Summary

Around the Concept of 'Loss'.
A Semantic Analysis of the Selected Language Verb Units

The dissertation presents a semantic analysis of the selected language units based on the word *stracić* 'lose', as well as of several expressions related to them both formally and semantically, such as *utracić* or *zatracić* (both glossed as 'lose' too), or the verbs whose status as separate lexical units may raise doubts, e.g. *natracić*, *potracić* and *przetracić* (all derivatives of *stracić*). The analysis also accounts for a number of verbs which in modern lexicographic descriptions are regarded as near synonyms of *stracić*, namely *zmarnować* (≈'waste'), *przepuścić*, *roztrwonić* (≈'squander'), or related to them *zaprzepaścić* (≈'forfeit') and *przepaść* (≈'be lost, disappear').

The author distinguishes the relevant language units and carries out their analysis according to the assumptions of reductionist semantics within the structuralist tradition, which sets a clear boundary between synchronic and diachronic description of language, as well as between semantics and pragmatics. The thesis is therefore a continuation of research conducted within this trend of linguistics, the main representatives (as well as initiators) of which in contemporary Polish research are Andrzej Bogusławski, Anna Wierzbicka, Maciej Grochowski, Magdalena Danielewiczowa, Jadwiga Wajszczuk, Zofia Zaron and Jolanta Chojak, together with their students.

In the dissertation, units of language are understood as separate entities (continuous or discontinuous) to which (in most cases) a single meaning is assigned. As regards valency slots, they are treated as immanent parts of expressions, unlike lexemes filling these slots in an utterance. The procedure of language-unit delimitation aims at identifying exactly those elements, the detachment of which would result in the unit losing its semantic properties.

All the units identified in the thesis are then subjected to semantic analysis, which is based – in addition to the test sentences constructed by the

author – on the material from the National Corpus of the Polish Language (NKJP), as well as on other texts posted on the internet or published in print. Analysing the usage of expressions, on the one hand, was aimed at the proper delimitation of language units, and on the other hand, it was helpful in establishing the relevant semantic invariants.

Since most of the described units are related to the concept of *mieć* 'have', which is comprised in their semantic structure, part of the thesis is devoted to the analysis of the selected units with this verb as their constitutive component. The author also resolves the problem of propositional arguments – complements of *mieć*, recognising them either as the result of an operation, cf. e.g. *ktoś jest pewien, że_* 'someone is sure/certain that_' → *pewność, że_* 'certainty that _' → *ktoś ma pewność, że_* 'someone has certainty that_', or as part of a unit, cf. *mieć nadzieję, że_* 'have the hope that_', *mieć szansę na coś* 'have a chance to_'. This influenced the decisions as to the status of abstract expressions accompanying the units that are the main subject of the work, cf. *mieć pewność* 'have certainty' → *stracić pewność* 'lose certainty'.

As a result of the proposed analyses, the author distinguishes three language units, namely: /a/ [$ktoś_i$] *ma* [$coś_j$] '[$someone_i$] has [$something_j$]', representing an elementary concept, and two other units that can be explicated by means of simpler concepts: /b/ [$ktoś_i/coś_j$] *ma* [$coś_k$] '[$someone_i/$ $something_j$] has [$something_k$]', related to the concept of "part of_", and /c/ [$ktoś_i$] *ma* [$kogoś_j$] '[$someone_i$] has [$someone_j$]', reflecting interpersonal relationships.

The analysis of the units constituted by *stracić* does not include lexemes showing formal similarity to it, but not related to the concept of 'loss', such as: *stracić (kogoś) z oczu* 'lose (someone) out of sight', *stracić głowę (w jakiejś sytuacji)* 'be off one's head (in some situation)' or *stracić głowę dla (kogoś)* 'lose one's head for (someone)'. As a result of the analysis, the author distinguishes and defines the following language units: /a/ [$ktoś_i$] $stracił_1$ [$coś_j$] '[$someone_i$] $lost_1$ [$something_j$]', related to the concept of "having something"; /b/ [$ktoś_i$] *stracił* [$kogoś_j$] '[$someone_i$] lost [$someone_j$]', carrying information about the termination of the relationship; /c/ [$ktoś_i$] $stracił_2$ [$coś_j$] '[$someone_i$] $lost_2$ [$something_j$]', referring only to parts of the body. What is characteristic of all the units based on the word *stracić* is a negative evaluation of the described event, present in their semantic structure.

The prefixed verbs, analysed by the author, form a rather diverse and heterogeneous group, including the units synonymous with $stracić_1$ *(coś)*

'lose$_1$ (something)' as well with *stracić (kogoś)* 'lose (someone)', namely [ktoś$_i$] *utracił* [coś$_j$] '[someone$_i$] lost [something$_j$]' and [ktoś$_i$] *utracił* [kogoś$_j$] '[someone$_i$] lost [someone$_j$]', which are stylistic variants of the former.

The unit [ktoś$_i$] *przetracił* [coś$_j$] is regarded as a separate expression, differing from [ktoś$_i$] *stracił* [coś$_j$] '[someone$_i$] lost [something$_j$]' in that it has additional quantitative information (thus requiring a complement in plural) and a narrower scope of reference, which results from its selectional restrictions (the accusative position may be filled only by NPs referring to money). An independent unit of language is also [ktoś$_i$/coś$_j$] *zatracił* [coś$_k$] '[someone$_i$/something$_j$] lost [something$_k$]', conveying the information that someone/something no longer has some feature (this expression cannot be defined as 'lose a feature', though).

The author interprets the derivative verbs *natracić* and *potracić* as the results of operations on the unit [ktoś$_i$] *stracił$_1$* [coś$_j$] – the former as a result of the accumulative operation (cf. *opowiadać* 'to tell' → *naopowiadać* ≈'to tell many things'), and the latter – of the distributive operation (cf. *otwierać* 'open' → *pootwierać* ≈'open many objects one by one'). They do not constitute separate language units, so there is no need to form independent definitions for them. In each case, the meaning of the verb *stracić$_1$* is enriched with the content of the prefix: for *po-* it is multiplicity of events and their non-simultaneity (in which the author follows Andrzej Bogusławski); and for *na-* it is the aggregation of partial acts (in accordance with Henryk Wróbel's definition).

The author gives also characteristics of a number of units that in lexicographic descriptions are typically associated with *stracić* (for their etymological rather than semantic relatedness), such as [ktoś$_i$] *wytracił* [kogoś$_j$] '[someone$_i$] executed [someone$_j$ <plural>]', [ktoś$_i$] *wytracił$_1$* [coś$_j$: *prędkość*] '[someone$_i$] reduced [something$_j$: speed]' or [ktoś$_i$] *zatracił się w* [czymś$_j$] '[someone$_i$] lost himself in [something$_j$]'. The analysis of such items just confirmed the intuitive assumptions as to the lack of semantic correlation between these expressions in contemporary Polish.

A description of the verbs that in contemporary dictionaries are mentioned in the synonymous definitions of *stracić* (often due to their typically identical complements) includes such units as [ktoś$_i$] *roztrwonił* [coś$_j$], [ktoś$_i$] *przepuścił* [coś$_j$] ≈'[someone$_i$] squandered [something$_j$]', [ktoś$_i$] *zaprzepaścił* [coś$_j$] ≈'[someone$_i$] forfeited [something$_j$]', [coś$_i$] *przepadło* [komuś$_j$] '[something$_i$] is lost for [somebody$_j$]', as well as the units based on the constitutive element

zmarnować 'waste': [ktoś$_i$] *zmarnował* [coś$_j$] '[someone$_i$] wasted [something$_j$]',
[ktoś$_i$] *zmarnował* [coś$_j$: *czas*] *na* [coś$_k$] '[someone$_i$] wasted [something$_j$: time]
on [something$_k$]', [ktoś$_i$] *zmarnował* [kogoś$_j$] ≈'[someone$_i$] ruined [someone's$_j$]
opportunities / career' and [ktoś$_i$] *zmarnował się* ≈'[somebody$_i$] languished'.

The effect of the analysis conducted by the author is, first, a description of the selectional restrictions of the identified language units (specific constraints on the complements, resulting from the semantic properties of these units), and second, formulation of the semantic representations of the concepts pertaining to them (in the form of multi-element and hierarchically ordered explications). In the definitions, the presupposed content (not covered by the negation applied to the verb) and information under the assertion (which is the main *dictum* within the scope of negation) are indicated separately.

Also, the author describes a certain type of transformation, namely transformation of the units into the so-called decausative constructions conveying information that what happened was not anyone's goal – it could have happened of its own accord or it could have been caused by something, yet – in the latter case – it was an accidental result (even of the intended action). The exponent of this operation is *się* 'itself', cf. [ktoś$_i$] *zmarnował* [coś$_j$] '[someone$_i$] wasted [something$_j$]' → [coś$_i$] *zmarnowało się* '[something$_i$] was wasted' (lit. '[something$_i$] wasted itself').

The author comments on non-obligatory dative phrases, too, interpreted as *dativus ethicus* and *dativus possesivus*, cf. *zmarnować* [coś$_j$] [*komuś] 'waste [something$_i$] [*at someone's expense]', which may also accompany the unit *zaprzepaścić* [coś$_j$] 'forfeit [something$_i$]'.