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The concept of “head“ in the 17th and 18th century Croatian dictionaries

Cognitive linguistics thesis that human body has primacy in experiencing reality is confirmed in many academic research articles concerning contemporary Croatian language. However, cognitive theory is quite neglected in Croatian historical linguistics because of its orientation on the traditional approach. Since the 16th century, whole series of dictionaries had been published, which now serve as a rich source of conceptual metaphors, metonymies and phrasemes. Those bilingual and multilingual dictionaries reveal connections between Croatian and other languages such as Latin, German, Hungarian and Italian, as well as their influence on Croatian language. Although many studies in contact linguistics focus on the influence of mid-european languages on Croatian, this area is still rather unexplored from the cognitive linguistics point of view.

Human cognitive processing power produces new metaphors, metonymies and phrasemes, but a large amount of old forms are still alive in Croatian, even after several centuries. Continuity of Croatian language in this area is supposed to be clearly visible when the number of old metaphors, metonymies and phrasemes is compared to the number of contemporary forms. The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of metaphors, metonymies and phrasemes found in the 17th and 18th century Croatian dictionaries, to provide an insight into the influence of neighbour languages in Croatia's geo-political surroundings, and to compare the historical with the contemporary status of Croatian language from this point of view.

For the purpose of our comparison we will analyze examples of the term “head”, found in dictionaries and handbooks published from the 17th to the end of the 18th century, providing abstract ideas through metaphorical expressions. Our sources are mostly dictionaries, but also other linguistic editions such as guides and handbooks written by Faust Vrančić, Bartol Kašić, Jakov Mikalja, Juraj Habdelić, Ivan Belostenec, Andrija Jambrešić, Blaž Tadijanović and Josip Jurin. This corpus will be compared with the contemporary situation in regard to recent studies of metaphors, metonymies and phrasemes in the standard Croatian language.