

Axiological ambiguity of the CONTAINER schema in multimodal discourses of collective memory

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The present paper addresses two of the conference themes: language and culture; and discourse and cognition. It looks into the interplay between language and landscape architecture in the construal of collective memory in the city of Poznań. It is inspired by research, which integrates the analysis of different modalities/ modes of communication and in this way extends the application of metaphor, metonymy and image schemata beyond language use (Caballero 2014 and 2016, Dancygier 2015, 2016, see also the articles in Forceville – Urios-Aparisi 2009, Pinar-Sanz 2015 and Romano – Porto 2016). Another theoretical source for the present study is the work on the axiology of image schemata, in which Krzeszowski (1997: 280) shows that “valuation is an integral part of conceptualization”. For example, the CONTAINER schema maybe viewed from two opposing perspectives either as carrying positive or negative polarity. It is positive within the frame, for which shelter is its prototypical instantiation, or negative when framed as a prison. The third and last source for this study is a rich body of research into the discourse on collective memory (e.g. Golka 2009, Seymour – Camino 2017).

The aim of this study is to explore how image schema of CONTAINER interacts with a number of other schemata (LINK, PART-WHOLE, BLOCKAGE) in the construction of social inclusion/exclusion in the discourses of collective memory. The case study is based on an analysis of three types of sources: (1) the memorial landscape of a reconstructed Jewish cemetery in Poznań, (2) the press representation of the opening of the memorial, and (3) individual and focus interviews with the inhabitants of Poznań about the city's past. The results of the analysis show that similar conceptual processes underlie the verbal and the spatial construal of the self and other dichotomy. When integrated with a specific axiologically loaded framing of either prison or shelter as the prototypical CONTAINER, it can produce two opposing construals of the position of the Jewish past in the city collective memory. One, in which the Jews are viewed as peripheral, barred from the public memorial practices of the majority community; and another, in which the remembering about their presence in the city is a part of the everyday life of its contemporary inhabitants. Thus the inherent ambiguity between various CONTAINER frames may give rise to opposing representations of the past.

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