

The semantics of English *blood* and Polish *krew*: a cognitive-semantic perspective

The aim of the study is to compare and contrast the semantics of the English word *blood* and the Polish word *krew* from the perspective of cognitive semantics. The literature on the topic (Enfield, Wierzbicka 2002; Kövecses 2005; Sharifian, Dirven, Yu, Niemeier 2008) shows that while the various parts of the body have been studied extensively in cognitive linguistics, bodily liquids like blood have received very little attention from scholars. In both English and Polish, apart from the prototypical sense of the bodily fluid that flows in the veins, it is possible to identify a number of different meanings of *blood* and *krew*, which range from the vital principle (e.g. “lifeblood” / “walczyć do ostatniej kropli krwi”), to killing and murdering (e.g. “to have blood on one’s hands” / “mieć krew na rękach”), to one’s temperament and emotions (e.g. “to murder in cold blood” / “zabić z zimną krwią”), to conceptualizing kinship (e.g. “blood-relative” / “krewny”) (Kövecses 1990, 2014; Geeraerts, Grondelaers 1995; Kuczok 2020). In line with the assumptions of cognitive semantics (Lakoff, Johnson 1999, 2003; Radden, Kövecses 1999; Ruiz de Mendoza, Galera 2014), it can be claimed that the meanings of polysemous words are often motivated by metonymical or metaphorical mappings. Thus, the research questions we want to ask are: What conceptual metaphors and metonymies in the semantics of *blood* and *krew* are the same in English and Polish? Which of them are unique to only one language? The analyzed material comes from dictionaries: the *Oxford Dictionary*, available from www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com, and *Wielki słownik frazeologiczny PWN z przysłowiami* (ed. A. Kłosińska, E. Sobol, A. Stankiewicz, Wydawnictwo PWN 2005).

The conducted analysis reveals that the extended senses of *blood* and *krew* in both languages are mostly based on the same or similar metonymical mappings, such as CAUSE FOR EFFECT (blood for life), EFFECT FOR CAUSE (blood for killing), PHYSIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF EMOTIONS FOR EMOTIONS (blood for passion or fear), and PART FOR WHOLE (blood for a human being). A unique metonymy can be found only in English: GENERIC FOR SPECIFIC (blood for blood samples). Nevertheless, certain contexts of referring to *blood* or *krew* can be different and specific to only one of those languages: while in English only *blood* has connotations to the activity of hunting (e.g. “to blood hounds”), in Polish *krew* may be a sign of a healthy look (e.g. “krew z mlekiem”). Metaphorical extensions of *blood* can be found in English, where they are based on metonymical senses, creating more complex conceptual metaphonymies, for instance, “lifeblood” used metonymically with reference to people’s life can be also used metaphorically with reference to inanimate or abstract concepts (e.g. “The movement of coal was the lifeblood of British railways”).

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