(MULTI)MODALITY IN NARRATIONS ABOUT COMMUNICATION. REPORTING COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES AND THEIR VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL MODES OF PERFORMANCE

This book presents the results of corpus studies on reporting the communication activities of different verbal and nonverbal modalities by speakers of Polish.

So far, theoretical and empirical research has covered several aspects of the narration of communication: 1. Verbs used to report communication activities (Wierzbicka 1987; Kleszczowa 1989; Bojar 1991; and others), 2. Performative verbs (Austin 1993 [1962]; and others) and speech acts (Searle 1969, 1975; Franck 1984), 3. Reported speech (Franck 1984; Caldas-Coulthard 1987, 1992, 1994; Holt & Clift 2006; and others), 4. Metatext (Wierzbicka 1971; Dobrzyńska 1971, 1978; and others), 5. Metalanguage and the reflexiveness of language (Lyons 1977; Lucy 1993; and others), 6. Markers of metapragmatical awareness (Caffi 1994; Bublitz & Hübler 2007; Culpeper & Haugh 2014; and others) and speech self- or auto-monitoring (Levelt 1983, 1989), 7. Metacommunication (Bateson 1972 [1955]; Watzlawick, Beavin & Jackson 2011 [1967]; Wilmot 1980; and others), as well as research on the involvement of various modalities in communication activities, in addition to words, intonation, prosody, facial expressions, gestures, movements of the whole body and its parts (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001; Kendon 2004; Karpiński 2006; Poggi 2007; Antas 2013; and others). In this research, communication activities and the verbs correlated with them, as well as reports on them, were analyzed separately. Also, the multimodality of communication was studied as a separate theme. This current study provides an innovative integration of all the above aspects.

In order to obtain data for the research, reports on communication activities were extracted from the National Corpus of Polish (Narodowy Korpus Języka Polskiego – NKJP), the Corpus of Narration about Communication (Korpusu Narracji O Komunikacji – KNOK) and from websites. KNOK was created as a result of an experimental study. In the experiment, twenty-three fragments of documentary films from the collection of the Archives of the Film School in Łódź were presented to 101 adults of various ages, genders, and educational levels. The participants of the experiment were asked to report on what the characters were doing. The result of the experiment was a KNOK database that included recordings of both the communication activities and the reports on them. The complementarity of data from the three analyzed sources turned out to be significant due to the tendency of language users to report communication activities selectively.

The studies presented in this book cover the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the corpus data, especially the meaning and reference of the vocabulary used by the authors of reports on communication activities, the frequency of expressions used in the reports, as well as discrepancies in the reports.

The corpus data was analyzed using the methods of corpus linguistics (Lewandowska--Tomaszczyk 2005), the semantic and syntactic analysis of verb collocations and the linguistic-auto-reflexive tests of so-called negative material (Bogusławski 2009, 2017; Dobaczewski 2008; and others), the elements of the theory of performative verbs (Austin 1993 [1962]) and the conversational analysis of interactions (Sacks 1998), the pragmatic analysis of reflexive language (Lyons 1977, Lucy 1993), metapragmatics (Caffi 1994, Culpeper, Haugh 2014), self-monitoring and self-repair (Levelt 1983, 1989), as well as metatext (Wierzbicka 1971, Dobrzyńska 1971, 1978).

The analysis of the vocabulary used in the reports shows that the modal, and hence the physical, aspects of communication activities are linguistically relevant. The modality of the communicative action can be presented in a relation in a synthetic way, using a phrase built around a verb implying the modality of the action, or in an analytical way, using the construction of verbs with adverbial expressions implying the modality of the action, compound sentences, direct and indirect speech, or comparative constructions; also, in reports formulated in face-to-face interactions, the communication activities are represented in para- or non-verbal modes. Reports that provide information about the modality may occur in the form of a single, individual utterance or sequences of utterances given by the different participants of the interaction.

The corpus analysis showed that the modality of the action influences the way certain structures are used in reports on the interactions. This is especially seen in three kinds of contexts with verbs implying the modality of action.

First, differences arise in the function of indirect speech. In reports on verbal actions, it is mainly used to quote someone else's utterances, such as *Krzyknął: Przesuń się w prawo!”* 'He shouted, Move to the right!'. By its very nature, it does not fulfill this function in reports on non-verbal actions, in which it is however used to explain meanings, such as *Pokazał gestem: Przesuń się w prawo!”* 'He showed with a gesture: Move to the right!'. Indirect speech can be used to explain meanings in reports from verbal actions too, but, unlike in reports from non-verbal actions, it does not tend to be used in this way.

Second, the modality of the action limits the use of the first-person forms of verbs. The performance of non-verbal actions is not supported by first-person verb forms, so for example when a man in film scene (P) makes the gesture of waving his hand in reaction to what he has heard from his son, the man's performance is not equivalent to: *Macham na to ręką!”* 'I waved my hand at it!', as in *I do not want to deal with it!”*; these actions are not performed interchangeably. The same applies to (para-) verbal actions. The utterances: *Mówię: Chodź tu!”* 'I say: Come here!' or: *Krzyczę: Chodź tu!”* 'I shout: Come here!' are not equivalent to saying or shouting: *Chodź tu!”* 'Come here!' which can be used as a repetition or a report.

Third, the reference of verbs in monologues and dialogues in written texts depends on the modality of action. According to the convention of writing in Polish, these verbs appear after the dash after the utterance. When a verbal communication verb is placed in this position, it is assigned to the utterance placed before the hyphen as its qualifier, such as *Wracaj! – krzyknęła.”* 'Come back! – she cried'. However, when a non-verbal communication verb is put in this position, the result is quite different, namely it stands for the name of the action accompanying the utterance before the hyphen, cf. *Wracaj! – skinęła na nią ręką.* 'Come back! - she motioned her hand at her'.

Other results of the analysis of semantic-syntactic relationships between expressions used in reports on communication activities give an insight into what the language users are guided by when qualifying communication activities.

Expressions describing the modality of action are used in various combinations with expressions describing the performative dimension of action, for example, *powiedział to tonem reprymendy”* 'He said it in the tone of a reprimand', *rzuciła mu przepraszające spojrzenie”* 'She gave him an apologetic look', *przywitał ich podaniem dłoni”* 'He greeted them with a shake of the hand'. The coexistence of such expressions indicates that language users treat activities

of different modalities as manifestations of performative activities. In the KNOK corpus, it can be observed that expressions specifying the performative aspects of action in combination with or without modal qualifications refer to the communication activities presented in both sound and silent films. This leads to the conclusion that the so-called communication intentions can be assigned to the action based on visual data alone, instead of prosodic guidelines which are also used in this intention (Hellbernd, Sammler, 2016).

Also, this study shows that reports on communicative activities are more reliable when they include expressions informed about modality, because this form of presentation does not go beyond the observation data. For example, if someone says that the doctor shook the patient's hand, it does not prejudge whether he or she greeted him, said goodbye, made an appointment, or introduced himself to him. The Polish expression *"podać komuś$_i$ rękę"*, as well as the analogical English expression *"to shake someone's hand"*, implies the communicative nature of the action and determines its modality, but does not provide a clear interpretation of the action in performative terms – for this purpose, it must be combined with another expression.

Formulating reports on interactions, Polish language speakers use both the usual names of communicative activities and their innovative names. The innovative ones are created *ad hoc* or borrowed from sociolects, professional languages, or specialist terminology. *Ad hoc* names can be characterized by high complexity and ambiguity, which leads to difficulties in their reception and understanding. However, the dissemination of innovative names and the stabilization in the general language of innovative names, as well as the names borrowed from other varieties of Polish, influences the expansion of the range of communicative phenomena, mainly non-verbal ones, which have a fixed name. This process may facilitate the creation and understanding of reports on these activities.

The lexicological analysis shows that there are verbs in Polish that imply the modality of a communicative action, but there are no verbs that imply that a given action is multimodal, although, it is not because language lacks the potential to inform about the multiplicity or variety of activities by means of single lexical forms. In Polish there are verbs describing actions performed with the help of different parts of the body, such as *"gimnastykować się"* 'to exercise', *"ruszać się"* 'to move', and verbs describing other types of complex actions, such as *"sprzątać coś / gdzieś"* 'to clean something / somewhere', *"naprawiać coś"* 'to repair something', or *"budować coś"* 'to build something'.

The information about the multimodality of actions is not obtained from reports built from single verbs. However, the observation of communication activities helps us notice that they are multimodal, for example the fact that a gesture is performed with a specific facial expression or exclamation (Johnson, Ekman, Friesen, 1975), or that facial expressions are used in the interpretation of the meaning of a gesture (Bitti, Poggi, 1991). Therefore, there is a certain asymmetry between the actions and the reports of these actions: although communication activities are multimodal, which can be observed directly in interactions or indirectly in film recordings, the vocabulary used to report interactions is monomodal. It implies taking an action with one modality, such as a gesture. So, if the reports on communication activities are made up of single verbs, they are also monomodal. The multimodality of communication activities is deducible from the constructions of expressions describing actions with different modalities, as in complex or participle sentences. By means of such constructs used in reports, the relations between activities with different modalities can be mapped. Communication activities are presented as co-occurring with each other, linked by temporal relations, extending or limiting the scope of activities, or opposing each other.

The corpus data analysis shows that the references of the names of the reported communication activities cannot be automatically recreated because they are not precisely established. Polish language users match the name to the action in an *ad hoc* manner: when they are speaking aloud, they choose words, analyze their adequacy and correct their choices,

making the qualification they have just given more precise or forgoing it entirely and submitting an alternative one. The choice of words in the reports is strongly determined by their modality, which is expressed in many names. The choice of words is also influenced by the performative dimension of the action. Therefore, further research is needed to develop a comprehensive list of the factors determining the matches of communication activities with their names.

As the references of names to activities are not constant, reports on the same communication activities made by different people may differ in terms of the choice of words to name and characterize the communication activities and their modality. In the KNOK, the frequency of particular expressions used to describe a given activity is similar in groups of people differing in age, gender and education. At the same time, for each activity one can find reports between which the differences are so significant that it can be expected that the authors of these reports could have difficulties in reaching an agreement in the field of reported interaction. The analysis of data collected in the KNOK showed that *these dependencies may result from* certain linguistic and psycholinguistic factors.

First, each action can be adequately described by various expressions, only some of which are stabilized in language. Linguistic innovations and stylistically marked expressions (social or professional dialects, specialist terms) in general-language communication may be ambiguous or even incomprehensible, as in the case of: *"pokazał palcem w dół"* 'He pointed down with his finger', *"wykonał gest kasjera"* 'He made the cashier's gesture'.

Second, reports on communication activities are created selectively, so the range of activities included in the reports may vary. Activities with different modalities are distinguished from each other, as evidenced by the fact that in certain reports individual activities with different modalities are described one after the other. At the same time, there is a noticeable tendency to reduce reports and represent the whole cluster or sequence of actions with an expression naming one action (Heliasz-Nowosielska, 2016b, 2018b, 2021). In this regard, various narrative patterns are used, first of all, various types of metonymization operations: "the part for the whole." The study found that any multimodal action can be represented by both verbs of verbal and non-verbal communication, but there are some limitations to this procedure. Multimodal actions are not represented by the verbs naming illustrative gestures, although they can be represented by the names of deictic, emblematic and performative gestures.

Third, the shape of the report including the choice of vocabulary that characterizes communication activities and their modality depends on a broad context. This context is made up of the observed activities and the words spoken about them during the process of reporting interaction as well as previous communication experiences and general knowledge. Traces of referring to previous reports or actions in subsequent reports are constituted by direct or implied judgments about common and differentiating (in the perception of the speaker) features of these actions and reports on them. Thus, this context can be created by: 1. the ambiguous use of words qualifying actions, for example *"dyrygować"* 'to conduct', 2. observations of typical and unusual behaviors in specific communication situations (for example during fieldwork, personal experiences of communicating with a given type of recipient, both human [a doctor, a laborer, or other] and an animal [a dog or a horse]), 3. knowledge of communication conditions (like what the sender had to do so that the recipient could understand the message), 4. general knowledge, including more or less accurately remembered information on a given topic, which may displace current observations and constitute a real point of references to utterances that were assumed to relate the current interaction (for example the expected reports from a theater scene depicting Giordano Bruno's conversation with his prosecutors turned into utterances about analogous episodes in the lives of various supporters of the heliocentric theory). In extreme cases, the influence of personal experiences and beliefs and the associations built on them is so strong that it leads to a situation in which the response to a request to report

actions becomes not a report, but a description of a given type of situation, opinion, or even instruction as to how the participants of the interaction should behave.

Fourth, when the context does not provide the basis for an unambiguous description of the action and its meaning, the perception or interpretation of the same communication activities may be different, and at the same time, due to the lack of data, neither of them can be considered inadequate. This dependency is reflected in the reports whose authors try to stick to the facts, so they name the observed actions, cite the utterances and present the acoustic or motor aspects of non-verbal actions, but at the same time they do not define the function or meaning of actions, or they give several possible interpretations. In opposition to the reports created in accordance with this narrative pattern, there are reports that contain unambiguous interpretations of actions, which in a given context can be interpreted in various ways, for example shaking hands by the characters of a silent film may indicate either that they greeted each other or they introduced themselves to each other, but on the basis of the non-sound recording, it is impossible to decide what the scope of activities was.

Fifth, reports on communication activities may provide content that contradicts the interpretative cues from the context. In such a case, certain reports may be considered inadequate, for example treating a gesture encouraging a child to consume something in the hospital as an offer to go for a drink after a concert. Reports containing questionable qualifications may contain two signals: either uncertainty in understanding what the author of report heard and saw, or confidence that the author's observations are adequate. Therefore, paradoxically, the confidence signals can strengthen the effects of messages misleading the recipient of the report. Both verbal and non-verbal actions can be inadequately qualified. Disturbances that lead to the formulation of inadequate reports on communication activities occur especially in the perception of sequences of utterances or gestures that are formally similar to each other, but differ in the manner of performance, for example *"nie patrzysz, co się dzieje"* 'You do not look at what is happening' can be qualified as an order or a rebuke (despite the fact that each of these categories of actions has different paraverbal characteristic) or wagging the finger as a threat or pointing at someone. Moreover, such disturbances can be observed in the perception of actions with different modalities and different references that are carried out simultaneously, for example the gestural orders and the verbal rebukes for receiving orders inattentively. The differences between the reports presented in the above points show that based on the reports alone it is impossible to create an adequate representation of the reported activities. However, having a set of differing reports, it is possible to identify points where there are inconsistencies. Identifying discrepancies between the perceptions and interpretations of actions can help clear up misunderstandings, but it can also lead to misunderstandings, especially in confrontations between people reporting the actions differently but without expressing doubts about the adequacy of their reports.

Modality is one of the necessary aspects of communication activities. Nevertheless, it does not have to be included in the coverage of these activities. The speakers may either define the modality of activities in their utterances or abstract from it. Therefore, some reports that do not contain information about the modality but concern communication activities are built with the verbs of performative activities, mental activities, as well as mental or emotional states. Also, such reports may not contain a verb qualifying communication activities, but only inform about what was communicated to the participants of the interaction as a result of these activities. The utterances belonging to this category lack the source of information on a given topic, so they sound like the reports of a witness of the described actions and because of that they may be misleading and make it difficult to build an understanding of the situation.

Other results of this research allow for the verification and supplementation of previous descriptions of the relations between words and non-verbal actions. These dependencies go beyond the list proposed by A. Krawczyk (1983), which includes four categories: 1. a gesture

(a facial expression) corresponds to one specific phrase, 2. a gesture (a facial expression) corresponds to a number of phrases, 3. a gesture (a facial expression) does not correspond to any linguistic unit, 4. a phrase describes a non-existent gesture. Corpus analyses revealed that, in addition, it is possible to refer to multiple gestures using a single expression, for example verbs with the morphemes *"wskaz-"* 'to point', *"pokaz-"* 'to show'. This fact can complicate communication about communication, because utterances containing these verbs may suggest more than one interpretation of action, even with the opposite meaning, for example the Polish phrase *"pokazać palec"* can be used in reference for either the middle finger gesture or the thumb gesture (although, for example, the analogical English phrase *"to show the finger"* refers only to the middle finger gesture). Therefore, in some cases, the precise reporting of a verbal-gestural message requires both the performance of a verbal action and the repetition of a non-verbal action. For example, if in response to someone's question about the size of the table, someone said: *"O taki!"* 'This size!' and made a circle with his hands, the report on this answer in the form it was just realized is not precise, but it can become so if the utterance will be combined with the performance of a gesture imitating the reported movement (which, by the way, is not commonly practiced in writing, although it is not excluded because a sender of an e-mail, text message or a post can use an appropriate picture or even a video).

Finally, research on the corpus data made it possible to verify the description of the functions of individual modalities in relation to each other in multimodal activities. In previous literature on the subject, researchers distinguished five functions that gestures play in relation to verbal utterances that accompany them: expanding the verbal message through gesture, complementing it, strengthening, integrating, and countering it (Lin, 2017: 160; Poggi, 2007: 333; and others). Analyses carried out on the material of the Polish language show that just as gestures can strengthen a verbal message, a verbal message can strengthen gestures too. In the first case, it is the gestures that remain in the background of the verbal message, doubling its meaning, for example iconic gestures performed together with talking about cutting something, and in the second case it is the other way around – the words remain in the background of the gestural message, duplicating its meaning; these can be shouts or slogans conventionally thrown around when making emblematic gestures, for example *"figa (z makiem z pasternakiem)!"*, literally: "a fig [with poppy seeds with parsnips]!", *"tak się zgina dziób pingwina!"*, literally: "This is how the penguin's beak bends!", *"fuck (off)!"*, and in special cases these can be performative forms of verbs naming non-verbal activities, for example: *"(patrz,) pokazuję ci fucka!"* '[Look,] I am showing you a 'fuck'!'. In addition, verbal actions serve the interpretation and qualification of non-verbal actions, their paraphrasing, as well as the explication of their meaning, in which quotations, comparisons and descriptive explanatory phrases play a distinctive role. Thus, verbal and non-verbal modalities interact with each other in such a way that each of them can play a subservient role in relation to the other.

Generally, the corpus study shows that Polish language speakers talk about communication activities with different modalities as well as about the ways of reporting such activities. Therefore, these kinds of issues are somehow important to them. This is fully understandable since discrepancies in the perception of communication directly affect the quality of social contacts. The research and analyses presented in this book contribute to building knowledge about the mechanisms of the perception of communication activities of various modalities, which are revealed when reporting them, as well as the role of these mechanisms in reaching a mutual understanding of communication activities. There are many further research questions and directions of possible work. Among others, there is a need for further studies on the expressions and structures used to report on different aspects of communication activities, other than their (multi)modality. Also, it would be interesting to investigate a full range of psychological and psycholinguistic determinants of the choice of qualifications of communication activities in reports on them. This research task may be facilitated by the multidimensional quantitative

analysis of corpus data, including declarations of the survey participants as to their communication habits. Moreover, as one of the most varied categories of communication activities are imperatives (Komorowska, 2008), or directives (Zarzeczny, 2012), in reports on which it was possible to observe an exceptionally large range of different qualifications attributed to the same action, in the future it would be worth paying special attention to discrepancies in reports on such activities and factors influencing these differences. All these subjects could be taken up in the comparative analysis of narrative expressions and patterns used in reports on communication activities in different languages. Also, based on the collected data, and even more after expanding this set, it seems possible to define the profile of community members with a strongly negative attitude to the activities of other people. In recorded interviews, this kind of attitude was revealed in the case of certain participants of the study who, in response to a request to report on the actions of film characters, or even to an incentive to say what the characters were doing, avoided responding, and instead made critical comments on the people observed in recordings or give them instructions on how they should behave.

A more general subject that requires a linguistic analysis are the processes of development of communicative competence in reporting communicative activities. Previous studies on this issue have been conducted by psychologists and psycholinguists on the material of the English language and have shown that the limit between the inability to assess and qualify communication activities and its acquisition is determined by the ninth or tenth year of a child's life (Wilkinson et al., 1984; Astington, 1990). It would be a worthwhile effort to check whether Polish speakers of the same age develop the ability to report actions, and whether it applies to all actions evenly, or whether it somehow depends on such parameters of actions as their performative functions or modalities. Finally, it is important to emphasize that credible research giving the results that may be intersubjectively acceptable and providing guidelines to support successful communication between Polish speakers can be carried on only on large, representative corpora documenting the diversity of communication activities and narratives about communication, as such there is a need to reinforce the research teams collecting and processing this type of data.