

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### ABOUT THE LINKS BETWEEN PHRASEOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY AT AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF LINGUISTICS

On April 7–10, an international conference of linguistics, Slavofraz 2016: Phraseologie und (naive) Psychologie, took place in Austria.

The conference venue was Graz, the second largest town in Austria and also a university town. The second oldest of the universities, Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz, currently enrolls about 30,000 students, making it the second largest in Austria after the University of Vienna.

The organiser of the conference was the Institute of Slavic Studies, established in 1811, which makes it one of the oldest of the kind in German-language cultural space. Besides Russian, mainly South Slavic languages are taught, above all, for historical and geographical reasons.

It was the first time that scholars from different countries assembled under the name of Slavofraz. The idea was born in Ljubljana a few years ago, as a kind of equivalent to Europhras, the international society of phraseology. It was decided to organise the first Slavofraz in Graz as Agnieszka Bedkowska-Kopczyk and Heinrich Pfandl from the Institute of Slavic Studies agreed to take it upon themselves.

Slavofraz 2016 opened with a round table discussion, moderated by Peter Grzybek (Graz), with scholars from different countries as participants: Agnieszka Bedkowska-Kopczyk (Graz), Natalya Bragina (Moscow), Wolfgang Eismann (Graz), Valery Mokienko (St Petersburg), and Alexei Shmelev (Moscow). The main topics focused on the concepts and theories announced as keywords of the conference: how are psychology and cognitive processes connected in phraseology; what is the role of popular naïve theories and is this approach justified; where is the line between naïve and scientific etymology; relations between physiology and psychology on the example of figurative language, etc.

I would like to highlight the topic discussed by Wolfgang Eismann, professor emeritus from the University of Graz, who, on the basis of German cultural space, explained the contradictions that appear when trying to find equivalents to terms; so, for example, it is difficult to translate the German term *Völkerpsychologie*, as the English term *folk psychology* is misleading. The research object of *Völkerpsychologie* is Hegelian *Volksgeist* (another German term for which is *Volksseele*). In terms of phraseology it is supposed to mean that the psychological motivation of idioms and proverbs in different languages is common, yet the imagery is individual. Eismann also pointed to the opposing viewpoints from different periods (e.g. Kleinpaul), according to which people as such cannot understand the existence of *psyche*, and actually everything is included in the deep structures of the language, which finds the most expressive manifestation in proverbs and idioms.

During the three conference days, about 60 scholars from 16 countries took the floor. Most of the presentations took place in parallel sections. The presentations can generally be divided into two: the linguistic expression of, on the one hand, the concepts such as *psyche* (*soul*, *dusha*) or physiological processes related to feelings and emotions, and,



*Round table discussion: (from the left) Peter Grzybek, Valery Mokienko, Wolfgang Eismann, Agnieszka Bedkowska-Kopczyk, Natalya Bragina, and Alexei Shmelev. Photograph Anneli Baran 2016.*

on the other hand, that of intellectual ability, including the opposites clever/stupid, in phraseological units. An attempt was made, by drawing on linguistic corpora and other linguistic collections, to analyse, above all, the proportion of naïve psychology in figurative language units. It was repeatedly mentioned, though, that dictionaries and everyday language use are two different things. Most of today's people know nothing about the etymology of set expressions and therefore use them as everyday linguistic forms. It has been found that in different languages expressions based on emotions are interpreted quite differently, depending on age, education, gender, etc. The scholars who up to now have been studying mainly literary sources and dictionaries repeatedly stated that more attention should be paid to the usage of phraseology in everyday speech, including communication in the internet environment. Those interested in the topic can find the conference programme with abstracts at <http://slavofraz.uni-graz.at/de/konferenz/>.

The conference in Graz provided a good opportunity for the assembling and a joint seminar of the new working group, *Meteo-Prognostic Paroemias*, established last autumn. The seminar brought together researchers from Austria, Slovenia, and Estonia, whose field of studies covers weather sayings, which have their role in different languages even today. Unfortunately, there is no systematic approach to this kind of paroemias today, and terminology creation and classification are especially confusing.

The working group is aimed, above all, at advancing the studies, by assembling scholars investigating this field, organising seminars and conferences, publishing research results, etc. The next meeting of the working group will take place at the Estonian Literary Museum in Tartu, Estonia.

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