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THE CROSS-CULTURAL CONCEPTUALIZATION OF 'I'M LOVIN' IT' BETWEEN ENGLISH AND POLISH

ABSTRACT

This study discusses the cross-cultural re-conceptualization of the slogan 'I'm lovin' it', popularized in Poland by a global fast-food restaurant chain, which occurs in the inter-linguistic transfer between English and Polish. The analytical framework for the study is provided by Cultural Linguistics and the Re-conceptualization and Approximation Theory. The analysis is based on proposals submitted by 45 translators asked to come up with a Polish equivalent of the slogan. The results indicate that because the semantic networks for the meaning of love do not overlap between English and Polish perfectly, attempts at the cross-cultural transfer of the slogan can be approached only as more or less accurate approximations of the original meaning constructed according to culture-specific norms, expectations, and attitudes.

KEYWORDS: love, emotions, re-conceptualization, approximation, Cultural Linguistics

STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł omawia międzykulturową re-konceptualizację znaczenia sloganu 'I'm lovin' it', spopularyzowanego w Polsce przez międzynarodową sieć restauracji, jaka zachodzi między językiem angielskim i polskim z perspektywy Lingwistyki kulturowej oraz Teorii re-konceptualizacji i aproksymacji. Przedstawiona analiza została oparta na propozycjach przekładu zaproponowanych przez 45 rodzimych użytkowników języka polskiego. Uzyskane rezultaty wskazują, że ponieważ sieci semantyczne dla znaczenia czasownika 'love' w języku angielskim i znaczenia czasownika 'kochać' w języku polskim nie do końca się pokrywają, próby przeniesienia znaczenia tego sloganu na język polski można traktować jedynie jako mniej lub bardziej trafne aproksymacje oryginalnego znaczenia według norm, oczekiwań i postaw funkcjonujących w kulturze docelowej.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: miłość, emocje, re-konceptualizacja, aproksymacja, Lingwistyka kulturowa

INTRODUCTION

This study discusses the cross-cultural re-conceptualization of love that occurs between English and Polish in the inter-linguistic transfer of the phrase *I'm lovin' it* employed by McDonald's for its global advertising campaign. The cultural dimension of love is approached from the perspective of Cultural Linguistics (Sharifian 2011, 2017), which provides an analytical framework for examining cross-

cultural differences in conceptualizations of emotions that underlie their linguistic expressions. This recently emergent field of linguistics draws on anthropology, cognitive psychology, distributed cognition, as well as other disciplines to study the relationship between language and *cultural conceptualizations* (Sharifian 2003, 2011, 2017: Ch. 2), understood broadly as “templates” for thought and behavior in the exchange of conceptual experiences among members of a cultural community. The framework assumes that emotions are subject to processes of cultural schematization, categorization, and metaphORIZATION, which arise from social and linguistic interactions between members of a particular culture across time and space (Sharifian 2017: Ch. 6). On this account, English and Polish speakers can be expected to foster culture-specific norms, expectations, and attitudes towards the expression of love because their conceptualizations are grounded in the respective cultures.

The cognitive linguistic aspect of re-conceptualization is approached from the perspective of the *re-conceptualization and approximation theory* (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2010, 2012, 2017), which assumes that any language transfer act in intra- and inter-linguistic communication does not take place directly, but through construction of *conceptual integration networks* (Fauconnier/ Turner 2002) that blend both linguistic and extra-linguistic elements from the speakers’ mental models and background knowledge frames. Each time a linguistic message is shared among different speakers, the meaning emerges through multiple cycles of re-conceptualization, in which the participants of a communicative act construct *mental spaces* (Fauconnier 1985/ 1994) populated with elements of the original message and other factors relevant to a given communicative situation. As a result, certain conceptual *approximations* are created on the part of the recipient. They bear some resemblance to the source conceptualizations but are nonetheless individually negotiated and reconstructed. Notwithstanding that the common level of reference required for the proper description of the conceptual transfer between different languages must incorporate the totality of socio-cultural and psycho-physiological elements, the scope of the present paper is narrowed down to the *cross-cultural re-conceptualization* understood here as the re-conceptualization that involves the conceptual integration of elements drawn from diverse cultures for the semantic transfer across languages (Sharifian 2017: 8–9).

GRAMMATICALITY OF *I’M LOVIN’ IT*

In September 2003 one of the world’s largest restaurant chains, the McDonald’s Corporation, introduced the phrase *I’m lovin’ it* as the slogan of its first global advertising campaign. Since its launch this English phrase has been used for the company promotion in more than 100 countries with some notable exceptions, including Germany and Japan, where the slogan was translated. Since its inception the slogan has attracted wide media attention. Eight months after its launch The

New York Times reported (Ives 2004) that the phrase had “crossed over into the mainstream” and had been a key factor in the campaign success. Larry Light, the global chief marketing officer of McDonald’s, quoted in the article, stated that “The phrase *I’m lovin’ it* is becoming part of the language”.

However, not everyone was equally enthusiastic about the slogan. Freund (2016: 50) notes that some British English speakers initially dubbed the phrase “McEnglish” to stigmatize it as a glaring example of marketing speak. One reason for the controversy is the slogan’s questionable grammar. To explain the problem one needs to refer to the distinction of “two broad semantic categories of lexical verbs: *stative verbs* (which typically denote stable states of affairs) and *dynamic verbs* (which denote events, acts, or processes with an inherent implication of completion)” (Biber et al. 1999: 458). Although stative verbs were sometimes described as incompatible with the progressive aspect (e.g. Comrie 1976: 35), in linguistic reality, especially under certain circumstances, they can take the progressive quite freely (Kakietek 1997; Leech et al. 2009: Ch. 6; Levin 2013).

The progressive uses of the verb *love*, such as *I’m loving every moment with you*, *He obviously is loving every minute of it*, *She is doing chemistry and loving it*, have been attested in a number of corpus linguistic studies. For instance, Granath and Wherrity (2014) found 132 tokens of *love* used in the progressive form in the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA), including 70 occurrences in dialogue/quoted speech and 62 occurrences in the running text, with only one instance where the construction was used by a non-native speaker. Freund (2016) compared the demographically-sampled component of the spoken section of the British National Corpus (BNC) against a specially built corpus of computer-mediated communication (CMC) including samples from forum discussions and interactive blogs. She observed that the progressive uses of *love* tend to recur in certain contextual themes, most notably the weather, fashion, and personal relationships. Within these contexts, the progressive use is typically adapted to serve particular communicative needs, such as the expression of intensity, transience, and humor. A conclusion that emerges from these studies is that while the progressive uses of *love* are fewer and less conventional, such expressions can freely occur in the discourse when a communicative need particular to a specific situation arises. The progressive use of *love* yields an activity reading: we can interpret stative *love* as equivalent to dynamic *enjoy* (Huddleston/ Pullum 2002: 170; Payne 2011: 292).

CULTURAL BOUNDS OF LOVE

In the light of the above-reviewed corpus studies, the ostensible ungrammaticality of *I’m lovin’ it* is unlikely to be the sole reason for the controversy that surrounds the slogan. Another reason, potentially not immediately obvious to less culturally-

inclined linguists, can be the use of the verb *love* in this specific context. The phrase is likely to evoke various *cultural conceptualizations* (Sharifian 2003, 2011, 2017: Ch. 2) across different cultures. The influence of culture on the meaning of the verb *love* becomes evident in comparative studies on love expressions across speakers from different countries. A cross-cultural study on the locution *I love you* as a form of emotion expression (Wilkins/ Gareis 2006) shows that this phrase is used far more often by Americans than members of some other societies. At the same time, in the U.S. it seems to lack the gravity that it has in many other cultures, in which this phrase implies a deeply emotional, committed relationship. It is noteworthy that the Oxford English Dictionary provides one definition of *love* as the verb used with personal object or one capable of personification: “To bear love to; to entertain a great affection or regard for; to hold dear” (OED 2009: *love*, v.1:1.a), and another definition as the verb used with a thing as object: “To have a strong liking for; to be fond of; to be devoted or addicted to” (OED 2009: *love*, v.1:4.b). The latter is accompanied by the comment: “In the U.S. a frequent vulgarism for *like*”, which indicates that using the verb *love* in non-human contexts is more conceptually restricted in the British culture than in the U.S.A.

More recently, Gareis and Wilkins (2011) pursued the question of cross-cultural differences in saying *I love you* further by focusing specifically on the United States and Germany. For Germans the phrase *Ich liebe dich* (*I love you*) is traditionally reserved for private disclosure of love governed by a communal imperative of meaningfulness, which contrasts sharply with the American tendency to use it in a broad range of contexts, including nonromantic relationships. What is particularly interesting from the perspective of the present study is that Gareis and Wilkins (2011: 307–308) touch upon the use of the phrase *Ich liebe es*, which the literal translation of *I'm lovin' it*, by McDonald's in their advertising campaign launched in Germany in 2003. They report that in Germany a distaste for the superficial use of the verb *liebe* (*love*) in the slogan was so great that it sparked off a heated debate in newspapers and magazines. Critical comments accentuated that love is an emotion too profound and transcending to be used for prosaic objects like McDonald's foodstuffs. Gareis and Wilkins (2011: 316) conclude that while the phrase *Ich liebe dich* can be recognized as the literal German translation of English *I love you*, from the perspective of data collected in their survey the meanings of these phrases in the respective cultures are not equivalent. While this may sound paradoxical, it just reflects the fact that the natural language concept of *love* encompasses a wide spectrum of emotional states whose conceptualizations differ between members of different cultures.

POLYSEMY OF LOVE

Today, most anthropologists assume that love is a cultural universal, or at the least a near universal, which is likely to have appeared in all human groups at all times in human history (Jankowiak 2015). Most, if not all, cultures have a semantic concept whose meaning resembles that of the English word *love*. However, the quality of love varies with the feelings evoked by different targets. The Greeks philosophers used several different words to describe what today is called *love* in English. Essentially, *eros* was used to refer to love in the sense of intense passionate desire; *philia* was the emotion of fondness, friendship, and appreciation of others; *storge* referred to the loyalty bond with family; *nomos*, which came through the Judaeo-Christian tradition, was the enhanced virtue felt towards the acceptance of the ethical norms of the society; and *agape*, which arrived together with *nomos*, was used to mean the love of God for man and of man for God, and by extension, the brotherly love among humans (Singer 2009).

Although love, in one form or another, has always been on people's minds, the explanation of what love actually is remains elusive. It is because *love* is an extremely polysemous concept with uncertain borders and countless related concepts such as admiration, affection, attraction, attachment, infatuation, or seduction (Berscheid 2010). Fehr and Russell (1991) asked 84 college students to list as many types of love as came to mind. After collating syntactic variants, 216 subtypes of love were found, 93 of which were mentioned by more than one respondent. Lamy (2016) provides a substantial review of various popular perceptions, interpretations, and academic positions that are used to conceptualize the phenomenon of love. He arrives at the conclusion that love needs to be viewed as "a constellation of emotions" as opposed to a single emotion.

For this reason, the natural language concept *love* can be understood more completely from the perspective of the prototype theory (Fehr 2006; cf. Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2007). It forms a radial category with an internal conceptual structure (Bierwiaczonek 2002) and fuzzy borders between many different kinds of love, such as maternal love, romantic love, patriotic love, platonic love, erotic love, love of pets, love of work, etc. The prototypical *love* located in the center of the semantic network is related to actual instances at the edge of the network, which are shaped by knowledge shared within a culture and norms functioning in the society. The cultural factor in the semantic network entails that we must assume that the verb *love*, or more specifically the slogan including it as in this case, means something different across different languages because its meaning is culturally constructed.

MEANING OF LOVE BETWEEN ENGLISH AND POLISH

Using three different but complementary methods: online categorization and sorting tasks, GRID questionnaires, and a corpus-based cognitive linguistic methodology, Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk and Wilson (2015) conducted a cross-cultural comparison between the British English concept *love* in and its basic Polish equivalent *miłość*. Assuming that these concepts are not identical across these two cultures they focused on identifying instances of *emotion cluster* equivalence rather than equivalence between single emotion terms in respective languages. In the emotion clusters each individual emotion space is inhabited by polysemous concepts, which is a range of different, although related, senses of an emotion concept, in this case, different types of love.

Within the *intra-cluster* relations the study demonstrates a major difference between Polish vs. British English with reference to *happiness/joy* and *love*. For Polish, the *happiness/joy* cluster is merged with the *love* cluster so tightly that it does not even form a distinct cluster. In contrast, for British English the *happiness/joy* cluster is much more distinct from the *love* cluster. Other emotions that appear in the British English cluster include *cheerfulness*, *excitement*, *euphoria*, *thrill*, *delight*, *amusement*, and *pleasure*. For Polish, these links are not so vivid. Among the *inter-cluster* relations British-English and Polish demonstrate relatively similar links between emotions related to *passionate love* and *companionate love*.

Moreover, Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk and Wilson (2015) performed a collocation analysis, i.e. identification of words which co-occur with the lexeme *love* in utterances more frequently than by coincidence. The analysis demonstrates that significant *adjectival collocates* for the English lexeme *love* includes *passionate*, *sexual*, and *erotic*. In contrast, a comparable list for the Polish equivalent *miłość* (*love*) includes items related to religious love: *God's/divine* (*boży/boski*), *marital* (*matżeński*), *brotherly* (*braterski*), *Christian* (*chrześcijański*), and *pure* (*czysty*), which are all significantly more frequent than lexemes related to romantic/passionate love. Additionally, a parallel contrast between Polish and English is reflected in *nominal collocates*. A substantial portion of nominal collocations for Polish includes lexemes related to religious love, such as *God* (*Bóg*), *creator* (*Stwórca*), *soul* (*dusza*), and *neighbour* (*bliźni* [love thy neighbour]). Another group includes lexemes related to family love, such as: *married couple* (*matżonkowie*), *parents* (*rodzice*), *mother* (*matka*), *husband* (*mąż*), *father* (*ojciec*), *daughter* (*córka*), and *wife* (*żona*). At the same time, few nominal collocates related to romantic/passionate love were found. Overall, the material analyzed in the study indicates that the British English word *love* and the Polish word *miłość* tend to involve different associations in the respective cultures. While in the British English data the most conceptually salient type is romantic/passionate love (Greek *eros*), it is much less markedly represented

in the Polish data, where love tends to be associated with divine (Greek *agape*) and family (Greek *storge*) love.

A dictionary and corpus based analysis of love in English and Polish conducted by Brożyna Reczko (2017) indicates parallel oppositions. While the basic components of the meaning of love in English are pleasure and desire, Poles tend to understand *miłość* (*love*) as “being good to someone” and “taking care of someone”. The aspect of “being good” is particularly important to the religious or divine love, which is more conspicuous in Polish than English. Although in both languages the concepts of love are similar in that they both include emotions related to passionate love and compassionate love, and both use equivalent source domains in metaphorical expressions, the conceptualization of love differs in some aspects between speakers of English and Polish.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF *I'M LOVIN' IT* IN TRANSLATION

Following the above-discussed observations that the meaning of *love* differs between English and Polish, a case study was designed to examine the re-conceptualization of the meaning of the slogan *I'm lovin' it* in Polish. Examining alternative re-conceptualizations reveals different mental models that arise in the inter-linguistic transfer (see Waliński 2016 for examples). In the case of *I'm lovin' it*, a straightforward one-by-one linguistic transfer from English is blocked by restrictions of the Polish language code, which does not offer a parallel grammatical/lexical structure.

One reason that prevents a direct linguistic transfer of the slogan to Polish stems from the lack of the Progressive aspect. Polish does not have any special grammatical means to express the meaning of an activity in progress at some temporal point of reference. Instead, this meaning is expressed just by choosing the imperfective verb form, and sometimes additionally marked by lexical items, typically adverbs (Fisiak et al. 1987: Ch. 3). Moreover, Polish lacks a lexicalized equivalent of the verb *enjoy*, which substitutes for *love* in the dynamic interpretations of the verb by English speakers. In Polish the meaning of *enjoy* is realized mainly with the verb *lubić* (*like*) and a wide array of phrases, such as “znajdować w czymś przyjemność” (*to find pleasure in something*), “cieszyć się czymś” (*to be pleased/glad/happy about something*), “dobrze się bawić” (*to have fun*), among others (PWN-Oxford 2004). In some cases, verbs *kochać* (*love*) and *uwielbiać* (*adore*) can also be used to express its meaning. The choice of a particular phrasing is in each case highly context-dependent (Dziwirek/ Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2010: 87–96).

In order to examine the cultural re-conceptualization of the slogan, an experiment was conducted with 45 translation trainees participating in a practical translation course as a part of the curriculum of the 2nd year of the BA level of studies of

English philology at the University of Lodz. The group included 39 females and 6 males. The age of participants ranged between 20–25, with the mean age of 21. At the time of the experiment, the translators had been learning English for 9–16 years, with the mean period of study of 13 years. The experiment was conducted in October 2017. Towards the end of a practical translation class devoted to dealing with the language of advertising materials, a short discussion was held about the phrase *I'm lovin' it* as an example of English slogan used in Poland the original non-translated form. The participants were asked to come up with a Polish equivalent of the slogan that would fulfill the same function in the restaurant context. They were asked to submit their proposals on paper indicating only their gender, age, and the period of learning English as a foreign language. The submissions were anonymous because the overall aim of the experiment was to elicit various proposals, not to evaluate individual translators. The participants were given 5 minutes to complete the task to ensure that they have enough time to consider various options.

VARIANTS OF APPROXIMATION

Generally, the submitted proposals can be assigned to 4 broad categories. The largest group of translations is based on replacing the original emotion predicate with a variety of Polish exclamations of tastiness. Approximations of this kind were proposed by 20 participants, which involves 10 variants (1a–1k) listed below.

- (1a) To jest pyszne (3×) [This is delicious]
- (1b) Ale to pyszne (2×) [So delicious]
- (1c) Pyszne [Delicious]
- (1d) Mmm, pyszne [Mhm, delicious]
- (1e) Pyszności (2×) [Yummies]
- (1f) Pycha (2×) [Yummy]
- (1g) Mniam, pycha [Yum-yum, yummy]
- (1h) Pychota [Yum-yum]
- (1i) Niebo w gębie (4×) [It tastes heavenly, lit. 'Heaven in the mouth']
- (1k) Palce lizać (3×) [Finger-licking tasty]

What characterizes these proposals is that they completely omit any kind of emotion predicate from the target message. From one perspective, they can be viewed as solutions that fulfill the *skopos* (Reiss/ Vermeer 1984), i.e. the function of the translated text. Taking into consideration the advertising context, the translators focused on creating a message that has the potential to attract customers to a restaurant.

From another perspective, these translations can be viewed as instances of *semantic leaps* (Coulson 2001) in which elements functioning in a *semantic frame*

(Fillmore 1982/2006) in the contextual representation are reorganized into a new frame. In these approximations, the original frame of *loving*, which is expressed in the linguistic code, is substituted with the semantic frame of *relishing food*, which is borrowed from the extra-linguistic context in which the slogan is intended to function. A common point of reference between the original and the re-conceptualized mental model can be found in the positive *joy/pleasure* aspect shared by loving and relishing. Accordingly, these proposals can be interpreted as somewhat parallel to the English reading *I'm enjoying it*. However, because Polish does not offer a lexicalized counterpart of the verb *enjoy*, these approximations *profile* (see Langacker 2008: Ch. 3) specifically the enjoyment of relishing food.

Another group of approximations includes proposals that retain an emotion predicate in the target message but alter the affective intensity of the slogan by substituting the verb *love* with other affective verbs. They were proposed by 15 participants in 8 variants (2a–2h) listed below.

- (2a) Uwielbiam to (7×) [I adore it]
- (2b) Uwielbiam (2×) [I adore]
- (2c) To co uwielbiam [What I adore]
- (2d) Coś co uwielbiam [Something I adore]
- (2e) Po prostu, uwielbiam [I just adore]
- (2f) Lubię to [I like it]
- (2g) To co lubię [What I like]
- (2h) Szaleję za tym [I am crazy about it]

Essentially, these approximations bear a strong affective charge but avoid an overt declaration of love. A relatively high number of proposals (12) employ the verb *uwielbiać* (*adore*) for the Polish equivalent of the slogan. As pointed out by Dziwirek and Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (2010: 91), in both English and Polish, this verb semantically groups together with the verb *kochać* (*love*) and is used to refer to emotions more intensive than those expressed by the verb *lubić* (*like*). Although *uwielbiać* (*adore*) has some “over the top” hyperbolic quality found in corpus examples, the data show that it recurs in certain contextual themes including food, as in *Uwielbiam lody/czekoladę* (*I adore ice cream/chocolate*). This explains why it was chosen by so many participants as the optimal substitute for the verb *love* in the slogan. At the same time, a relatively low number of translators (2) decided to employ the verb *lubić* (*like*), which may be attributed to a tendency to avoid solutions sounding too obvious to catch the target audience attention. Additionally, one translator expressed the emotional meaning of the slogan with the idiomatic phrase *Szaleję za tym* (*I am crazy about it*), which is used to express a strong positive affection in an informal manner.

A third group of proposals involves translations that employ the verb *kochać* (*love*) to render the meaning of the slogan. This solution was taken by 7 participants in 3 different variants (3a–3c) listed below.

- (3a) Kocham to (3x) [I love it]
 (3b) To co kocham (3x) [What I love]
 (3c) To jest to, co kocham [This is what I love]

From the perspective of the linguistic code, these proposals offer the closest morphosyntactic equivalent of the slogan. However, only seven translators decided to render the meaning of the slogan in this manner. This can be attributed to cultural differences in the expression of love between English and Polish. As noted by Dziwirek and Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (2010: 90), in Polish an overt declaration of love is very rarely uttered in direct statements to an addressee. It is reserved for very private, emotionally laden, romantic contexts. The relatively low number of proposals in this category indicates that for many speakers of Polish the verb *kochać* (*love*) does not fit conceptually in the context of fast food marketing (cf. Gareis/Wilkins 2011).

The final group includes three proposals (4a–4c) that are difficult to categorize in a straightforward manner.

- (4a) Jedz, pij, kochaj [Eat, drink, love]
 (4b) Ten “smac” urzeka [This “taste” {trans. smak → smac} delights]
 (4c) Rozpływam się [I am melting]

The translation (4a) probably borrows from the Wrigley’s Orbit slogan “Jedz, pij, żuj.” (“Eat. Drink. Chew.”) by replacing the “żuj” (chew) segment with “kochaj” (love [imperative form]). The proposal (4b) employs a pun based on the transliteration of the Polish noun *smak* (*taste*) into “smac”, which is probably intended to bear some resemblance to the initial segment in the McDonald’s name. Although this approximation carries some affective charge because of the verb *urzezać* (*delight/bewitch*) included in the target message, it focuses on building the corporation name’s association with taste rather than an emotionally charged message.

The proposal (4c) “Rozpływam się” (*I am melting* [reflexive form]) is particularly arresting. In Polish, especially in poetry, one melts under a passionate affection, e.g. “*Moja niepewność rozpłynęła się pod wpływem jej żarliwych pocałunków*” (*My diffidence melted under the influence of her ardent kisses*); one melts with pleasure, e.g. “*Rozpłynę się z rozkoszy*” (*I will melt with delight*); and tasty food melts in the mouth, e.g. “*Naleśniki z dżemem Barbary po prostu rozpływają się w ustach*” (*Barbara’s pancakes with jam just melt in the mouth*) – all these examples come from the National Corpus of Polish (NKJP 2010). Therefore, this approximation offers ambiguity that combines the sublime love and with the enjoyment of relishing food in one statement. Although a detailed analysis of the complex *conceptual integration network* (Fauconnier/ Turner 2002) that underlies this proposal expands beyond the scope of this study, it is undoubtedly a very clever translation.

CROSS-CULTURAL RE-CONCEPTUALIZATION

The broad range of the above-reviewed translation proposals indicates that although the original conceptual-semantic content of a message constitutes the foundation for all operations involved in the conceptual transfer between different languages, speakers from the target speech community re-create the meaning of the message in a way that they consider most optimal according to their own interpretation. The re-conceptualization and approximation theory (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2010, 2012, 2017) posits that even for a simple phrase, such as the slogan analyzed in this research, there exist multiple alternative re-conceptualizations. In each case, the meaning of a linguistic structure emerges as the result of the interaction between the meaning of a lexical unit and the semantic interpretation of discourse in a specific context through multiple cycles of re-conceptualization carried out along the way. The outcome is not a perfect mirror image of the original author's mental model but an approximation formed through a mental blend of the original conceptual content and the way it is interpreted in the mind of the recipient.

Cultural Linguistics posits that emotions are culturally-constructed categories tied to social norms in a culture-specific manner, which influences the way in which people speak (Sharifian 2017: 63). As pointed out in the above-reviewed studies (Brożyna Reczko 2017; Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk/ Wilson 2015), the conceptualization of love overlaps between Polish and English only partly: whereas in Polish *love* tends to be associated with the divine, in English it tends to be associated to a greater extent with earthly connotations. Because the conceptualization of *love* is constructed according to culture-specific values, expectations, and attitudes, the meaning of the slogan undergoes the *cross cultural re-conceptualization* across English and Polish. While the phrase *I'm lovin' it* may offer an acceptable level of emotion to express the marketing idea in American English, a straightforward declaration of love in the fast-food context sounds too exaggerated or inappropriate to many speakers of Polish. This is indicated by the fact that the largest group of 20 translators took the daring decision to reorganize the meaning of the slogan into the new semantic frame of relishing food. At the same time, relatively few, only 7 out of 45, translators decided to employ the closest morphosyntactic equivalent of the slogan with the verb *kochać* (*love*) as the way of rendering its meaning. Many other translators (15) diminished the emotional intensity of the slogan by employing other affective verbs. Additionally, three others came up with sophisticated conceptual blends to approximate the meaning of the slogan without an overt declaration of affection.

The diversity of the proposed approximations corroborates another basic tenet of Cultural Linguistics that the cultural cognition is a form of *distributed cognition* (Sharifian 2017: 3–5), understood as a complex system in which elements of a speech community's cultural cognition are heterogeneously shared among its members.

Polish speakers participating in the study demonstrated a substantial variation in their cross-cultural re-conceptualizations of the slogan, which suggests that they have individualized internalizations of the semantic patterns in their community's cultural cognition.

CONCLUSIONS

The fact that today some English speakers, under certain circumstances, express their emotional stance with BE+*loving* instead of *love* can be attributed, at least in some part, to regular exposure to the McDonald's slogan over the past fifteen years. From a broader perspective, the increasing popularity of the progressive form of *love* may be attributed to *subjectification* of meanings (De Smedt/ Verstraete 2006; Traugott 1989), by which the progressive construction has developed a new meaning, beyond the aspectual function of representing the temporal contour of a situation, to perform expressive, emotional or attitudinal functions. However, the questionable grammaticality of the slogan is unlikely to be the sole reason for the difficulty of rendering its meaning into Polish. The results of the study indicate that the major difficulty in its conceptual transfer between English and Polish can be ascribed to the cross-cultural re-conceptualization, which stems not as much from the linguistic structure of the slogan as the cultural conceptualization of its meaning.

Emotional terms and the sentences in which they are used in different cultures are embedded in distinct semantic networks because of different values and life experiences (Kagan 2007; Wierzbicka 1999). The cultural variation in the semantic networks implies that we cannot assume that a particular term or sentence has the same meaning across speakers from different speech communities, which makes it virtually impossible to translate all emotional words from one language into another and assume that they have the same intended meaning. For this reason, Polish translations of the phrase *I'm lovin' it* can only be approached as more or less accurate culturally-reconstructed approximations of the original meaning of the slogan. However, these diverse approximations can be viewed as examples of *cluster equivalence*, which is postulated by Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk (2017: 144) as a replacement for the traditional models of both intra- and cross-linguistic communicative equivalence. On this account, any linguistic equivalent bears only some *resemblance* to the original within the lower and upper bounds of tolerance thresholds for semantic differences on *tolerance spaces*. The re-framing of *I'm lovin' it!* into exclamations of tastiness or the construction of complex conceptual blends demonstrates that the cluster equivalence holds as long as an approximation constitutes an *allowable substitution*, i.e. is sufficiently similar to the original in a certain specified sense to allow a substitution (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2012: 171). In the cross-cultural communication of emotions, which are inherently

vague concepts with fuzzy borders and no exact definition, the tolerance spaces can be very expansive. It is because the conceptual resemblance of emotions is culturally-grounded, context-sensitive, speaker-specific, and on each occasion negotiated among the participants of the communicative act through inferential interpretations.

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