

Gerhard Stickel

Wstęp / Einführung / Introduction

Wielce szanowni Goście, drodzy Przyjaciele i Koledzy,

podczas ubiegłorocznej konferencji w Helsinkach przyjęliśmy z wielką radością propozycję naszego polskiego kolegi Walerego Pisarka dotyczącą przeprowadzenia tegorocznego sympozjum EFNIL w Warszawie. To właśnie dzięki olbrzymim staraniom gospodarza, którym jest Rada Języka Polskiego, możemy obradować w tej wspaniałej sali.

Moje podziękowania składam więc na ręce przewodniczącego Rady, pana profesora Markowskiego dziękując za gościnę i serdeczne słowa powitania.

Nie chcę jednak dłużej męczyć Państwa moją polską wymową i dlatego też będę kontynuować moje przemówienie w językach, które nie tylko ja, ale również wielu moich kolegów zna lepiej niż język polski.¹

(Zunächst auf Deutsch. Dies wird den Sprechern anderer Sprachen auch eine Gelegenheit bieten, Ihre Vorurteile über die phonetischen Eigenschaften der deutschen Sprache zu prüfen oder zu festigen.)

Mein besonderes Willkommen gilt Herrn Tadeusz Deszkiewicz von der Kanzlei des Präsidenten der Republik Polen, der uns eine Botschaft des Präsidenten überbracht und verlesen hat. Wir fühlen uns sehr geehrt und sind dankbar für die

¹ Sehr verehrte Gäste, liebe Kollegen und Freunde, bei unserer Tagung vor einem Jahr in Helsinki haben wir mit großer Freude das Angebot unseres polnischen Kollegen Walery Pisarek angenommen, die diesjährige Tagung von EFNIL hier in Warschau durchzuführen. Dank der sorgfältigen Vorbereitung des Rada Języka Polskiego (RADA), unseres Gastgebers, können wir uns nun hier in diesem schönen Saal versammeln und arbeiten. Mein Gruß und Dank gilt deshalb zunächst dem Präsidenten des RADA, Herrn Professor Markowski, für die Gastfreundschaft und seine freundlichen Willkommensworte. Um Sie nicht weiter mit schlechter polnischer Aussprache zu belästigen, möchte ich in Sprachen fortfahren, die mir und vielen meiner EFNIL-Kollegen vertrauter sind.

Honourable guests, dear colleagues and friends, at our conference in Helsinki last year, we accepted with great pleasure the offer of our Polish colleague Walery Pisarek to hold this year's EFNIL conference in Warsaw. Thanks to the careful preparations of our host, the Council for the Polish Language (RADA), we can now assemble and work in this beautiful hall. Therefore, my greetings and thanks go first of all to Professor Markowski, the President of the Council, for his hospitality and kind words of welcome. In order to not offend you further with my bad Polish pronunciation, I would like to continue in languages more familiar to me and many of my EFNIL colleagues.

Willkommensworte des Herrn Präsidenten. Bitte, Herr Deszkiewicz, übermitteln Sie Herrn Präsidenten Duda unseren großen Dank für seine Botschaft. Wir können ihm versichern, dass die polnischen Mitglieder unserer Organisation mit uns vereint sind in dem Bemühen, zur Bewahrung der Nationalsprachen in Europa und der gesamten europäischen Sprachenvielfalt beizutragen.

Ich grüße auch die Vertreterin der Polnischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Frau Prof. Elżbieta Frąckowiak. Wir freuen uns, Gäste dieser ehrwürdigen Akademie sein zu dürfen, und danken Ihnen für Ihre Grußadresse.

Dankbar sind wir auch Herrn Dr. Mateusz Werner, dem stellvertretenden Direktor des Nationalen Kulturzentrums, für seine Unterstützung der Tagungsorganisation und sein heutiges Grußwort.

Mit Dank begrüße ich auch die beiden Vertreter der Europäischen Kommission, Herrn Filip Majcen, Direktor im Generaldirektorat für Übersetzung, und Herrn Javier Hernández Saseta, den Leiter der Sektion für Mehrsprachigkeit des Generaldirektorats für Dolmetschen. Als europäische Linguisten unterstützen wir schon seit langem die sprachpolitischen Initiativen der Kommission. In diesen schweren Zeiten, in denen die Kommission mit mehreren großen Problemen befasst ist, halten wir es für besonders wichtig, die Europäische Sprachenvielfalt als wesentliche Bedingung für die kulturelle Vielfalt Europas auf der politischen Agenda zu halten. Wir sind deshalb Herrn Majcen und Herrn Hernández Saseta sehr dankbar für ihre ermutigenden Worte.

Als besonderer Gast nimmt eine Vertreterin des Schweizer Instituts für Mehrsprachigkeit in Fribourg an unserer Tagung teil: Willkommen, Frau Dr. Coray. Wir hoffen auf eine engere Zusammenarbeit mit ihrem Institut.

Ich grüße auch zwei Kolleginnen vom Institut der koreanischen Sprache in Seoul, Frau Dr. Heewon Jung und Frau Dr. Hyejin Hong. Wir hoffen auf einen fruchtbaren Austausch von Informationen über die derzeitige Sprachenpolitik in Europa und Korea.

Unsere Konferenz hat offensichtlich auch das Interesse von Wissenschaftlern aus der akademischen Region gefunden. Ich grüße auch diese Gäste.

Und natürlich heiße ich auch die Delegierten unserer Mitgliedsinstitutionen willkommen. Eigentlich, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen, sind Sie keine Gäste. Schließlich ist es unsere gemeinsame Tagung.

Lassen Sie mich nun eine kurze Einführung in das Thema dieser Tagung geben, und dies auf Englisch, um Teilnehmern (und Lesern), die weder mit Polnisch noch mit Deutsch vertraut sind, den Zugang zu erleichtern.

At our General Assembly in Helsinki, we decided the general theme of the next conference – “Stereotypes and linguistic prejudices in Europe” – in agreement with its Polish hosts. It is of course a delicate subject for two reasons, a scientific one and an emotional one. *Stereotypes* and *prejudices* are defined and used as terms in various ways by different sciences and schools of research. More

detailed and precise information on this is provided by some of the expert guest speakers who are taking part in our conference.²

As working definitions in EFNIL we agreed to use *stereotype* to refer to a generalising opinion or belief shared by members of a society (or part of it) concerning a group of people, or individuals as members of a group. We use the term *prejudice* to refer to the explicit validation of stereotypes. From a European perspective we concentrate within the context of the conference on opinions and beliefs common in our own countries concerning other countries and their people (heterostereotypes) and our own countries and their citizens, including minorities (autostereotypes). As linguists and philologists – as most of us are – we focus our attention on the verbal expressions of stereotypes and prejudices in our various languages. We know that languages are not only a way of establishing understanding and cooperation between human beings, but can also express contempt, detestation or even hatred towards other people. They are also the most important medium between members of our own society for transmitting prejudice against other people.

Stereotypes and prejudices concerning the languages spoken in other countries and our own national language(s) and its/their varieties – which are common in our countries – are an interesting special case. Stereotypical opinions about other languages certainly have an influence on the choice of foreign languages learnt at school and thus on the future of European linguistic diversity.

We learn from the experts that stereotypes can hardly be avoided, because they are a cognitive means of generalising and typifying which help us to structure our amorphous reality and to communicate about it. We should beware of them, because they are always simplifications. Prejudices, however – that is, stereotypes which express and spread negative attitudes towards other groups, including nations and their members – are dangerous. They hamper our encounters with real people, because they confuse our orientation both within our own society and towards other groups and should, therefore, be avoided.

This leads to the second reason why stereotypes and especially prejudices – independently of how we ultimately define them – are a difficult subject. Most of them are unpleasant or hurtful for those to whom they refer and who become aware of them. They cause misunderstandings, often antipathies, between different social groups, including European nations. They are, therefore, also relevant for us as members of different nations and could lead, even at a conference like this, to offence. Precisely because of that, we are taking a risk in presenting and discussing stereotypes and prejudices at this conference. Prejudices, their causes and forms, must be revealed and analysed, so that we can see through them and

² See the articles by Virginie Mamadouh, Bernd Six, Klaus Reichert, Hans Henning Hahn and Jerzy Bartmiński. I would like to take this opportunity to thank these guest speakers for their contributions to the conference and to this volume.

learn how to handle them. We hope that through this will not only gain scientific insights, but also contribute to improving communication and understanding between our nations.

In our preparation for the conference, we asked our members to take part in a small poll. We hoped to gain a broad preliminary overview of the stereotypes and prejudices which are widespread in our countries concerning other countries and their inhabitants, and our own countries and their inhabitants. Unfortunately, only one third of our members took part in this poll. Therefore, the answers to the questionnaire will not be summarised and presented here. Several colleagues who actively participated in the poll have extended and transformed their answers in their contributions to the conference. Their presentations are also recorded in this volume.

Reading the responses, I noticed among other things that stereotypical opinions and their corresponding expressions refer remarkably often to neighbouring countries and their inhabitants, or other regions and ethnic groups within an individual country. This is especially striking in the answers from countries or regions where the same language or closely related languages are being spoken, as for instance in Austria and Germany, the Netherlands and the Nordic countries. Apparently social and linguistic proximity is no barrier to prejudice. We learn more about this from our colleagues in their reports. It is, by the way, a familiar experience for someone who has lived in a rural area, where it quickly becomes obvious that especially persistent prejudices about each other are held by the inhabitants of neighbouring villages. As a layman in social psychology, I still do not understand the reason for this; I therefore look forward to hearing explanations from the experts.

In terms of methodological interest, I would also like to also mention the responses from our colleagues at the Polish Language Council. They, obviously, concerned themselves in detail with the linguistic expression of stereotypes and prejudices. To do this, they gathered detailed lists of collocations of names of countries and their inhabitants together with adjectival, nominal and sentential attributes; collocations that are in frequent use. In this way they have studied ways of expressing stereotypes that are widespread in their own society. As to the other answers to the little poll, the data exists in digital form. It will not be published at present, but can be made available for research purposes.

Two aspects of stereotypes and prejudices could not be sufficiently considered, in my view, in the preparation of the conference: the difference between old and new stereotypes, and experiences and projects in combatting prejudices. Concerning the history of stereotypes, it must be stated that some of them have been handed down for a long time from one generation to the next, often as part of a literary tradition, and still influence our attitudes towards other nations and their citizens. On the other hand, new stereotypes develop, perhaps because of new experiences with the 'others'. A German prejudice against France and the

French people is a prominent example. It was the stereotypical image of France as the arch-enemy (“Erbfeind”) that determined the attitude of my grandparents’ generation and that, fortunately, was replaced in due course after the last war by the new stereotype of the French as our best friends in Europe. Of course, neither the old nor the new stereotype was or is held by all Germans, but by a considerable proportion of them. It is certainly interesting and important to study how persistent such old stereotypes are and which of them are superseded by new ones, as in the German-French example. By studying this, we could also learn about the processes and means by which negative stereotypes, i.e. prejudices, can be successfully analysed and overcome. Therefore, I hope that in at least some of the contributions to this conference the aspects of the relative age of prejudices and the means to overcome them can also be discussed.

Let me now conclude this introduction with my best wishes for informative and stimulating presentations and discussions and with repeated thanks to our hosts, especially to Dr. Kłosińska and her colleagues and assistants. The conference has only begun, but you can judge from the fact that we all have come here that your preparatory work has been very successful.

Thank you, Merci, Danke, Dziękuję.

Bibliographical information

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