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School knowledge of the language profiles in the context of external examinations

The end of the 20th century in the Polish language didactics was a time full of emotion, discussion about the place in the education of Polish language teaching, commonly called grammar lessons. Criticism was met primarily the system- centric concept as a simple recontextualization of a scientific one, the linguistic knowledge of the language for the school's language teaching, the scope and order of the learning content that restores the structure of the parental discipline with its proper conceptual-terminological apparatus, analytical methods and the scientific definition of language categories¹. And also the effects of the dominance of this concept, contrary to the emerging trends in psychology, pedagogy and didactics: the independence of the grammar lesson as a specific sub-object of the school (within the polonistic education framework), and thus the disintegration of the education content. Focus on the teaching object (material) with the underestimation of the education subject (student), and consequently on teaching rather than learning (himself), superfluous scientism and excessive encyclopaedias, and the lack of knowledge of communication skills (transmitting and receiving). Among other things, they pointed out the need for pragmatism, semantisation and functionalization of school language knowledge² and the primacy of language learning over learning about the language³.

The belief in the need for change in the perception of goals, tasks and functions in general linguistic education, and not only language learning, is growing in linguodidactics, imposed on the paradigm shift in linguistics research, and above all to move away from structuralism for communicationism and cognitivism⁴. This is the communication approach that has set a new direction in thinking about the reform of language training, which was reflected in the core curriculum of the Polish language in 1999. The program in which was structured around four communication skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing, and language learning was significantly reduced, functional (supporting communication competence), and deprived of the terminological and definitional character of the concept. Another program reform (from 2008) has generally maintained this trend, although the scope of language knowledge has been broadened in it, and communicationism was weakened. However, the content of the language as a subdivision (and not a separate area) of the specific requirements

¹ See, e.g. articles in "Polonistyka" in the 90s of the twentieth century.

² K. Bakula, *Kształcenie językowe w szkole podstawowej w świetle współczesnych teorii psychologicznych i lingwistycznych. Projekt nowej metodyki*, Wrocław, 1997, p. 214.

³ See, e.g. M. Nagajowa, *Nauka o języku dla nauki języka*, Kielce, 1994.

⁴ This second linguistic paradigm has not been adapted by the didactics of the Polish language.

and location in two areas: reception of speech (area I) and speech formation (area III), pointed out, on the one hand, it was necessary to integrate the process of acquiring language knowledge with the development and improvement of transcription and reception skills; on the other, the perception of linguistic means as an element of text / expression, and not merely the units of the system, and linguistic constructions not only in the system (langue) but also in speech (parole). Thus, in the 2008 core curriculum, three basic principles were laid down to organize the process of Polish language teaching (including linguistics): integration, textocentrism and functionalism⁵.

As Jerzy Bartmiński wrote (co-founder of this base) "Functional approach to grammar means taking into account the role of grammatical forms in the broader context of expression, binding inflection phenomena, word formation, syntax with the intention of the genre and style. For example, in terms of function analysis superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs in the advertising text (...); perceiving the role of the first person in the plural in building the community with the recipient in publicist and propaganda texts (...); incorporating word formation in search of tools that condense the content in such forms of expression, such as a report, essay, and expression and creation in poetic texts, essay and others(...); constructions of personal forms of unspecified type: created, is creating, allowing the sender statements skipping or postponing further information on the plan of the performers action⁶." This is the shortest lecture explaining the essence of functional grammar in school. This concept goes beyond descriptive and paradigmatic approaches in methodology: "Functional grammar is closely related to communication and linguistic behaviours, functional styles, and the function of speech [...]. Language competence would therefore describe the structure of the language, but always taking into account the function of its components and the correct application"⁷.

According to Halina Wiśniewska, "Functional grammar gives priority to linguistic phenomena in its description that are semantically and stylistically marked"⁸. This should result in a different criterion for the content of education than for a systemocentric approach, not aiming to reproduce, with a full and orderly structure of the linguistic system with its elements, rules and norms⁹ but focused on the selection of above all linguistic issues which are useful in communication processes:¹⁰ "It's about grammar [...] "needed". It is not about paradigms analysing, but extracting the functions of the elements that make up them: not in relation to one another, within the system, but in the context of widely understood speaking, listening, reading and writing processes."¹¹ The changes would also require a methodology that should not limit the student's cognitive function to the answer to the question "what is the language?",

⁵ See, Comments on the core curriculum for the Polish language subject [in:] *Podstawa programowa z komentarzami*, Vol. 2, Polish in elementary school, junior high school and high school. bc.ore.edu.pl/Content/232/Tom+2+J%C4%99zyk+polski+w+szkole+podstawowej%2C+gimnazjum+i+liceum.pdf, DOA 12 I 2017.

⁶ J. Bartmiński, *Nauka o języku w szkole podstawowej*, [in:] *Podstawa programowa...*

⁷ U. Żydek-Bednarczuk, *Nowe aspekty kompetencji komunikacyjnej*, [in:] *W trosce o dobrą edukację*, ed. A. Janus-Sitarz, Cracow, 2009, p. 58.

⁸ H. Wiśniewska, *Antropocentryzm a kształcenie językowe*, [in:] *Wokół edukacji polonistycznej w szkole. Teoria i praktyka*, ed. M. Karwatowska, L. Tymiakin, Lublin, 2016, p. 37.

⁹ This approach Maria Dudzik aptly called the gloomy university (M. Dudzik, *Ja wobec – siebie, drugiego człowieka i świata: doświadczam, działam, przeżywam, wyrażam w języku*, [in:] *Podmiotowy wymiar szkolnej polonistyki*, ed. Z. Uryga, Cracow, 1998, p. 168.)

¹⁰ This does not exclude confusion between the two criteria for the selection of the content of the training, as can be seen, for example, in the 2008 curriculum. It is important that the descriptive approach to language knowledge does not obscure the functional perspective.

¹¹ J. Kowalikowa *Kształcenie językowe. Teoria dla praktyki*, [in:] *Polonista w szkole. Podstawy kształcenia nauczyciela polonisty*, et. A. Janus-Sitarz, Cracow, 2004, p. 116.

but would seek to "guides how to use it in specific language activities"¹². In the educational process, they should therefore move from learning the linguistic means to using them or vice versa, from reflexive use of language to the knowledge about linguistic system¹³.

In the functional sense of the grammar school scholar draws attention to its connection with the text. Language is used in the text, which means the perception of language structures from the perspective of their functioning in different types of texts / speeches / speech acts as a material by which various goals, intentions, intentions of the sender / author are realized¹⁴. Therefore, learning the linguistic mechanisms should be the result of reflection on specific texts, their own and others, the language of the text can not be transparent to the student, in other words grammar (and other content from language learning) should not be known in isolation from use.

The concept of functional language learning is thus integral to the textocentric concept, according to which the teaching process should be centered around the text (received or created by the student), from the text to go and to the text. This linguistic categories present in used in the classroom by the teacher deliberately chosen texts should become "the subject of cognitive overview"¹⁵ and the pupil put in the role of the sender or recipient to reflect on the language in the text (someone else's, received) and language for the text (own, created). Thus, the text becomes a tool for integrating the development and improvement of communicative competence, including text-making, with language science¹⁶, and the effectiveness of the didactic process is reduced to the ability to apply knowledge of language "in working with text, i.e. in its reception and creation"¹⁷. They are thus active knowledge, consciously used by the student in acts of transmission and reception, and not passive knowledge, only verbally recreated and revealed in analyses of language forms and constructs detached from the textual context.

Most of the confusion at the reception desk of the program core curriculum from 2008 caused the conversion of the traditional name of language science to language awareness, in the absence of precise categorization of the term, which would explain its understanding by the creators of the document. The general category of consciousness, and hence linguistic awareness, is fuzzy, it is defined differently and needs to be clarified if it is to be used in an educational context. Therefore, nothing prevents the two names¹⁸ from identifying and concentrating the didactic process on the descriptive-paradigmatic description of the language, terminological and definitional knowledge, analytical skills, vocabulary and phraseology, language standard and the standard of writing, or return to the methodology from before

¹² There, p. 86.

¹³ And again to use the language. See. J. Nocoń, *Świadomość językowa w podręcznikach szkolnych (teoria i praktyka)*, [in:] *Język a Edukacja 3. Świadomość językowa*, eds. J. Nocoń, A. Tabisz, Opole, 2014 oraz M. Szymańska, *Między nauką o języku a rozwijaniem języka. Koncepcje kształcenia językowego na przełomie XX i XXI wieku*, Cracow, 2016.

¹⁴ J. Nocoń, *Świadomość językowa...*, p. 163-164.

¹⁵ There p. 163.

¹⁶ According to the creators of the core curriculum from 2008, the text is a good integration tool that enables finding common ground for all areas of Polish language learning content, and not only for communicative competence and language learning (J. Bartmiński, *Nauka o języku ...*, p. 61-62).

¹⁷ J. Kowalikowa, *Kształcenie językowe ...*, p. 120. "Achieving the level of functionalized knowledge is associated with transceiver skills and the ability to create a variety of texts in various communication systems" (U. Żydek-Bednarczuk, *Nowe aspekty ...*, p. 59).

¹⁸ What do hints / suggest Comments on the core curriculum to the subject Polish language in which there is no language awareness, but about learning about language.

1999¹⁹. However, the issue of the necessity of functional language learning has been clearly indicated in the basis among others by formulations "and defines their functions" (without adding, where / in what or with definitions "in the text / in the statement"). This seems to suggest that a simple reference of linguistic awareness to traditionally recognized language science would be inconsistent with the intention of the authors of the 2008 base that the name change was deliberate²⁰ - it was supposed to suggest other language learning, e.g. text-oriented, hence, transceiver-acquired and functionalized skills, as well as giving the knowledge acquired by the student a conceptual, not a terminological-definition one.

Different concepts of language science shape the acquisition of knowledge of different structure, and this is due to the way of configuring roles that are attributed to language in the process of language education. First of all, the language is / can be the subject of cognition. Knowledge is then mainly cognitive²¹ and reveals itself through knowledge of concepts, terms and definitions, as well as linguistic norms and recording norms and communication conventions, including genre. The descriptive nature of such knowledge gives it the characteristics of passive knowledge, reproduced in declarations like "I know what it is", "I know what it is". The area also includes procedural knowledge ("I know how") and reflective ("I know why"), but in the part that does not have the form of action, and boils down to the verbal knowledge of operating procedures. Getting to know a language also means improving pre-communication skills, i.e. linguistic system efficiency²², understood as knowledge of vocabulary and the ability to construct grammatically correct sentences in a given language, as well as correctness (compliance with standards) of spoken and written statements. In this case, the knowledge acquired by the student is active, functional, and appears in the acts of language use. On the other hand, analytical skills developed through exercises based on the analysis of grammatical forms, structures and structures at all levels of the language system seem to be apparently active. In fact, they reinforce passive knowledge of language (at the level of understanding and application, but not in communication contexts, but only in the systemic contexts).

The second role of language in language learning is a tool with extensive functionality, not only for communication (communication tool), but also for cognition, expression and persuasion, transmission of content and cultural values, etc. Language and communication skills acquired in the educational process, language information, from this perspective, should be useful for the perception of the world and functioning in it in an active, creative way²³, to understand verbal messages on non-literal levels, to read the intentions and intentions of the sender, to the critical views on the transmitted content, judgments and conclusions, to read the meaning of the linguistic means used in the text, to express their own judgments, including polemics, to implement their own intentions and intentions of communication, etc. The foreground should therefore include pragmatics and semantics, not grammar. This profile of knowledge about language / linguistic is of a skillful character, therefore active and functional. It also manifests itself through the ability to interpret linguistic means used in the text, taking

¹⁹ In this case linguistic awareness, not lingual, would be developed (see M. Bugajski, *Linguistic Awareness and Linguistic Consciousness.*) *Social and scientific needs of language culture*, [in:] *Speech illuminated by thought*, ed. J. Miodek, Wrocław, 1999; Bakula, *Linguistic Awareness - Didactic Awareness*, [in:] *Language and Education 3. Linguistic Awareness*, ed. J. Nocoń, A. Tabisz, Opole, 2014.

²⁰ Although it seems that it was a medium-lasting attempt to please all: and supporters of traditional language knowledge and supporters of the communication and functional approach.

²¹ In the cognitive goals understanding.

²² S. Grabias, *Język w zachowaniach społecznych*, Lublin, 1994, p. 278-280.

²³ B. Dyduch, M. Jędrychowska, Z. A. Kłakówna, H. Mrazek, I. Steczko, *To Lubię! A Polish language guide for the fourth grade. Teacher's book*, Warsaw-Krakow, 1994, p. 11.

into account cognitive, communication and pragmatic contexts and the point of view of the author / sender and listener, the reader / recipient of the text²⁴.

Polyphonicity of the language learning concept, under-expression of the sub-conscious linguistic awareness in the core curriculum of 2008, as well as the complexity of profiles acquired in the school of knowledge resulting in its heterogeneous structure as a measurable effect of education tend to ask a question about how to check language knowledge during exams at the end of subsequent stages of education. This is important due to the important role of external examinations not only in the education system, but also their impact on the classroom practice. It is difficult to assume that teachers are not interested at all, what is checked in the examination sheets and that it does not affect the organization of the didactic process and, perhaps more importantly, the structure of learning outcomes (what is checked during the exam is to strengthen in educational practice). In principle, the exams should be integrated with the core curriculum and educational concepts included in it. This means that they also have a system-creating function - examination task profiles become model examples (modules) of practices embedded in a specific interpretation of the education program. This is particularly important in a situation when the curriculum reform is not limited to the correction of the teaching content, but aims at changing the model of didactics, and also when the concepts included in the program document are not clearly profiled. This is the situation we currently have in terms of educating language awareness and checking the achievements of this sub-field of educational content. Hence, one should look at what the interpretation of linguistic awareness is revealed in the examination tasks, what kind of language knowledge of the authors expect the examination papers of students and the language examinations Polish support new teaching, or perpetuate the traditional models of learning the language.

Answers to these questions can be provided by the analysis of tasks from the exam sheets. Due to the volume of the article, this procedure only subjected to the tasks of junior high school examinations from 2012-2016, which allowed to compare the results with the provisions in the core curriculum from 2008²⁵. In total, 38 tasks²⁶ from the reading test were taken into account, referring to the language of the test. The tasks were grouped due to two criteria: 1) embedded outside the text context and embedded in a text context, 2) non-functionalized and functionalized (explanation later in the article). The study should be treated as a pilot, and conclusions as hypotheses for research on a more comprehensive scale.

In the case of tasks embedded outside the text context, they refer to the text used in the reading test only seemingly, i.e. they do not provide information about the reception level of the text by the student, the text provides only examples for analysis, discussion, etc. Such tasks "pretend" that they implement the principle of textocentric profiling of knowledge about language - language forms are "torn out" from the text, and the solution of the task does not require taking into account a wider context than saying. Thus, knowledge about the language system is not checked without relation to communication competence.

Tasks in this group were used to check the mastery of the following cognitive activities:

- 1) Defining the language category (2 tasks)

Example 1.

Termination *Home walk through the bustling market* is

²⁴ J. Kowalikowa, *Kształcenie językowe...*, pp. 97-98.

²⁵ The program document from 2008 became for the first time the basis of the external exam after three years of implementation, i.e. in 2012.

²⁶ This does not correspond to the absolute number of tasks in the test, as some of them had a complex construction and were counted as more than one task.

- A. a single sentence
 - B. a sentence equivalent
- because

- 1. there is no subject in it.
- 2. contains only one predicate.
- 3. there is no personal verb form. (2016)²⁷

The example given is a complex task - only the second part is of a definitional nature. After recognizing the language category, the student does not have to analyze the example given in the task, it is enough to refer to his memory, recreate the definition of the sentence's equivalent and match the answer. In the second task of this type, the definitional attribute of the attribute had to be indicated.

2) Identifying the language form / category (4 tasks)

Example 2.

The title of the text by Jan Miodek has been applied

- A. archaisms.
- B. dialectal words.
- C. borrowing.
- D. scientific terms. (2012)

This task is only formally linked to the text segment, which is the title - there is no attempt at explaining why the author has used the lexical category in the title. In the remaining tasks, the students were to recognize the adjectival participle, the pronoun and the verb tenses in the indicated passage of the text (first it was necessary to recognize the verbs).

3) Knowledge of the meanings of words and phrasemes (6 tasks)

Example 3.

Which expression should be supplemented with the following sentence regarding the pre-war theater audience?

- A. Contemporary
 - B. Then
 - C. Present
 - D. Today's
 - E. Previous
- A / B / C / D / E the theater audience was very demanding. (2012)

Example 4.

Complete the entry article so that a phraseological phrase arises, the meaning of which is consistent with the explanation given. Choose the right answer from the given.

Read - guess what is not written or not stated explicitly, clearly.

- A. *in one breath*.
- B. *from cover to cover*.
- C. *everything in turn*.
- D. *between the lines*. (2014)

Tasks from this group were reduced to decoding meanings from the lexical memory of the student. In the first example, the command to put the selected word into the sentence context does not add anything, it is unnecessary, it is added, the task can be solved without this part. The second task is more complex - it requires reconstructing from the memory the meaning of the four phraseological relationships and deciding which one is about.

4) Decoding the meaning of a word from sentence context (2 tasks)

Example 5.

fame 1. «great notoriety gained by talent, great deeds, merits, etc.»: A Familiar Fame. Pianist, world-renowned doctor. Gain, gain fame. To be famous. ◊ phrase. Enjoy the reputation of

²⁷ The year in which the task appears in the exam sheet is shown in brackets. All exam sheets are available on the Central Examination Board website: cke.edu.pl/egzamin-gimnazjalny/arkusze/, DOA 12/1/2017.

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minister, artist, etc. «be a famous minister, artist, etc.» ◊ book. To have, to become famous for someone, something, as someone "to be known from something, as someone, something, to get to know in some field, for some reason".

2. *raises* "opinion, about someone, something, especially good": Defend someone's fame. Tear someone's fame.

3. *colloquially* "famous man, famous figure; brilliance »: The film itself has only fame. It's a fame in medicine.

Indicate the sentence in which the noun of fame appears in the meaning given in the second definition. Select P at the real sentence.

1. The festival gathered the greatest fame of contemporary film music. P

2. This sports center enjoys a good reputation among skiing enthusiasts. P

3. His talent and diligence made him famous in a few years. P (2015)

These tasks check the recognition of wildcard meanings only. The activity is performed outside the text and does not lead the student to decode the meaning in which the word was used in the context of the text being read.

5) Knowledge of the language standard (3 tasks)

Example 6

Is the form of gods in the sentence: Angry wandering and cursing gods is in accordance with the current language norm? Indicate the correct assignment.

1. Yes, 2. No,

because

A. the accusative plural of this noun has today only the ending -ów.

B. in the accusative plural of this noun it is possible to use both the -i particle and the -ów particle.

C. the norms regarding the variety of nouns are immutable. (2012)

The task over the student's abilities - evaluation of the poetic phrase due to the contemporary language norm and justification of this assessment requires knowledge of the distribution of inflectional endings. In addition, it is suggested that there is an inflectional error in the sentence quoted. The other two tasks concerned vocabulary.

6) Grammatical analysis (5 tasks)

Example 7.

In the first line of the fairy tale, there is a word in the function of the subject

A. he was angry.

B. wandering.

C. he cursed.

D. gods. (2012)

This is a group of tasks that test analytical skills only at the syntax level. Apart from specifying the syntactic function of words, the student was required to recognize the types of utterances.

All types of tasks discussed are devoid of functionalities because they do not try to direct the student's attention to why these language forms were used in the text. But in the analysed exam sheets, among the tasks embedded outside the text context, there are two tasks that can be attributed to the so-called intra-system functionality:

7) Determining functions in the system (2 tasks)

Example 8.

To give the word "small", "small size" meaning, controls are used

A. -isko, -idło, -dło.

- B. -na, -anka, -owa.
- C. -arz, -iciel, -ec.
- D. -ik, -ek, -ka. (2012)

Example 9.

In the example *He understood this in a moment, fearless king, so he grabbed the hilt of a sword.*, the conjunction, therefore, indicates the sentence

- A. coordinate complex resultants.
- B. subordinately complex occasional causes.
- C. coordinate complex opposing.
- D. subordinately complex occasional purpose. (2013)

Intra-system functionality is about determining the functions of language system units in the system itself.²⁸ The first task is to assign to the formants a specific word-formation function, in the second to indicate the grammatical function (syntactic) of a particular conjunction. In both cases, the student does not have to undertake complicated cognitive operations aimed at solving the task at all - if he learned this knowledge from the lesson and remembers it, he can refer directly to it.

The second group of tasks are tasks embedded in a text context, profiled text-centrally and functionalised at the text level, not only the system, thus providing information about the level of text reception by the student. They have been grouped according to the language unit, which in the task is reviewed from the functional perspective:

1) Functions of lexical means (6 tasks)

Example 10.

In saying *Once I approached Barbara Skarga with a question, if she remembers, when she felt happy*, the word *approached* mean asking the question in a way

- A. insistent.
- B. tactful.
- C. cunning.
- D. kind. (2016)

Example 11.

Evaluate whether the following information on the word functions used in the ORZEŁ I SOWA tale is true. Select T if the information is true or N if it is false.

- 1. Then - it promises a sudden turn in action. T N
- 2. Immediately - it signals a rapid follow-up of events. T N (2014)

2) Grammatical category function (1 task)

Example 12.

In describing the construction of slums in the third paragraph, the reporter mainly uses time

A. present, B. past,
to

- 1. show the time distance in relation to the described situation.
- 2. describe the differences in the ways of building the former and present district.
- 3. emphasize dynamism and continuity of the district's development. (2014)

In the case of this type of task, the determination of functions is preceded by the recognition of a grammatical category (complex task).

3) Functions of punctuation (1 task)

Example 13.

What features in the sentence *Kmicic looked ... and the soul shook in it with horror* do ellipsis?

²⁸ J. Nocoń, *Świadomość językowa...*, p. 168.

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Evaluate which answer is false. Select F in the right place.

1. Announces an unexpected turn of the action. F
 2. Indicates the interruption of the hero's speech. F
 3. It introduces voltage. F
 4. Focuses the reader's attention on the event. F (2013)
- 4) Function of stylistic means (2 tasks)

Example 14.

Please rate the following information about the function of stylistic means in the section DZIADY part II are real. Select P if the information is true or F if it is false. (2015)

Stylistic measure and example.

Function in the text

diminutives: eg with a bow tie, a butterfly, a lamb

they reflect Zosia's way of perceiving the world P F

comparison: the wind sweeps me like a feather

illustrates the situation in which the heroine is P F

- 5) Functions of speech acts (3 tasks)

Example 15.

What is the function twice placed in the text of the question: *Is it courage?*

1. It is a composite bracket that links the statement.
2. Allows the author to define courage.
3. It is to encourage the reader to think about the problem.
4. Provides a disregard for bold behaviour by the author of the text. (2013)

In the analysed tasks, the functionality of linguistic means in the context of the text read by the student has a different character. The attention is paid, among others on the roles of linguistic means in the formal construction of the text, their pragmatic intentionality, as well as semantic and stylistic characterization. In this way, the reception of the text is also controlled, which thus does not only focus on the level of meanings, but also includes a functionalized and semanticised view of the language layer of the text.

To sum up, for 38 tasks checking knowledge relating to the language of text used in the reading test during junior high school exams, 24 tasks (63%) were tested only by language and language standards, analytical skills and language competence (system language skills), of which 22 tasks (57% of all tasks) was devoid of any functionality, and 2 (5%) were functionalized at the level of the language system. None of the tasks in this group provided information about the acceptance competence test. The remaining 14 tasks (37%) implemented the principle of textocentrism and functionalization of knowledge about language. They all diagnosed the level of the receiving communication competence.

The analyses show that in the case of the gymnasium exam the text in the reading test is mainly a pretext to check what students know about the language and the ability to analyse typically grammatical. The text only provides examples of different language forms, the content of the task refers to them. Most of the tasks are not related to the reception of the text - it does not diagnose whether the student can read the meanings transmitted by linguistic means and determine their roles in the text. Language as the subject of cognition dominates over language as a tool - the exam thus supports traditional language teaching for language learning, to paraphrase Maria Nagajowa. However, what should be emphasized is that tasks functionalized

in the context of the text provide good models for subject didactics, how to implement the principles of functionalism, textocentrism, integration and communicationism.

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