

Rocznik Slawistyczny, t. LXX, 2021

ISSN 0080-3588

DOI: 10.24425/rslaw.2021.138349

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**A new book devoted to the comparative linguistics,
written in a general perspective**

Rev.: Leszek Bednarczuk, **Sporne problemy językoznawstwa porównawczego**. – Kraków: Lexis, 2020. – 151 s.

The book under review is divided into 8 chapters, which are preceded by Preface and finished by Summary and Bibliography. Every chapter solves specific questions:

1. Man and his language (*Człowiek i jego język*)

In the first chapter the author summarizes the most recent results of anthropology, genetics and archaeology about the development of homonids leading to the modern man (c. 300,000 years BP) and his migrational routes out of Africa. He follows with discussion of glottogonical hypotheses, trying to explain

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the creation of human language. Finally he briefly informs about expansions of some societies in correlation with hypotheses about some macro-families.

2. Communicative society (*Wspólnoty komunikatywne*)

In the second chapter the author classifies the forms of communication into five types: biological; cultural; symbolic; political; religious-transcendent.

3. Language functions and types (*Funkcje i typy językowe*)

The third chapter introduces the isomorphic structures applied to syllable, word, and sentence, leading to language typology.

4. Problems of substrate (*Problemy substratu*)

In the fourth chapter the author tries to identify the features in individual Indo-European branches, which could be ascribed to various substrata. His survey is mostly general, the hypothetical substratal features especially belong to phonological or syntactic typology. The most valuable is author's confrontation of specific phonological features in the Indo-European languages of the Mediterranean with the characteristics of phonological systems of the pre-Indo-European languages of the same area, namely the language of the Linear script A reflected in the system of the Linear script B, further Etruscan, Iberian, Aquitanian and Basque.

5. Phonetic hypotheses and parallels (*Hipotezy i paralele fonetyczne*)

The fifth chapter brings discussions about such fundamental questions of the Indo-European historical phonetics as the laryngeal theory, glottalic theory, problem of reconstruction of gutturals and lenition. In the end of this chapter the author compares the parallel processes in development of phonology among the Romance and Slavic languages, interpreting them as the Danubian Romance influence on Slavic.

6. Substantial parts of speech (*Podstawowe części mowy*)

The sixth chapter is devoted to nominal and verbal morphology. The author speculates about the ergative past of the Indo-European nominal inflection. In the case of the conjugation of the Indo-European verb, he sees here the primary nomina actionis and agentis, plus inflectional endings of pronominal origin. Concerning pronouns, he mentions the specific pronominal inflection, frequently different from the nominal one, and the characteristic suppletivism.

7. Grammatical functors (*Funktory gramatyczne*)

In the seventh chapter the author is interested in so-called grammatical words (prepositions, conjunctions, primary particles) and free-morphemes (pronominal enclitics and mobile inflectional endings of verbs). He tries to classify them according to various criteria.

8. Problems of syntax (*Problemy składniowe*)

The last, eighth, chapter devoted to the Indo-European syntax begins with definitions of various approaches to syntax: functional, stylistic, psychological, logical, semantic, textual-discursive. Further he develops his ideas about the role of morphosyntax in the grammatical systems of languages. Finally he discusses the relation of parataxis and hypotaxis in the Indo-European languages.

Although the most recent book of Leszek Bednarczuk is thin, only 151 pages, it brings a lot of serious questions of both the comparative, but also general linguistics, usually here illustrated by examples from the Indo-European languages.

The spectre of knowledge of the author is admirable, not speaking about his ideas – some of them overtook their time. There is only very limited set of his formulations, which can be supplemented or corrected. E.g. on pp. 16–17 he uses twice the term Caucasian languages, but in reality it is not the only genetic unit, but two language families, Kartvelian = South Caucasian and North Caucasian. It is possible to speak about the only Caucasian *Sprachbund*, but together with Armenian, Ossetic and Karačai-Balkar. If the author mentions some language

families as members of the hypothetical Nostratic macro-phylum (p. 16), his example Semitic should be replaced by Afroasiatic. The very valuable part of the chapter V devoted to the parallel processes between the Romance and Slavic language could be supplemented by several useful publications of Vít Boček (2010, 2012, 2014, 2019), devoted just to this contact situation. In any case, the reader has in hands a new masterpiece of the old master, who produces his fresh ideas already more than incredible 60 years!

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Summary

A new book devoted to the comparative linguistics, written in a general perspective

The newest book of the renowned Polish linguist Leszek Bednarczuk summarizes his ideas in the field of comparative, areal and typological linguistics and brings some of his original ways out.

Keywords: language, speech, communication, word, relation.