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PSYCHOLINGUISTICS AT LARGE: PROFESSOR FRANCISZEK GRUCZA'S GLOTTODIDACTIC BENT

INTRODUCTION

In the past half a century psycholinguistics has shown its multiple merits throughout its articulate presence in the science of linguistics. Above all, psycholinguistics has successfully focused on the significance of an individual language user as a mentally-determined communicative agent against the predominant emphasis on mere language structure which has ruled in the halls of linguistics before its nascency in the 1950s. Thus, it was only natural to expect a qualitatively and quantitatively significant turn in the domain of psycholinguistics with regard to language pedagogy, in particular to foreign language pedagogy. The reason is and has always been very simple: attempts to learn a foreign language by an individual language user, be it a teen/adolescent user or an adult one, are always a matter of individual toil imbued with individual mental-physical (mind-brain) imprints. Moreover, psycholinguistics has moved from the structure-function determinism in language studies to biology-mentalese-verbalese determinism in language studies and has in its evolution turned out to be of unparalleled usefulness in the latter respect. In fact, it has allowed for an explanation of the mystery of (foreign) language learning/acquisition based on the premise that every human being's psychological (i.e. mental-biological) underpinnings, such as the brain-mind as a dynamic functional system set on complex cognitive tasking (with perceptual-productive content) by virtue of its evolutionarily fixed modularity, its parallel distributed processing capacity, the intentionality and subjectivity of speech acts and, above all, general inborn mental fitness for language learnability, are fundamental.

FRANCISZEK GRUCZA'S VIEW OF PSYCHOLINGUISTICS

No doubt, psycholinguistics has noted an unprecedented success in undertaking the descriptive-explanatory tasks with regard to the distinctly human phenomenon of language acquisition/learning as immersed in the mental-biological framework, including second/foreign language learning/acquisition. Professor Franciszek Grucza's contribution to psycholinguistics in this latter respect has been a notable one. Suffice it to say that in many of his papers, although he does not attempt any systematic and rigorous psycholinguistic study of its own, strong psycholinguistic undertones are indirectly but quite distinctly present. This refers especially to an important paper from 1974, entitled "Lingwistyka a glottodydaktyka" (Linguistics and glottodidactics) where Grucza hastens to derive glottodidactics from applied linguistics and brands the latter a strong interdisciplinary science which, among other sources, necessarily verges on (and breeds from) psychology as a rich source of information concerning the two sides of the (foreign) language learning/teaching process. His understanding of the term glottodidactics is, therefore, completely in accordance with the psycholinguistic bias.

A similar psycholinguistic bent is present in another important and early paper by Grucza entitled "Metasprachen, Kodematik, Fremdsprachenunterricht" (1967), where he uses the notions of 'rule' and 'natural language' which happen not only to belong entirely to the transformational-generative approach but which are also the constitutive notions of the psycholinguistic, or mentally-determined, linguistic creed. The said pair of notions are firmly anchored in the core of the psycholinguistic orientation which accords them a major role in the innate human fitness for language as ruled behaviour. No doubt, the psycholinguistic understanding of any natural language in terms of its rules provides a very prolific framework.

As has been stated above, Grucza has not undertaken any rigorous and systematic psycholinguistic investigation, but psycholinguistics is indirectly and constantly present in his abundant writings, especially where he is concerned with a discussion of the developmental trends in the linguistic landscape. It must at the same time be admitted that his evaluation of psycholinguistics is not always positive. For example, a generally critical view of psycholinguistics has been articulated in Grucza's monograph entitled *Zagadnienia metalingwistyki. Lingwistyka – jej przedmiot, lingwistyka stosowana* (Problems of metalinguistics. Linguistics – its subject matter, applied linguistics, 2017). In this very comprehensive and monumental study, Grucza admits that, as a result of the generative-transformational turn (with Chomsky's key 'competence-performance' dyad and 'ideal speaker-hearer') which has fed psycholinguistic abundantly, the science of linguistics has broadened its scope considerably towards the communicative theory of language.

Grucza rightly concedes that the latter theory has very strongly emphasized the inborn human communicative potential and has generally made language open to

various interdisciplinary penetrations, including the psycholinguistic one. However, at this point Grucza clearly signals its general inadequacy in providing a satisfactory psycholinguistic account of human linguistic behaviour, including the phenomenon of foreign language learning/teaching, basically owing to insufficient and carelessly presented empirical data. The lack of sufficiently credible data is, in Grucza's opinion, a manifestly weak point of the psycholinguistic approach to natural and rule-based language behaviour because it unnecessarily introduces a high degree of conjecture into linguistics as a scientific endeavour.

SUMMARY

The necessarily succinct review of Franciszek Grucza's account of psycholinguistics can be summarized as extending from his considerations of some of the more important and detailed concepts of psycholinguistics to a more general picture of this subdiscipline vis-a-vis other linguistic orientations. Grucza has shown that, although psycholinguistics cannot grant itself any completeness in accounting for the phenomena of foreign language learning and teaching, it is not without merits and as such it requires close attention, especially with regard to the central notions of the foreign language learner and foreign language teacher. Those individuals, who are both producers and receivers of linguistic messages, are, according to Grucza, at the same time best described as possessing learnable/teachable rules, skills and knowledge. These three elements, no doubt, most appropriately characterize human mentalesse and as such do allow for the inclusion of psycholinguistics into the fully legitimate linguistic paradigms within the realm of linguistics.

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