm afraid I don't like it much*), by questioning the accuracy of an utterance (*Is beautiful the right word?*) or challenging the speaker's sincerity (*Oh, you don't really mean that!*). Men were slightly more likely to deflect a compliment by ignoring it and changing the subject (*Gosh, is that the time?*) or some other evasive action (Talbot 1998: 95).

Responses are also subject to socio-cultural conventions concerning avoidance of self-praise, which is the highest among Poles, less strong in British English and the weakest among the American English speakers. As a result, Poles tend to avoid self-praise by refusing to acknowledge compliments. Thus, compliments are more frequently acknowledged and accepted in British or American English than in Polish (cf. Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 1989). When receiving a compliment, Poles often feel obliged to downgrade or deflect it (Marcjanik 2000:133):

27. *Ale masz ładny sweterek!*  
What a wonderful jumper you have!

*E, taki sobie. Nie przesadzaj.*  
Eh, so-so. Do not exaggerate.

which is connected with Polish-specific pessimism and the taboo on promoting a successful self-image.

In most cultures **self-praise** is evaluated negatively by other people and perceived as bragging. Self-praise has become a kind of linguistic taboo. It violates Leech's Modesty Maxim "minimise praise of self, maximise dispraise of self" (1983:136). This contradiction results in the fact that there are explicit and implicit ways of self-praise.

The latter is socially more acceptable because it creates the impression of higher objectivity (in the sense of impartiality). It is not nice to praise oneself while being praised is socially acceptable (cf. Galasiński 1992). Self-praise is negatively evaluated both in Polish and British culture; however, there are fewer constraints on overt self-praise. In the individualist English culture. In English self-praise may be realised through understatement: *I'm rather good at it* (cf. Leech 1983:145-8). Women are socially required to show more modesty about their accomplishments and successes than men. For men self-praise is an arena for self-advertising to achieve status especially in public situations. For women, self-praise is more acceptable in private situations (Tannen 1999:237). Through self-praise the speaker may accentuate his/her status, which may increase social distance between the interlocutors.

### **3.5 Conclusions: Polish and English linguistic etiquette**

One of the principles characteristic of the **Polish linguistic etiquette** is the adoption of a subordinate status by the speaker and it consists in upgrading the interlocutor at the speaker's cost and through the speaker's subordination (Marcjanik 2000:273). Marcjanik divides it into four principles (2000:273-4):

#### **1. The principle of reducing the speaker's worth**

It may be found in responses to compliments; a polite Pole questions and rejects a compliment and draws attention to his/her deficiencies.

#### **2. The principle of reducing the speaker's contribution or success**

This principle applies to replies to congratulations and rejection of compliments directed at the speaker's skills, e.g. *Doskonałe ciasto* ("Perfect cake") – *Oj, dużo mu jeszcze brakuje* ("Oh, it's far from perfect"). Responses to *thank you* should

minimise the speaker's effort, e.g. *nie ma za co* ("not at all"), *cała przyjemność po mojej stronie* ("it was my pleasure").

### **3. The principle of minimising the interlocutor's guilt**

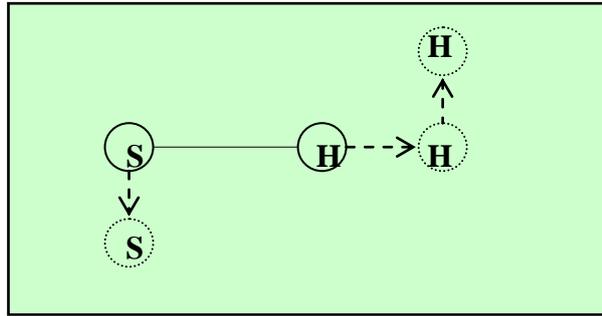
It is found in replies to apologies which should minimise the interlocutor's guilt even if it is contrary to the speaker's feelings, e.g.: *nic nie szkodzi* ("it doesn't matter"), *nic się nie stało* ("nothing has happened"), *nie ma sprawy* ("it is not a problem").

### **4. The principle of maximising the speaker's guilt**

The speaker should be willing to assume guilt; especially at leave-taking: *Przepraszam, tyle czasu wam zmarnowałam* ("I am sorry, I wasted so much of your time"). This principle is also reflected in the negative evaluation of oneself in apologies: *ale ciemajda/gapa ze mnie* ("how clumsy of me), *to przez własną głupotę* ("out of my stupidity").

The above principles identified by Marcjanik create an image of the modest speaker who assumes a subordinate status, hides his/her good qualities, puts his/her shortcomings on display in order to present the hearer in a better light (2000:273). In short, a polite speaker of Polish should downgrade his/her status. As shown in the previous section, the out-group hearer's status is simultaneously enhanced: 1. through horizontal distance (the third person verb marking in address forms) and 2. vertical distance (the honorific address form *pan(i)* and titles) – see Figure 19.

Figure 19. Conceptualisation of the speaker's and the hearer's status in the Polish etiquette.



Farther horizontal distance is achieved through epistemic distance, e.g. indirectness and hedges in requests, opinions, disagreements, refusals, etc. Such deferential politeness is applied in Polish mainly to interlocutors categorised as the out-group, i.e. socially and psychologically distant. As noted by Marcjanik, **the Polish linguistic etiquette attaches exceptional importance to preserving the distance existing between the interlocutors** (2001:288). Thus, there are different patterns of polite linguistic behaviour towards superiors, subordinates and equals. The Polish etiquette allows the speaker to apply directness and a certain degree of despotism towards equals (to approach the interlocutor along the intimacy axis, i.e. a signal of intimacy) and subordinates (to approach the interlocutor along the respect axis, i.e. a signal of lower respect). In view of the foregoing, it is difficult to agree with Wierzbicka that Polish culture is oriented towards positive politeness (1991): this claim applies only to conversations between psychologically close interlocutors. It has been noted that after the fall of Communism the linguistic etiquette gains in importance among Poles (Marcjanik 2001:290).

In the English linguistic etiquette the speaker is not required to upgrade the hearer's status and to downgrade his/her own status or to divide interlocutors into the in-group and the out-group. English has devices which enable the speaker to adopt varying degrees of epistemic distance to code respect for his/her interlocutor. Thus, the British linguistic etiquette involves a more gradable coding of distance, rather than a two-polar

sharp opposition. Devices frequently applied in English include: indirectness, understatement, question tags, hedges, interrogative requests. Respect is coded through the speaker's reduction of his/her certainty and commitment to the message and avoidance of impositions on the hearer, which is most frequent when the hearer has a higher status than the speaker. Such epistemic deference is reflected in Givón's modesty principle (1990) and Brown and Levinson's principle of polite pessimism (1987), which assumes that the hearer will not be able to do a favour for the speaker. The English linguistic etiquette does not keep all interlocutors at a polite epistemic distance. As in Polish, intimates are treated with directness and dogmatism (however, to a smaller degree than in Polish) because the psychologically close relationship between the interlocutors entitles them to a much smaller degree of politeness.

#### **4. EMOTIONAL COLOURING OF CONVERSATIONAL ATMOSPHERE**

Conversations are filled with linguistic units which are evaluative and expressive of the speaker's attitude towards the hearer and the content of the message. The analysis of the material collected shows that there is a group of linguistic devices which code the speaker's attitude towards the interlocutor covertly and indirectly contribute to the overall feeling of communicative distance (in particular psychological distance). Their semantic pole does not usually profile the relationship between interlocutors but evokes it in the base or in the ground. These devices create psychological "**conversational atmosphere**", i.e. they emotionally colour conversational space<sup>120</sup>. The conversational atmosphere shares certain dimensions of the setting (see page 99); in particular, the formal/informal and warm/cold dimensions.

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<sup>120</sup> The analysis covers only selected verbal devices.

The first dimension is created, at a linguistic level, through registers, which impact the emotional colouring of atmosphere. Owing to emotional unexpressiveness of formal registers, the formal atmosphere is prototypically neutral or ‘cold’ while the informal atmosphere is prototypically neutral or ‘warm’. Interlocutors are perceived as psychologically closer in warm settings than in cold settings (cf. Knapp and Hall 2000:160); and this fact may motivate the interlocutors’ wish to create a warm conversational atmosphere. The word ‘warm’ is derived from the AFFECTION IS WARMTH metaphor and means high emotional expressiveness. By analogy, a ‘cold’ atmosphere is connected with low emotional expressiveness.

High expressiveness is characteristic of face-to-face conversation (cf. Biber et al. 1999, Wilkoń 2000). Expressiveness means that the speaker opens up and provides the hearer with access to his/her internal world. The speaker openly communicates his/her feelings and attitudes, which become foregrounded. They may be negative (attack the hearer; hence, the hearer increases psychological distance) or positive (the hearer decreases psychological distance). For example, R. Lakoff notes that “expressing emotions is (...) a means of achieving camaraderie” (1974:347). Lack of **expressiveness** means that the speaker does not open himself/herself; hence, he/she maintains a psychological distance.

According to Grabias, emotions may be signalled in three ways: 1. they may be **subconsciously revealed** through nonverbal communication; they are additional elements accompanying verbal expression; 2. **implicitly expressed** through linguistic devices; contained in the meaning of an utterance: *What a blockhead*; 3. **explicitly communicated** through linguistic labels of emotions (lexically): *I am happy / angry* – the speaker speaks of his/her emotions (1997:294). Grabias notes that in face-to-face conversation emotions are manifested only to a small degree at the level of language

(ibid.:294), including axiologically charged lexicon, expressive derivation, dysfluencies, ellipsis, grammatically incomplete utterances, rhetorical questions, exclamations, interjections, etc. (cf. Grzesiuk 1995, Biber et al. 1999).

Grabias notes that contacts with friends and acquaintances (i.e. between the interlocutors of equivalent ranks) are marked by high expressiveness. When the interlocutors have non-equivalent ranks, expressiveness is constrained. The privilege to use expressive devices is vested in the higher rank interlocutor; a subordinate may behave emotionally only in extremely stressful situations (1997:293-4). Grabias's description emphasises an important fact that expressiveness depends to a large degree on social distance between the interlocutors.

Another important factor is culture. British and Polish attitudes towards displays of emotions were discussed in Part II. It is worth remembering that British culture is stereotypically associated with the speaker's high self-control and a taboo on expression of emotions while Polish culture is stereotypically considered to value uninhibited emotional expression, in particular regarding negative emotions. As noted earlier, these attitudes are subject to the informalisation process.

#### **4.1 Expressive Derivation**

Words with the axiologically or emotionally neutral conceptual content may be modified by way of expressive derivation, as a result of which they gain a negative or positive load. I am mainly concerned here with expressions which do not refer directly to the interlocutor (e.g. diminutive first names), but which contribute to the conversational atmosphere.

#### 4.1.1 Diminutives

The Polish diminutive is a very productive morphological category. There is a large number of suffixes added to nouns (*kwiatek*, *kocię*, *psiatko*, *psina*, *córusia*, *ciocia*, *dziadziunio*, *tatulo*, *miśiak*), adjectives (*czyściutki*) and adverbs (*wesolutko*). Polish also allows double diminutives (*syneczek* < *synek* < *syn*). Within the framework of Cognitive Linguistics, the diminutive is seen as a radial category<sup>121</sup> with the central meaning of smallness in physical space (the prototype) and conventional metaphorical or metonymic extensions (Taylor 1989:147). The prototypical notion of physical smallness is transferred from spatial to non-spatial domains of positive or negative emotions.

The diminutive is very frequent and productive in Polish **baby talk**. Its use is motivated by the **SMALL IS NICE** metaphor. The diminutive not only communicates an adult's affectionate attitude towards a child, but also "the reduced scale of things and events reflects the speaker's wish to reduce matters to proportions which would make them easier to cope with – emotionally or otherwise" (Tabakowska 1993:106). Wierzbicka claims that the abundance of diminutive forms expresses and promotes warm feelings of Polish parents while the lack of diminutives reflects the emotional restraint of typical Anglo-Saxon parents (1990:77).

The Polish diminutive is not limited to baby talk. It is associated with affection and warm hospitality. For example, the diminutive is used to offer food or drink at a party, in a restaurant, by the host/hostess (much more frequently used by women):

28a. *To co do picia?*                    *Herbatka czy kawka?*                    *To może wódeczki?*  
What do you want to drink? A tea-DIM or coffee-DIM? Maybe vodka-DIM?

28b. *Trochę chleбка?*                    *To może ten mały kawaleczek tortu?*  
A bit of bread-DIM? Maybe this small bit-doubleDIM of cake?

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<sup>121</sup> The radial category consists of a central subcategory (the prototype: a cluster of converging cognitive models) and noncentral extensions (motivated variants of the central subcategory extended by convention) (Lakoff 1987:91).

The diminutive not only praises the food offered but also minimises its quantity (Wierzbicka 1991:51). It may be combined with *trochę* (“a bit”), *troszeczkę* (“a very small bit”), *mały kawaleczek* (“small bit-doubleDIM”) to emphasise that the quantity is so small that the guest may not refuse it (cf. example 28b).

Being an indicator of colloquial and more intimate/personal style, the diminutive creates a pleasant atmosphere, impression of cosiness, warmth and comfort. This usage is motivated by the **SMALL IS LOVABLE** metaphor (Tabakowska 1993:108) and may be found, for example, in:

- invitations:

*Zapraszam was na kawunię/kawusię / kawkę i ciasteczka.*  
I invite you for coffee-doubleDIM/ coffee-DIM and cakes.

*Chodźmy na piwko.*  
Let's go for beer-DIM.

- everyday conversations in the shop:

*Proszę dwie bułeczki / pieniądze*  
Two croissants-DIM, please / money-DIM

- TV:

*Herbatka u Tadka* (TV show name);  
Tea-DIM with FN-DIM

*Wyż będzie się powolutku przesuwał na południe* (weather forecast)  
The high will slowly-DIM move to the south.

- Advertisements:

*Znajdziesz tutaj różne atrakcje (np. gdzie się napić piwka).*  
You will find various attractions here (e.g. where to have a beer-DIM)

- Websites:

*A to są świeżutkie fotki z najdłuższego GSM Party.*  
*These are fresh-DIM photos-DIM from the longest GSM Party.*

The diminutive also functions as an in-group marker of solidarity, e.g. in drunkards' jargon (Tabakowska 1993:108) or slang, e.g. *browarek* (beer-DIM), *imprezka* (party-DIM), *pozdrawionka* (greetings-DIM), *siorka* (sister-DIM), *naraska* (“see you” +DIM),

*sorki* (sorry-DIM). Diminutives create an atmosphere of jocularity and playfulness, which may be seen in the below comment on a restaurant:

29. *Lokalik w porzo! Nie jest to raczej miejscówka na browara, ale jak*  
The restaurant-DIM is OK! It is not a place-DIM to have a beer, but if  
*się chce pannę wziąć na kolacyjkę, to czemu nie. (...) Gdybym miał*  
you want to take your lady for a dinner-DIM, why not. (...) If I had  
*trochę więcej kaski, to tam częściej bym zaglądał. Full respektik*<sup>122</sup>  
a little more cash-DIM, I would eat there more often. Full respect-DIM.

In example 29 diminutives create an informal atmosphere and are part of specific in-group language.

The depreciative use of the diminutive is less productive. Smallness may be associated with lack of worth (SMALL IS CHEAP) or with little importance (SMALL IS UNIMPORTANT) (Taylor 1989:146). For these reasons, small things may arise **disrespect** or contempt: *móźdzek* (brain-DIM), *miłostka* (love-DIM), *pijaczek* (drunkard-DIM); hence, this usage involves a tint of the speaker's superiority (Tabakowska 1993:105). Diminutive suffixes may emphasise the pejorative load of words that have a negative meaning (Grabias 1981:70).

The diminutive may be offensive when it belittles things which should not be made smaller, e.g. *profesorek* (professor-DIM), *dyrektorek* (director-DIM), *Polaczek* (Pole-DIM), *Żydek* (Jew-DIM), *damula* (lady-DIM), *komuszek* (Communist-DIM). This usage invites **irony** due to the asymmetry between the root of the word and a diminutive suffix (Sarnowski 1991:42). The diminutive may communicate a negative or positive attitude depending on the context and intonation. For example, *prezencik* (present-DIM) may be a nice gift or not a present at all as in “*Prezencik od radnych*” (present-DIM from councillors) from the title of a newspaper article about the rise of water prices.

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<sup>122</sup> warszawa.pogodzinach.pl

Another use of the diminutive is connected with the fact that small things may evoke pity in the hearer, e.g. *babina* (old lady-DIM), *pijaczyna* (drunkard-DIM), *psina* (dog-DIM)<sup>123</sup>. This use may be manipulative as in:

30. *Ogólnopolska akcja pomocy dzieciaczkom niepełnosprawnym*,  
Nation-wide charity action for disabled children-doubleDIM.

announced by a person collecting contributions for charity on the train. The diminutive is to arouse pity and make a refusal to pay more difficult.

There is a small number of diminutive affixes in **English** and unlike in Polish, their use is unproductive and generally restricted to a limited number of nouns in baby talk: *mummy*, *daddy*, *piggie*, *doggy*, *puppy*, *tummy*, *belly*, *hanky*, *lambkin*, *Munchkin*, *piglet*, *princeling*. English diminutives often denote smallness in size (prototypical use of the diminutive): *kitchenette*, *booklet*, *duckling*. The affectionate diminutive in English is reduced to baby talk: *tummy*, *horsie*, *birdie*, *doggie*, *fatty*. Other instances of diminutives are isolated exceptions, e.g. pet names (*footsy*, *barky*, *droopy*), cars<sup>124</sup> (*Caddie/Kitty* for the Cadillac), *Macky* (hamburger), *voddy* (vodka), *brekky* (breakfast), *druggy*. They are often associated with familiarity and in-group language (Quirk et al. 1985:1584).

A nice conversational atmosphere is not created in English with the diminutive. English female speakers frequently use specific adjectives, such as *divine*, *adorable*, *charming*, *cute*, *lovely*, *thrilling* to create a nice atmosphere. One may also mention, for example, the adjective *old*, which may be applied to colour the noun with a tinge of affection: *we had a good old talk*, *good old Rose*, *he's a funny old thing*.

In English a small size is often implied by the meaning of a word, e.g. *cottage*, rather than by derivation. However, in some cases, English also manipulates size to express an emotional attitude. For example, in contrast to 'small' which denotes only a

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<sup>123</sup> typically the *-yna/-ina* suffix in this function (Grabias 1981: 69).

<sup>124</sup> A dog or a car may also be called *a baby/my baby*, which involves a small size.

small size (*a small bag*), the adjective ‘little’ is “generally used to express positive or negative emotions, as well as the idea of smallness. This can be for example, affection, amusement, disgust, contempt” (Swan 1991: 555), as well as fondness or sympathy:

LIKE:            *What a lovely little dog!* (admiration and affection)  
                    *The poor little boy was crying for his mother.* (sympathy)  
                    *I have a little prezzie for you.*

DISLIKE:       *I think he’s just a boring little man with a silly voice.*  
                    *What’s that nasty little boy doing now?*  
                    *What a silly little man!* (unimportant)

*Little* often sounds more friendly or polite than ‘small’. *I have a little problem, can you help?* makes the problem sound less serious or urgent than: *I have a small problem.* *We’re going to have a little test* sounds a little less frightening than *We’re going to have a small test.* However, this lexical device is not as affectionate as Polish diminutives.

#### 4.1.2 Augmentatives

Another type of expressive derivation is the augmentative. It is absent in English and as far as Polish is concerned, it is less productive and rarer than the diminutive (Grabias 1981:75) although one may observe quite a number of suffixes used in slang or informal register (*chamisko, psisko; czarnuch, komuch; czacha, flacha; wiocha, taniocha; szlachciura, chamidło, malpizson, łapówa, dziadyga*). The augmentative forms a radial category: its prototypical sense of a large size is in the centre, e.g. words referring to unusually large objects, e.g. *bucior* (shoe-AUG) *bucisko* (shoe-doubleDIM). However, it is rare for the augmentative not to carry any emotional load: they usually connote a pejorative meaning (Grabias 1981:67) coded through an excessive (too large) size. Thus, pejorative connotations are derived from the conceptual metaphors LARGE IS UNPLEASANT and BIG IS UGLY. Big objects are often perceived as unpleasant or ugly, they may be dangerous or difficult to cope with: *chamidło* (churl-AUG), *babsztyl /*

*babol* (hag-AUG), *dupsko* (arse-AUG), *octówa* (ugly woman-AUG). If the basic meaning is negative, the augmentative profiles such negative aspects, placing them in the foreground. Therefore, it is often used to express the conceptualizer's negative attitude, contempt or disrespect towards the referent: *komuch* (Communist-AUG), *czarnuch* (black man-AUG), *staruch* (old man-AUG), *sekretara* (secretary-AUG), *mięcho* (meat-AUG). On the other hand, largeness may be associated with clumsiness; hence, the augmentative is applied to signal pity on the part of the conceptualizer: *biedaczysko* (poor man-AUG), *chłopisko* (man-AUG), *człeczysko* (human being-AUG). Reserved earlier for the male conversational style, augmentatives which also create a rough and coarse atmosphere are on the increase among Polish women: *ściera* (rag-AUG), *wyro* (bed-AUG), *cielsko* (body-AUG), *nochal* (nose-AUG) (Bajerowa 2003:94).

The augmentative may also carry a positive load. This usage is linked to the LARGE IS IMPORTANT metaphor. It may be illustrated by the name of a web site:

31. *Największe panisko to trabancisko.*  
The largest lord-AUG is Trabant-AUG.

The two augmentatives convey not only the importance of the vehicle but also create a jocular atmosphere. Tabakowska notes that the augmentative is used in drunkards' jargon, e.g. *flacha* (bottle-AUG): "readiness to cope with things that are conceptualised as large on the part of the speaker, together with his assumption of the same readiness on the part of his interlocutors, carry the notion of 'togetherness' and solidarity" (1993:109-110). The same phenomenon may be noted in slang or colloquial language, where augmentatives create an informal atmosphere: e.g. *czacha* (head-AUG), *łacha* (favour-AUG), *taniocha* (cheapo-AUG), *darmocha* (freebie-AUG), *do zobaczyska* ("see you"-AUG).

### 4.1.3 Clipping and deprecatives

Clipping is one of the morphological processes which help the speaker create an informal atmosphere, e.g. *ad*, *exam*, *photo*, *lab*, *fab* (*fabulous*), *telly*, *cos/'cos* (because), *mo* (moment). Clipping combined with affixation may be used for expressive purposes to convey a highly informal tone or in-group language and “close community with (together with familiar, often affectionate, knowledge of) what is referred to”, e.g. -y/-ie: *hippy*, *Aussy*, *telly*; -o: *ammo* (ammunition), *aggro* (aggravation), *doggo* (BrE quiet); -er: *rugger*, *footer*, *boner* (blunder), *fresher* (freshman); -s: *Babs*, *bananas* (Quirk et al. 1985:1584).

This phenomenon was also noted by Wierzbicka in Australian English and labelled by her as the deprecativ, e.g. *prezzie* (present), *muso* (musician). The deprecativ is grounded in the Australian culture which favours anti-sentimentality, jocular cynicism, humour, informality and dislikes long words (1991:55-56). However, clipping is also frequently used in Polish, in particular in informal register among young people: *spoko*, *matma*, *dyro*, *siema*, *docha*, *nara*, *ściema*, *impra*, *herba*. Skibski perceives clipping as a new development tendency of Polish spoken by young people, motivated by linguistic economy and the brevity of messages (2003:153), i.e. Zipf's **principle of least effort**, which is an index of familiarity or frequency of occurrence (Haiman 1983:802). It is a form of sanctioned ellipsis which carries a metamessage that the interlocutors are such good communicators that they can use abbreviated forms (Tannen 1984:66).

### 4.1.4 Reduplication

Reduplicatives are made up of identical or slightly different constituents. Most of them are informal, familiar or characteristic of baby talk, e.g.: *din-din* (dinner), *gee-gee* (Quirk et al. 1985:1579), *choo-choo* or *sim sim* to embarrass a child. Other examples include: *itsy-bitsy*, *namby-pamby* or *teeny-weeny*. Reduplication is used to “disparage by

suggesting instability, nonsense, insincerity, vacillation”, e.g. *higgledy-piggledy*, *wishy-washy*, *dilly-dally*, *shilly-shally*, *bla bla bla*. Another example is informal AmE phrases of the type *Boston-Schmoston*, which may be used to ironically or playfully dismiss the first constituent (Quirk et al. 1985:1580). This element of verbal playfulness is nearly absent in Polish and is limited to a few isolated examples: *tere-fere*, *trele-morele*, *pierdu-pierdu*, *gadka-szmatka*.

#### 4.1.5 Expletive infixing

This process is found especially in British English. As noted by Quirk et al., it is “a kind of blending that produces the very informal and usually scatological ‘tmesis’ or use of infixes in: *absobloodylutely*, *stonygoddambroke*, *alruddymighty*. Semantically, these combine an already emotional hyperbole with an extreme intensifier, and as the indicated stressing shows, there is a common essential prosodic pattern such that the infixing intensifier comes immediately before the most emphasized syllable” (1985:1584). *Absobloodylutely*, *absofuckinglylutely*, etc. are strong, direct and definite equivalents of *yes*. Emotional stress is added just before the main emphasis: “*fan’tastic* ~ *fan-’flaming-tastic*” (Quirk et al. 1985:1418), which precisely directs the focus of attention. This kind of emotional infixing is not used in Polish.

**To sum up**, the diminutive and the augmentative are frequently used in Polish and are nearly absent in English as a productive morphological category. Other word formation processes, clipping in the form of the so-called deprecatives, reduplication, and expletive infixing, are more characteristic of English. Wierzbicka claims that “there is a link between the rich system of expressive derivation in Polish and the uninhibited display of emotions. There is also (...) a link between the virtual absence of expressive derivation in English and the taboo on overt displays of emotion in Anglo-Saxon culture (1991:279)”. Expressive derivation contributes to the creation of warm and informal

atmosphere in the Polish conversational space. English is less expressive at this level of language.

#### 4.2 Emotive emphasis: intensifiers, exclamations and swearing

This section focuses on linguistic units which are used for emotive emphasis. They include: exclamations, swearwords, intensifiers, persuasive empathetic operators.

**Intensifiers**, such as *for sure, really, certainly, exactly, absolutely*, realise the positive politeness strategy aimed at exaggerating interest, approval or sympathy with the hearer (Brown and Levinson 1987:104). In particular, intensifiers are a characteristic feature of female conversational style. They are used to add friendly enthusiasm and show interest (Talbot 1998). *So* and *such* may be strongly stressed, which gives an exclamatory force to the utterance. This usage may be perceived as “extravagantly emphatic”: *She was wearing such a lovely dress / Don't upset yourself so.* (Quirk et al. 1985:1416). Intensifiers increase the speaker's commitment towards his/her message. Intensifiers, together with discourse markers, are indispensable in spoken language: they constitute the phatic background of communication; create cohesion, warm up the channel of communication and maintain liaison between the speaker and the hearer (Pisarkowa 1984:159)

Another type of emotive emphasis in English is the use of stressed **operators**: to show the speaker's enthusiasm (*It really DOES taste nice*), concern (*I AM sorry*), sympathy (*You DO look pale this morning*), reproach (*I DID tell you*). However, this stress pattern is also sometimes “felt to be rather gushing and extravagant” (Quirk et al. 1985:1415). It is more typical of female than male speech style.

An **exclamation** highlights the speaker's emotional stance. Exclamations may code joy, admiration, dissatisfaction or attract attention: *ach! hej! fe!* (Klemensiewicz 1962:65). Krzeszowski notes that exclamations “increase the degree of emotional

involvement of the speaker, and consequently the axiological charge of the corresponding utterance” (1997:208-209). Exclamative sentences are deictically anchored: “the notion of affective stance entails the presence of someone making a judgement, and the speaker is the judge by default” (Michaelis and Lambrecht 1996:380), e.g. *What a rip-off!*

In English exclamations are often interrogative in form but have “the illocutionary force of an exclamatory assertion”: *Wasn't it a marvellous concert!*; “these invite the hearer’s agreement to something on which the speaker has strong feelings” (Quirk et al. 1985:825). Wierzbicka claims that in English exclamations the speaker does not impose his/her opinion on the hearer but is willing to agree with him/her due to the interrogative form (*Isn't that lovely?*) or a symmetrical confirmation-asking question (*How wonderful! Isn't that wonderful?*) (1991:45). Exclamations are accompanied by question tags, which invite the hearer’s agreement more insistently: *How odd, isn't it?* (Quirk et al. 1985:813).

Wierzbicka notes that exclamations are not spontaneous expressions of emotion but rather a “conventional device aimed at ‘being nice’ to the addressee” (1991:45). She claims that strong positive stereotypical exclamations such as *How lovely!* are much more common in English than in Polish, which “makes frequent use of negative (critical) exclamations but not of positive, enthusiastic ones” (1991:45), e.g. *Co za idiota!* (What an idiot); *Ale zdzierstwo!* (What a rip-off). This claim is disputable because positive exclamations are frequent in complimentary exclamations, in particular in female conversational style: *Ale masz fajną bluzkę!* (What a fab blouse you have); *Coś pięknego!* (something beautiful); *Super!* or often combine with expletives in male conversational style: *Ja pierdzielę!* (Holy shit), *Zajebisty samochód!* (cool-VULG car). Furthermore, as shown by Suszczyńska, English, in contrast to Polish, makes a frequent use of negative

exclamations in apologies: *Oh, my God!, How clumsy of me!* (1999:1060). The difference consists in the fact that that Polish exclamations rarely have an interrogative form. Wierzbicka also claims that in contrast to Polish, English often uses negative-interrogative exclamations, such as *Isn't it lovely?*, which imply the speaker's interest in the interlocutor's opinion: "they acknowledge the possibility that the addressee could say the opposite (...) and symbolically seek confirmation" (1991:46) and are "very strongly positive" (Krzyszowski 1997:209). Kalisz notes that negative-interrogative exclamations are also found in Polish *Czyż to nie cud!* (Isn't it a wonder) and he notes that "the range of occurrences of negative exclamations in both languages is similar" (1993:113).

Swearwords are another type of highly emotive words. They are frequently used in informal register, especially in slang. They often break the cultural convention and taboos established by a given speech community (Grochowski 1996:15). Hudson emphasises that the vulgarity of a word is a result of convention: "social value of a word is just a matter of convention, since other words with precisely the same meanings are not taboo" (1980:53). Taboo refers to a "behaviour which is believed to be supernaturally forbidden and/or highly immoral and/or very improper, and which is prohibited for irrational rather than rational reasons. (...) Language taboo has to do with words and expressions which are supposed not to be used, and which are shocking, offensive, blasphemous or indecent when they are used" (Trudgill 1992:73). Swearwords usually employ expressions related to sex life and physiology; in this way they violate the taboo that these areas should be kept private. For example, *kurwa*, one of the most popular swearwords in Polish, is also a vulgar name for a prostitute. When this swearword is uttered by the speaker, the speaker does not *intentionally* call the hearer a prostitute. However, this expression activates the domain of prostitution in its base against which his/her attitude or emotions are profiled. Tolerance for such vulgar expressions depends,

to a large degree, on how quickly the hearer activates, for example, the domain of prostitution when the swearword is used, which may vary from interlocutor to interlocutor. For this reason, swearwords are not “semantically (=informationally) empty”, as some linguists have suggested (e.g. Grochowski 1996:13).

Swearwords are prototypically uttered to express one’s strong emotions or pain. It is a **conventional** way of **expressing emotions**. Emotions may range from positive, such as happiness or surprise expressed through *Holy shit! Holy hell! Goddamit!* (and their Polish equivalents: *Ja pierdolę!, Ja cię sunę!, O żeż kurwa!*), to negative, such as anger, frustration, impatience, dissatisfaction, indignation, as in *Damn!, Fuck!, Heck!* (in Polish: *Cholera!, Kurwa!, W mordę!*), and their strength may vary as in the following examples:

*My gosh, (By) golly, (Good) heavens, Doggone (it), Darn (it), Heck, Blast (it), Good Lord, (Good) God, Christ Almighty, Oh hell, Damn (it), Bugger (it), Shit, Fuck (it)* (Quirk et al. 1985:853).

In emotional situations swearwords are uttered automatically as a result of emotional reaction from the right hemisphere whereas more intentional and creative usages come from the left hemisphere (Jay 2000). On the other hand, Dąbrowska notes that taboo-related restraints are the first reaction preceding verbalisation (1990:234). Thus, swearing reveals the speaker’s limited self-control over his/her emotional reactions and weak internal monitors - a sign of improper breeding. Although the speaker does not have an intention to offend the hearer, this form of emotional expression is not always socially acceptable unless in moments of extreme emotions.

Grochowski claims that there are spontaneous verbal behaviours to which speakers become accustomed and which dominate over authentic emotions (1996:13). For example, the speaker may use swearwords intentionally to **insult** the hearer. English swearwords contain a large number of plosive and fricative consonants, *b* and *f*, while

Polish swearwords contain *g*, *k*, *p* and *r*, which give an impression of verbal attack. These swearwords may be grouped around the following semantic fields<sup>125</sup> (see Table 11):

**Table 11. Functions of insulting swearwords**

<b>Function</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Polish</b>
Telling the interlocutor to <b>go away</b> - expressions that communicate the speaker's wish to break contact with the hearer	<i>Fuck off!</i> <i>Piss off!</i>	<i>Spieprzaj!</i> <i>Odpierdol się!</i>
Telling the interlocutor to <b>stop talking</b>	<i>Shut up!</i> <i>Cut the crap!</i>	<i>Zamknij się!</i> <i>Stul pysk!</i>
Showing <b>disagreement</b> or doubts in what the other person is saying	<i>Bullshit!</i> <i>Don't shit me!</i> <i>Don't give me that crap!</i>	<i>Gówno prawda!</i> <i>Pierdu-pierdu!</i>
<b>Indifference</b>	<i>I don't give a shit!</i>	<i>Mam to w dupie!</i> <i>Gówno mnie to obchodzi!</i>
<b>Contempt</b> , refusal	<i>Fuck/damn you!</i> <i>Damn you!</i> <i>Kiss my ass!</i>	<i>Pieprz się!</i> <i>Wypchaj się!</i> <i>Mam cię w dupie!</i>
<b>Curses:</b> wishes that something bad happens to the interlocutor	<i>May you die a horrible and painful death!</i> <i>May you die a thousand deaths!</i>	<i>Obyś zdechł!</i> <i>Niech Cię diabli!</i>

The acceptability and offensiveness of a swearword depend, in fact, on the hearer's tolerance for swearwords. Not all the social groups or age groups regard the same expressions as vulgar (Grochowski 1996:17). For example, expressions that are vulgar for the elder generation or educated people may be informal for the younger generation. Another important factor is the setting: the more formal and public the context, the more shocking or insulting a swear word can be. Swearwords are often metaphorically referred

<sup>125</sup> Source of examples: NSSPA.

to as *foul or dirty language* (in Polish: *brzydkie wyrazy*, i.e. “ugly words”), which points to their negative evaluation in the folk knowledge.

Young people may swear to **shock, provoke** and to distance themselves from society. They often treat swearing as a way to signal their freedom or ‘courage’ to break social norms. However, because of the ubiquity of swearwords, they wear out and lose their original intensity. If a person says one swearword per 1,000 words, this swearword stands out as a figure and has a strong effect. If somebody says a swearword per 10 words, their force is substantially reduced. Thus, frequently used swearwords lose their primary function of emotional relief or shock.

Swearwords are not necessarily abusive or aggressive, but may be also playful and humorous. Since they often belong to slang, they create an informal and relaxed atmosphere:

- 32a. *Co tam **kurwa** słychać?*  
How’s it, vulgarism, going?
- 32b. *A wiesz, **jakoś, kurwa, leci.***  
You know, vulgarism, so-so.

The above examples present a friendly exchange between two middle-aged male tram drivers. Swearing is often a sign of familiarity and friendliness between males and may be part of in-group language. Being also referred to as locker-room language, frequent swearing is associated with sport: “Normally I avoid swearing but as soon as I go into the clubhouse, my use of four-letter words increases, because it’s the nature of the environment. (...) It’s how you show you’re one of the guys.” says a sportsman (Barks and Muller 1991; emphasis mine – Ł.B.). In this case swearing has a **bonding** function, i.e. it decreases psychological distance between the interlocutors. “It is how men forge bonds without risking intimacy (...) profanity is the male hedge against getting too close” despite physical contact frequent in sport (Barks and Muller 1991). Swearwords

help create a rough and masculine image of the speaker. With swearwords, the speaker may show he/she is ‘cool’, relaxed and not constrained by social norms.

Swearwords are often used for emphasis. They are “a common mode of amplification (...) serving as a rhetorical transition between theme and an emotionally coloured focus” (Quirk et al. 1985:1418). Swearwords may profile a particular word or the entire statement; they often function as intensifiers stronger than *very*. For example, there is a difference between examples a and b:

- |                                      |                                       |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 33(EN)a. A <i>very</i> great film    | 33(PL)a. <b>Bardzo</b> dobry film     |
| 33(EN)b. A <i>fucking</i> great film | 33(PL)b. <b>Zajebiście</b> dobry film |

The second sentences (33(EN)b and 33(PL)b) signal greater intensity and more enthusiasm on the part of the speaker. The expletive creates a more informal atmosphere.

However, the expletive in the following example has a different function:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 34(EN)a. I <i>didn't</i> do it.         | 34(PL)a. Ja tego <i>nie</i> zrobiłem.              |
| 34(EN)b. I <i>didn't fucking</i> do it. | 34(PL)b. Ja tego <b>kurwa</b> <i>nie</i> zrobiłem. |

The expletive makes the second statements (34(EN)b and 34(PL)b) more definite and unquestionable. The speaker may want to remove any suspicions from himself/herself. The speaker may also signal his/her irritation or anger that somebody suspects him/her. Quirk et al. also note that expletives can “amplify the theme in wh-questions”: *Who/What/Why on earth/in heaven/(in) the hell/in the world/in God's name* (1985:1418); or in their Polish equivalents: *Kto do cholery/do licha/do kurwy nędzy?* (NSLPA:357).

The recent spread of swearwords is a consequence of informalisation and relaxation of social norms. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were strict social rules prohibiting swearwords in public and in front of women. In the UK and the US, attitudes towards swearing started to change in the 60's and 70's when cursing was employed by the Hippies as a badge of authenticity, abandonment of prudishness and challenge of

authority (Hughes 1991:200). Since the 70's swearwords have started to appear regularly in the mass media, literature, music (e.g. rap and hip-hop). This trend escalated in the 80's and 90's and resulted in relaxed attitudes to swearing, even in public places. Britons accept vulgarisms not only in tabloids, but also in mass media. Rosiak notes that it is easy to swear in English and what is vulgar and acceptable in English has become relative (2001:223). Vulgarisms are no longer associated with lower social classes: even Polish and British political and cultural elites swear, so do educated people.

In respect of Polish, vulgarisms are less acceptable in public and formal contexts than in English; nevertheless, they are used frequently in private contexts, especially by males. Kowalikowa notes that Poles have always had a coarse and robust sense of humour (2000:122)<sup>126</sup>. Before the fall of Communism, the mass media were censored not only politically, but also with respect to vulgarisms. Since the 90's, vulgarisms have spread from informal to formal and official register (Kowalikowa 2000:121) and significant vulgarisation of informal register was reported (Bajerowa 2003:93). Nowadays vulgarisms appear more frequently on the TV, in films, literature, etc. The fact is that language coarsened in public contexts but Poles still have lower tolerance for swearing in public than Britons or Americans because they are less accustomed to hearing swearwords in such contexts. According to the CBOS opinion poll, 93% of Poles do not like if somebody swears in public<sup>127</sup>. Swearwords can still arise national controversy, e.g. films *Psy* or *Kawaleria powietrzna* or heated discussions about the vulgarisation of a spelling dictionary. Linguists also note the increase of negative expressiveness and vulgarisms in female Polish, even in neutral, semi-official and official situations (Wilkoń 2000:52; Bajerowa 2003:94).

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<sup>126</sup> See also Ożóg's article from 1981 about vulgarisms in Polish; this article is evidence that swearing was also frequent before the 90's.

<sup>127</sup> *Polaków Portret Własny*, 24 January 2002.

### 4.3 Empathetic deixis: proximal/distal demonstratives

As all deictic expressions, proximal/distal demonstratives are pointing gestures: they evoke and highlight some elements of the ground, focusing the interlocutors' attention. The term **empathetic deixis**<sup>128</sup> was introduced by Lyons, who noted the speaker's preference for the use of proximal demonstratives (*this, here, now* rather than *that, there* and *then*) "when the speaker is personally involved with the entity, situation or place to which he is referring or is identifying himself with the attitude or viewpoint of the addressee"; thus, proximal demonstratives code "the speaker's subjective involvement and his appeal to shared experience" (1977:677). It is because, as Yule notes, the speaker generally treats physically close objects as psychologically close and physically distant as psychologically distant (1996:13). This can also be explained with Kamio's theory of information territory: *this* points to objects in the speaker's territory, *that* – to objects outside his/her territory: either in the hearer's territory or beyond the conversational space (2001:1114).

Levinson notes that a shift from *that* to *this* signals empathy and from *this* to *that* – emotional distance (1983:81). Demonstratives enable the speaker to treat physically close objects as psychologically distant: *I don't like that* when sniffing a perfume (Yule 1996:13) or pointing to food on a plate. Here *that* signals that the speaker conceptualises the object as lying outside his/her territory. Krzeszowski notes that the hypothesis that proximal demonstrative pronouns instantiate the PLUS pole of the NEAR-FAR schema and distal demonstratives instantiate the MINUS schema "gets very little support from data" (1997:212). He further notes that "there is a slight tendency to use *that* rather than *this* in front of nouns designating undesirable things, from which the speaker, as it were, mentally distances himself" (1997:213). For example, the proximal deixis (*this*) signals

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<sup>128</sup> R. Lakoff refers to it emotional deixis (1974:347).

the speaker's emotional involvement in his/her utterance and "since emotional closeness often creates in the hearer a sense of participation, these forms are (...) used for 'vividness'" (R. Lakoff 1974:347). *This* may introduce a subject which is of importance to the speaker: *because there's this guy...*; "in using *this* (...), the speaker is establishing the referent cognitively within his/her discourse sphere, thereby tacitly associating and involving him/herself with it" and urging the interlocutor to focus his/her attention on it (Cornish 2001:312).

However, the distal deixis (*that*) is frequently used in spoken English to establish emotional closeness between the speaker and the hearer. For example, R. Lakoff notes that in:

35.       *How's that throat?*

uttered by a physician to his patient, the physician shows his concern and sympathy (1974:351-2). When *that* is used, the speaker signals that the referent is cognitively placed outside his/her subjective discourse sphere to align himself/herself with the hearer and the hearer needs to apply less cognitive effort on retrieving the referent (Cornish 2001:313). Cheshire notes that *that* signals the speaker's previous knowledge about the throat and **interpersonal involvement**; hence, empathy with the hearer's illness. He further notes that "the stereotypical doctor's *how's this throat?* can be indicating speaker involvement – some would say insincerely" (1996:376). *That* foregrounds the speaker-hearer involvement "perhaps by indicating that the speaker is aware of the addressee's attitude towards the referent, and that they share that attitude" (Cheshire 1996:377). It may also refer to a shared experience in long-term memory (Cornish 2001:313). The English **definite article** often reflects the common viewpoint of the speaker and the hearer and depends on their shared knowledge (cf. Epstein 1996), but it is more neutral than expressive *that*.

It is interesting to note that in Polish distal demonstratives are not used to signal positive interpersonal involvement. However, Polish proximal/distal demonstratives do not instantiate the PLUS and MINUS poles, respectively, of the NEAR-FAR schema, either. Polish tends to use proximal markers more often to code both the speaker's positive attitude: *to mi się podoba* (I like this) and negative attitude: *ta cała Baśka* (this whole FN-AUG); and also references to shared knowledge: *była tutaj ta baba z tymi papierami* ("this woman was here with these papers").

To sum up, empathetic deixis can signal the speaker's distance toward the referent and his/her involvement in conversation. They also involve the hearer in conversation by focusing his/her attention.

#### **4.4 Humour, Teasing, Irony and Sarcasm**

Psychologists emphasise that humour creates a pleasant and jolly conversational atmosphere and signals a positive attitude towards people (Argyle 1999:86). Laughter enables the hearer to show his/her involvement in conversation and his/her "continued presence in the collaborative floor" (Coates 1997:79). Hay notes that the speaker's successful attempts at humour positively affect his/her status within the group and show that the interlocutors share "a common idea of what is funny", which creates or enhances solidarity between them (Hay 2000:716). Solidarity-based humour involves sharing the speaker's personal information, highlighting similarities or capitalising on shared experiences, marking the in-group and playful teasing without offence (ibid.:718-721).

Boxer and Cortés-Conde differentiate two main types of conversational humour: joke-telling and conversational joking. The latter is "a play frame created by the participants, with a backdrop of ingroup knowledge" (1997:277). They divide conversational joking into 1) teasing; 2) joking about an absent other; and 3) self-denigrating joking (1997:279).

**Teasing** is directed at the hearer and in most cases it bites (Boxer and Cortés-Conde 1997:279); in teasing, the speaker violates the hearer's territory by joking about his/her weak points. Teasing may also be a way of expressing intimacy: it can "develop a sense of comradeship and joviality" (Hay 2000:736). Hay's research shows that jocular abuse and teasing are present in conversations of both men and women; however, in single-sex groups rather than in mixed-sex groups (2000:735).

**Joking about an absent other** is a play frame which is not targeted against the hearer, e.g. *Gee, his girl-friend is so fat she can't see her feet*. This type of humour has a bonding function: "bonding against others perceived as different allows us to become a unit without having to define what we are for each other. What makes us part of an in-group is having in common an 'out group'" (Boxer and Cortés-Conde 1997:283). Boxer and Cortés-Conde show a correlation between teasing/joking and social distance: teasing is frequent among intimates, family members but not with strangers while bonding joking often takes place among "interlocutors of medial social distance, that is friends and acquaintances, as well as among strangers" (ibid.:287).

**Self-denigrating joking** is targeted at the speaker; it also bonds: "by complaining about one's own physical, emotional or intellectual shortcomings, speakers show themselves self-effacing, allowing the addressee to perceive them as **approachable**" (Boxer and Cortés-Conde 1997:281; my emphasis - ŁB). Thus, the speaker provides access to himself/herself and creates a verbal play:

36a. *Big of you to apologise.*

36b. *If there's one thing I am, it's big.*

Sentence 36b is uttered by an overweight person, who attracts attention to her shortcoming. This type of conversational joking is more often practiced by women (Boxer and Cortés-Conde 1997:284).

The next related concept is **irony**, which is a humorous but potentially face-threatening device. It is created through “the incongruity between a speaker’s actual words and the intended meaning” (Haiman 1994:1631). For example, the speaker may reply with “*I love you too*”/“*Merry Christmas to you too*” in response to an unfriendly remark or with *Don’t go out of your way* when the interlocutor is reluctant to do a favour for the speaker (Murdoch 1999:156-7). Thus, irony is polyphonic: “the speaker’s words express one point of view, while the meta-message expresses another alienated perspective” (Haiman 1990:192).

The polyphonic nature of irony allows the speaker to distance himself/herself from the message. Clift adopts Goffman’s metaphor of **framing** to explain irony. She notes that an ironic message contains a distancing frame because it “displays two meanings: an ‘inside’ meaning framed by an ‘outside’ meaning” (1996:40). Similarly, as noted by Jorgensen, “the echoic nature of the ironic form itself distances the speaker from the proposition expressed and thereby creates an ambiguity as to just how seriously the irony is intended” (ibid.:629). The distancing meta-message enables the speaker to attack the interlocutor without assuming responsibility for it and to discuss **sensitive** topics veiled in a humorous frame (cf. Clift 1996:20).

Clift notes that the basic function of irony is **evaluation**. Irony may be face threatening when the interlocutor is the target of such evaluation or when he/she does not share the ironist’s perspective and judgement implicit in the framing (1996:15). However, it should be emphasised that irony is not always hostile and may signal a positive, playful attitude (Attardo 2000:796). Irony relies on assumptions about the common ground and requires “the shared degree of sympathy”; the fact that it is used among intimates “draws attention to the intimacy of the relationship” (Clift 1996:19). Jorgensen claims that the reason why irony (in particular sarcastic irony) is frequently

used among intimates is that their mutual knowledge allows for a high degree of indirectness. She further notes that the very reliance on mutual knowledge may enhance solidarity between the interlocutors: “social closeness may include, and may be strengthened by, sharing the right to comment on one’s own and each others’ minor foibles and personal attributes in a way that emphasizes the existence of a collective standpoint” (1996:629).

It is **sarcasm** that is often considered as a more offensive and aggressive type of irony<sup>129</sup> “with clearer markers/cues and a clear target” (Attardo 2000:795; see also Leech 1983:143). Jorgensen’s research shows that in everyday interaction sarcastic irony is often used to criticise psychologically close interlocutors, in particular, for trivial mistakes, which is a face-saving strategy because “direct criticism of a trivial mistake makes a speaker appear unfair, thoughtless, insulting, and rude” (1996:627).

The fact that the speaker is ironic or sarcastic is often communicated through exaggeration or understatement (Leech 1983:143), e.g. incongruity in intonation - total melodic monotony in *wow!* or feigned exaggeration in *You poor baby!* (Haiman 1990:194-195). Haiman points to the iconic motivation of sarcasm: “Given that sarcasm by definition communicates two opposed meanings simultaneously, the fact that it is conveyed by an incongruous or inappropriate intonation overlaid over the ostensible text is again perfectly iconic” (1994:1631). In Polish irony is also expressed through expressive derivation, in particular diminutive suffixes combined with negatively charged words, e.g. *donosik* (denunciation-DIM), which signals a clash in values (Grabias 1981:173). Haiman discusses sarcasm signalled by hyperformality, i.e. features taken from high register (syntax, address forms, absence of phonetic reduction), which codes exaggerated respect for the interlocutor and “pokes fun not only at its target, but

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<sup>129</sup> Some linguists use these two terms interchangeably while others treat them as two distinct concepts. See Attardo for a more detailed discussion (2000).

also at the very conventions of according respect” (1990:200). Haiman further notes that sarcasm coded through formality involves the speaker’s self-control which enables him/her to alienate from his/her message and signal “I don’t really mean a word of this” (1990:202).

Robin Lakoff notes that the British are “skilled ironists” while Americans often fail to understand irony, interpreting it as sarcasm (1990:173). In the UK irony (an in particular self-irony, i.e. i.e. irony directed at the speaker) is more valued than in Polish, where it is often evaluated negatively as a form of secretive unfair behaviour connected with making fun of the interlocutor. The British sense of humour is sometimes not understood by Poles and British-specific irony may be offensive for Poles when misunderstood (Murdoch 1999:154). As Murdoch notes, British friends and acquaintances have the right to mock each other or joke at the interlocutor: close psychological distance entitles them to do so. They do not mock psychologically distant interlocutors (1999:155). The speaker assumes that his/her joke will not be taken seriously as offence in a close and friendly relationship. It suggests that irony is not offensive if the speaker has correctly conceptualised his/her interlocutor as the in-group.

#### **4.5 Speech management**

Speech management is very important for the flow of conversation and the overall impression the interlocutors have of such conversation, i.e. whether or not the interlocutor was cooperative. Psychologists claim that people who expect positive results of interaction create warmer social and emotional atmosphere via nonverbal communication and more differentiated feedback (Knapp and Hall 2000:56).

Speech management is effected verbally or nonverbally, including turn-taking, interruptions, pauses, topic uptake, minimal responses or overt verbal comments (e.g. *to go back to what we were talking about before*). In close relationships a positively

experienced conversation involves what Coates calls “melding”: “two speakers combine with each other, blend their voices to produce a single utterance” (1997:55). They jointly produce utterances with frequent overlaps: they develop a **collaborative floor** “where the individual speaker becomes far less significant” (ibid.:70). Tannen notes that interlocutors conventionally signal solidarity, enthusiasm, and interest in partners’ speech by high synchronisation: a rapid rate of speech, overlaps, short pauses and latching of utterances and “the resulting fast pace greases the conversational wheels” (1984:77). The collaborative floor depends on a degree of social/psychological distance between the interlocutors: when they “are on familiar terms and feel that they need not stand on ceremony with one another, then inattentiveness and interruptions are likely to become rife, and talk may degenerate into a happy babble of disorganized sound” (Goffman 1967:42). Pamela Fishman’s findings show that in mixed-sex dyads women perform more routine maintenance work in conversation: they ask more engaging questions, use more minimal responses, attention-getters (e.g. *d’ya know what?*) and support the uptake of male topics (qtd. in Talbot 1998:82-83).

As Trudgill notes, interruptions are possible at certain points of conversational structure (1983:126) where they are perceived as cooperative/facilitating **overlaps** that contribute to the development of collaborative floor, rather than a fight for floor (because they help avoid pauses). Thus, overlaps signal interest, involvement, and cooperation (Tannen 1999:214). Interruptions aim at taking control over the flow of conversation and topic; hence, they may be perceived as attempts to control the interlocutor. Evaluation of **interruptions** as uncooperative or cooperative depends to a large degree on psychological distance between the interlocutors: if it is large, interruptions are interpreted as impolite violations of conversational rules. In a singly developed floor interruptions and overlaps are evaluated negatively. Furthermore, interruptions are

subject to gender differences: men are more likely than women to interrupt and women are more likely to interrupt other women than they are to interrupt men (Tannen 1999:198-228).

Long pauses are seen as a **lack of rapport** and hence they are avoided. As noted by Trudgill, in a conversation between two English speakers who are not close friends, a silence of longer than about four seconds is not allowed (interlocutors feel obliged to say something) (1983:127). A long pause may change into silence which signals a communicative breakdown, i.e. a “unilateral suspension of conversational activity” (Biber et al. 1999:1067). Silence is a kind of metaphorical space which may be filled both with negative and positive meaning. Among close people silence may be a marker of closeness and intimacy (Jaworski 1998:142) signalling that the interlocutors are so close that silence is comfortable for them. Poles have a higher tolerance for long pauses than Americans and the British (cf. Murdoch 1999:55).

The conversational atmosphere also depends on the hearer’s cooperative behaviour. The hearer has to provide **regular supportive feedback** during the speaker’s turn in conversation, e.g. interjections, minimal responses, nonverbal signals (head nods, gaze, laughter). As noted by Stubbe, the hearer’s feedback may range from minimal support, low involvement and neutral affect (automatic feedback) to signal attention, understanding, further listening, etc. to explicitly supportive and affective feedback to signal sympathy, interest, surprise and enthusiastic agreement (1998:258). Thus, the hearer’s feedback reflects varying degrees of positive affect and involvement.

**Minimal responses** are “verbal and nonverbal indicators of a person’s co-participation in a conversation” (Reid 1995:494). These are ‘interested listener’ noises, such as *hmm, mm, yeah, ha, yep, aha, uh huh, right* (in Polish: *mhm, tak, aha*), as well as nonverbal indicators, such as head nods / shakes, eye contact. Minimal responses may be

divided into neutral ones (=affectively neutral) and overtly supportive ones (=affectively positive) (Stubbe 1998:265). Vocal minimal responses occupy the vocalization channel of segmental content and the conceptualisation channel of speech management: they signal agreement and/or indicate attention, participation and interest, encourage the speaker to continue talking. They have a facilitative function and are an essential part of cooperative talk and the collaborative floor (Coates 1997:76). According to Maltz and Borker, women and men use minimal responses differently, which can lead to miscommunication. Positive minimal responses signal “*I’m listening to you; please continue*” to women, but “*I agree with you*” to men. Women interpret men’s rare use of minimal responses as a lack of attention while men are confused when minimal responses are made by a female hearer who later disagrees with the male’s comment (1998:421). Furthermore, women often use minimal responses supportively to develop the topic (Talbot 1998:82) while men tend to withhold or delay minimal responses to curtail topics, which was interpreted as uncooperative.

Verbal minimal responses as used in Polish do not seem to differ from English usage. They are also used to show agreement and to facilitate conversation. One may expect more supportive feedback in Polish conversations at the level of nonverbal nonvocal signals.

**To sum up**, the majority of atmosphere-creating signals are provided by the interlocutors’ nonverbal behaviours. Collaborative conversational atmosphere is also created through emotional expressiveness and other conventional verbal signals of the speaker’s enthusiasm and involvement in the conversation. Polish offers its speakers ready-made devices in the form of the diminutive and the augmentative, which allow them to create a warm, intimate or informal atmosphere. English promotes lower expressiveness and is more restrained in displaying emotions. It uses more

understatement, irony and self-irony than Polish. Other devices are similar in Polish and English and they differ quantitatively rather than qualitatively. These include: intensifiers, exclamations, swearing, compliments, minimal responses, humour. English culture promotes lower expressiveness. It is also worth noting that the emotional colouring of conversational atmosphere is to a large degree gender-specific. In general, women tend to create a highly expressive collaborative atmosphere (e.g. diminutives (in Polish), euphemisms or intensifiers/ empathetic operators) while men achieve less expressive and intimate atmosphere through different means, e.g. intimacy-implicating lack of politeness, jocular abuse, etc.

## PART IV. CONCLUSIONS: GEOMETRY OF CONVERSATION

The above analysis shows that human relationships are perceived, conceptualised, and expressed, to a large degree, in spatial terms; hence, distance is an important variable in the conceptualisation of relationship between the interlocutors.

Part I and Part II aimed at a detailed examination of the concept of communicative distance, which was necessitated by significant terminological inconsistencies in the meaning of *distance* in linguistic research. The concept of DISTANCE was analysed with the use of Cognitive Linguistics tools, including examination of dictionary definitions; the network model; the preconceptual image schema NEAR\_FAR which structures the concept of DISTANCE; as well as relational metaphors where distance functions as a source domain. It was demonstrated that distance is involved in the comprehension of a large number of relational concepts connected with INTIMACY and RESPECT (e.g. LOVE, LIKING, FRIENDSHIP, RESERVE, ALOOFNESS, DEFERENCE). The main distance metaphors are the high-level conceptual metaphors EMOTIONAL RELATIONSHIP IS A PHYSICAL DISTANCE BETWEEN THE INTERLOCUTORS and SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP IS A PHYSICAL DISTANCE BETWEEN THE INTERLOCUTORS, which means that the social and psychological relationship between the interlocutors is understood and talked about in terms of physical closeness or distance.

It was postulated to adopt the term “**communicative distance**” for the overall feeling of distance experienced by the conceptualiser in face-to-face conversation. Communicative distance is a real-time mental construct which consists of physical, social and psychological distance. **Physical distance** is the most concrete and measurable component of communicative distance. As shown in the analysis, physical distance in fact reflects a degree of social and psychological distance between the interlocutors and it is coordinated with other nonverbal and verbal means of expressing the same.

Social distance and psychological distance are metaphorical concepts which are understood in terms of physical distance. **Social distance** is comprehended as a vertical and horizontal physical distance which measures a disparity of rank, class or status between the interlocutors. It is assessed by the conceptualiser on the basis of his/her own social position and his/her perception of the interlocutor's social position. This concept is relatively stable and has a fixed value but perceived social distance depends on how overtly the interlocutor communicates his/her status to the conceptualiser. **Psychological distance** is comprehended as a horizontal physical distance which measures a degree of intimacy, affection and familiarity between interlocutors. Psychological distance is a less stable and measurable parameter than social distance because it is subject to constant changes in the conceptualiser's internal states. It should be noted that psychological distance is interrelated with social distance because in a large number of cases social distance automatically creates psychological distance. Nevertheless, I hope to have demonstrated that it is necessary to distinguish between social and psychological distance because these terms profile different aspects of the speaker-hearer relationship.

Part II has identified and examined factors that impact the conceptualisation of communicative distance. It was shown that distance is subject to a large number of factors, including biological, psychological, cultural and social factors. Thus, the conceptualisation of distance is on the one hand very subjective and unique to each conceptualiser (subjectivity of perception, personality, unique individual experience) but, on the other hand, it is subject to psychological regularities and cultural and conventions.

Part III has addressed Objective 2: **Contrastive analysis of communicative distance in English and Polish**. The analysis has focused on four different realisations of communicative distance in conversation: 1. physical distance; 2. location of usage event participants in the conversational space (forms of address); 3. epistemic distance

towards the message (linguistic etiquette); and 4. emotional colouring of conversational atmosphere, all of which impact the conceptualisation of social and psychological distance by the interlocutors.

It has been demonstrated that both Polish and English have linguistic units which express a degree of social and psychological distance between interlocutors. These are conventionalised ways of invading or respecting the hearer's personal space/territory and of protecting and opening the speaker's territory. The complexity of analysis is due to the fact that communicative distance is created at various levels of communication, starting with nonverbal communication: proxemics, gaze, touch, bodily orientation and posture, paralanguage, and verbal communication: morphology, forms of address, register, the Vocative, irony, indirectness, hedges, question tags, etc. All the levels of expression are closely integrated with one another and may complete or counterbalance their effect. These conventional linguistic and non-linguistic units have the referential function because they reflect psychological and social distance between the interlocutors and the instrumental function because they may change or maintain social and psychological distance existing between the interlocutors. In fact, Polish and English use a large number of similar linguistic devices to express social and psychological distance and differences are often quantitative, rather than qualitative.

Special attention was paid to Wierzbicka's claim that distance is evaluated positively in British culture as it is associated with respect for autonomy and evaluated negatively in Polish culture where it is associated with hostility and alienation. It was shown that this claim is problematic (largely stereotype-based) and needs updating in light of recent social and linguistic changes towards informalisation and democratisation in British and Polish culture. Both cultures evaluate distance negatively when it means lack of intimacy between psychologically close interlocutors (the in-group) and evaluate it positively when it means respect and autonomy between socially distant interlocutors (the out-group).

**Polish** makes a sharp distinction between interlocutors categorised as in-group and as out-group – this categorisation is crucial for the selection of linguistic units. Out-group members are treated with ritual respect, courtesy, formality and cautiousness. Polish emphasises social and

psychological distance between such interlocutors. What is characteristic of Polish is to upgrade the hearer's status through forms of address: the speaker addresses the hearer as *pan(i)* (linguistic ennoblement) and/or adds titles to acknowledge the interlocutor's status, rank, education. Respect is coded through the vertical elevation of the hearer, locating the hearer at a far distance from the speaker (through 3<sup>rd</sup> person verb agreement), and focus on the hearer's status (including potential upgrading of status or rank). Another Polish-specific feature is the speaker's modesty and downgrading of his/her status, contribution, success, etc. Thus, it may be concluded that Poles maintain large communicative distance and are respect-oriented towards out-group interlocutors. In respect of interlocutors categorised as in-group members, Polish forces a completely different conceptualisation and linguistic treatment of such interlocutors by minimising psychological distance. The interlocutor's size is metaphorically reduced through the diminutive and he/she is located at a short distance from the speaker through *ty*. Psychologically close interlocutors may be treated in a direct and straightforward way. Thus, in Polish there are two different worlds: **ty-world** and **pan(i)-world** which condition other linguistic choices and require different politeness rules. The former foregrounds psychological closeness while the latter foregrounds social distance.

Polish allows the speaker to remain at a far distance with the out-group interlocutor and at a very close distance with the in-group interlocutor. English does not require the speaker to categorise interlocutors into the in-group and the out-group and does not have grammatical devices which enable the speaker to get as close with the in-group interlocutor or as far as with the out-group interlocutor as in Polish. English attaches more importance to the gradability of distance between the interlocutors and this objective is achieved only to a small degree with forms of address which tend to be neutral as regards social and psychological distance. English attaches more importance to the speaker's epistemic deference and epistemic distance to his/her message as an expression of respect. Respect is coded through the speaker's reduction of his/her certainty and commitment to the message and avoidance of impositions on the hearer, which is most frequent when the hearer has a higher status than the speaker. It is achieved mainly through hedges, question tags, understatement, interrogative requests, etc. Another linguistic difference

which has an impact on the conceptualization of communicative distance in English and Polish is the fact that the British are less expressive on nonverbal channels and more self-controlled in bodily expressiveness; however, they are more expressive in terms of paralanguage. In respect of social distance, English requires its speakers to communicate their own social status through accent.

Another variable is **gender**. Although in general gender differences account for a small percentage of variance in the use of language, they are quite significant as regards social and psychological distance. It was hypothesised that women would keep smaller physical, psychological and social distance than men due to different gender-specific hierarchies of values, worldviews and conversational behaviours. This hypothesis was only partly confirmed. Earlier findings confirm that women maintain smaller physical distances than men do in a friendly interaction but larger distances with strangers: this behaviour is also reflected in female linguistic behaviour. Female-specific strategies are oriented towards close psychological distance with intimates / the in-group (e.g. compliments, facilitative question tags, boosters, minimal responses, the diminutive in Polish) and larger social distance towards strangers / the out-group (super-polite forms, less self-praise, more apologies, more polite requests). These female-specific patterns are found in the linguistic behaviour of both Polish and British women. Men (both Polish and British) use different linguistic strategies which allow them to maintain closer distance to their interlocutor along the respect axis and larger distance along the intimacy axis than female speakers generally do. The former strategies include more direct requests, opinions, less frequent use of hedges and mock-impoliteness, i.e. jocular swearing, banter, verbal abuse, etc. Larger psychological distance is maintained due to avoidance of affectionate derivation and vocabulary, affective question tags and lower use of compliments and minimal responses. The above findings suggest that gender-specific speech styles may result in different conceptualisations of communicative distance in face-to-face conversation.

As I hope to have demonstrated, the parameter of distance (its evaluation and expression) has undergone significant changes in Polish and British culture. At the end of 19<sup>th</sup>-century and at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup>-century, physical, social and psychological distances were much larger.

Owing to social changes, democratisation and informalisation trends which took place in the last century, distances and attitudes towards them changed and, as a result, smaller distances are nowadays perceived as more natural, spontaneous and relaxed. It was hypothesised that these trends should also be reflected at the level of language and the hypothesis was confirmed. Although language in general changes at a slower rate, they are also noticeable in English and Polish. For example, it has been observed for both languages that informal register widens its scope of use by replacing formal register in some public and institutionalised contexts. Moreover, English undergoes important changes at the phonological level, including dialect levelling and standardization, as well as changes in attitudes towards RP and Estuary English. Recent popularity of Estuary English, which obscures the speaker's social origin, is in line with informalisation trends, in particular when it means a downward convergence from RP; hence, smaller social distance between the interlocutors. Both Polish and English observe changes in address patterns, which are primary devices of locating the interlocutor in the conversational space. The basic tendency behind these changes is to locate the interlocutor at a smaller communicative distance from the Origo. In English it was achieved through the widespread use of first names among social strangers and the resulting reduction of first-naming intimacy. Polish experiences the spread of informal personal pronoun *ty* in contexts where earlier honorific *pan(i)* would be expected. Changes go in the similar direction in both languages, i.e. towards a decrease of communicative distance between interlocutors, although they sometimes affect different linguistic units.

In light of the above discussion, I think it is important to integrate the parameter of social and psychological distance into the theoretical CL framework for usage events that pertain to face-to-face conversation. It has been demonstrated that social and psychological distance between the interlocutor underlies a large number of linguistic choices, in particular the choice of register, forms of address, linguistic etiquette acts and speech expressiveness, which in turn impact choices at lower levels of language organisation. Communicative distance should be seen as an important element of Langacker's background assumptions and expectations because it

often impacts the interpretation of specific linguistic units as offensive or friendly in a given context.

**Suggestions for further research.** Psychological and social distance requires more in-depth statistical research in the comparative perspective. For the time being research on distance is to a large degree speculative and intuitive and is not backed up by comparable real-life statistical data. One may hope that in future there will be Polish and English corpora with comparable spoken material from similar usage events. However, having regard to the fact that the experience and expression of distance is to a large degree unique to each speaker because of many contextual and individual factors involved, this task may not be feasible for a long time. In the meantime, it may be useful to analyse strategies adopted by Polish-English and English-Polish translators to deal with language-specific ways of expressing communicative distance. It may be also useful to see how the expression of social and psychological distance differs in spoken and written language; in particular, how written language makes up for a lack of nonverbal and prosodic means of expressing social and psychological distance. Furthermore, it would be interesting to see whether informalisation trends will further affect Polish and English towards the decrease of communicative distance and whether or not the in-group/out-group opposition will lose its importance in Polish as a result of informalisation.

## List of Dictionaries

- AHD American Heritage Dictionary, Third Edition, Version 3.6a. CD-ROM. SoftKey International Inc., 1994.
- CLD Cambridge Learner's Dictionary, Version 1.01. CD-ROM. Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Collins Collins English Dictionary and Thesaurus, Version 1.0. CD-ROM. Harper Collins Publishers, 1992.
- EPD PWN Oxford English-Polish Dictionary (ed. by Jadwiga Linde-Usiekiewicz). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2002.
- LDCE Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, Third Edition. Longman Group Ltd., 1995.
- LIED Longman Interactive English Dictionary. CD-ROM. ACT Multimedia/Harlow: Longman, 1994.
- NSPP Nowy Słownik Poprawnej Polszczyzny (ed. by Andrzej Markowski). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2002.
- NSLPA Nowy Słownik Słangu i Potocznej Angielszczyzny (by Maciej Widawski). Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo L&L, 1998.
- OALD Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (by A.S. Hornby). London: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- OED Oxford English Dictionary, Second Edition (ed. by J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.
- RIT Roget's International Thesaurus. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1961.
- SEJP1 Słownik Etymologiczny Języka Polskiego, Eighth Edition (by Aleksander Brückner). Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1998.
- SEJP2 Słownik Etymologiczny Języka Polskiego (by Andrzej Bańkowski). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2000.
- SJP Słownik Języka Polskiego (ed. by Mieczysław Szymczak). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1998.
- SPP Słownik Poprawnej Polszczyzny, Eighteenth Edition (ed. by Witold Doroszewski). Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN: Warszawa, 1996.
- SWO Słownik Wyrazów Obcych PWN (ed. by Elżbieta Sobol). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2002.
- USJP Uniwersalny Słownik Języka Polskiego (ed. by Stanisław Dubisz). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2003.
- Webster Webster's New World College Dictionary, Third Edition. CD-ROM. Dallas, 1994.
- WSAP Wielki Słownik Angielsko-Polski and Wielki Słownik Polsko-Angielski (ed. by Jan Stanisławski). Warszawa: Philip Wilson, 1998.

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