

Katarzyna Dzwirek*

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9401-2421>

WHAT DO WE CALL THE CHILDREN? FAMILIAL TERMS OF ADDRESS IN POLISH AND ENGLISH

Keywords: terms of address, children, cultural scripts, individualism, collectivism, teaching Polish as a foreign language

Abstract. The paper addresses cultural differences between Polish and English as they pertain to familial terms of address. Using corpus data, I demonstrate that Polish parents frequently address their children using hypocoristic forms of the terms *syn* ‘son’, *córka* ‘daughter’ and *dziecko* ‘child’. These forms convey affection and emphasize familial ties. English parents, on the other hand, use children’s names, nicknames, or terms of endearment. I argue that these differences follow from underlying contrasts in cultural scripts: English individualism and Polish warmth.

1. CULTURAL VALUES

Culture is often called the fifth skill in foreign language teaching (in addition to speaking, listening comprehension, reading and writing). This is especially true when the target culture is of a different type to the native culture of the learners. Cultures have been classified in various ways: individualistic vs. interdependent/collectivist, high context vs. low context (Hall 1976), etc. These differences are conveyed in a multitude of different ways in speech, body language, facial expressions, etc. This paper addresses cross-cultural differences in Polish (a culture typically classified as interdependent and high context) and English (individualistic) use of familial forms of address, that is, kinship terms (*mother*, *father*) and kinship diminutives or hypocoristic forms (*mom*, *daddy*). The data discussed in the paper comes from the Polish National Corpus (NKJP), the British National Corpus (BNC), and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA).

* dzwirek@uw.edu, University of Washington, Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, box 354335, Seattle, WA 98125.

I argue that at the root of some key lexical gaps in English and the differences in familial forms of address in the two languages are contrasting values underlying each culture. Namely, “uniqueness/individuality” in English and “warmth” in Polish (and more broadly Slavic). The latter has been formulated by Wierzbicka (1999) as follows:

(1) **Polish “warmth” (*serdeczność*)**

[people think:]

it is good

if a person says/does something

because this person feels something good toward another person

(Wierzbicka 1999, p. 255)

[everybody knows:]

often when people feel something good towards someone else

they do something with their body at the same time

they want to do it

when they do it parts of their body touch parts of the other person’s body

because of this other people can know what those people feel

[people think: this is good]

(Wierzbicka 1999, pp. 253–254)

The explications in (1) state that in Polish culture expression of positive emotions towards others is “good”, something that should be communicated with both words and bodily actions. As Wierzbicka says:

What is “good” (from a Polish cultural point of view) is a spontaneous manifestation of “good feelings” towards another person (i.e. of interpersonal “warmth”, “*serdeczność*”)

Wierzbicka (1999, p. 253)

That the English speaking people place a high value on their individuality is very well documented (e.g. Nisbett (2003), Markus and Kitayama (1994)), below is my representation of this value in Wierzbicka’s NSM.

(2) **English individuality**

[everybody knows:]

I am not like other people

I am me

no person is like me

[people think: this is good]

How are forms of address related to the cultural values in (1) and (2)? Wierzbicka (1992) argues that expressive derivation as applied to personal names demonstrates the high value that Polish speakers place on interpersonal relationships. Her analysis of soft and hard stem short forms and suffixes *-ka*, *-ek*, *-eńka*, *-eczka*, *-cia*, *-uś*, *-unia/-unio*, *-ulka/-ulek*, *-ik*, *-usik*, *-qtko*, *-ch*, *-cho*, *-chu*, *-cha*,

-ucha, -chna, -uchna, and -uška assigns a unique meaning to each form, but all the explications center on good feelings (“I feel something good toward you”).

Wierzbicka (1992, p. 236) also analyzes English family relation terms and groups them into three categories: child-source family terms (*Mummy*, *Daddy*, *Auntie*, *Granny*), non-childish but intimate (*Mum* and *Dad*), and non-childish, non-intimate family terms (*Mother* and *Father*). What is striking about the English terms, from the Polish perspective, is the lack of adult-source terms for the children. In other words, English speakers typically do not address their children as “son” or “daughter”, while Polish speakers do so frequently.

This striking lexical gap in English as compared not only to Polish but to all of the Slavic languages, Romance languages, several Germanic languages, and in fact most of the languages of the world, is what this paper is about.

In the rest of the paper I discuss the Polish hypocoristic forms based on *córka* ‘daughter’, *syn* ‘son’, and *dziecko* ‘child’. I focus on their meanings, frequencies, and the fact that they exhibit both archaic and innovative morphological properties. I discuss the corresponding English forms and come back to cultural values as an explanation at the end.

2. DAUGHTERS

The basic word for daughter in Polish is *córka*, whose vocative *córko* occurs 193 times in the Polish National Corpus (NKJP)¹. A brief note on my material gathering methodology here: in informal speech both the vocative and the nominative can be used as forms of address in Polish, e.g. *Marysiu/Marysia*, *mamo/mama*, *Jurku/Jurek*, etc. For the purposes of this paper I focus only on the vocatives, as they are, for the most part, used uniquely as forms of address, and thus are clear examples of speaking **to** rather than **about** children.

The basic form *córka* is non-childish and non-intimate and does not seem to convey either positive or negative emotions, it is a form that could be used in addressing small children, but most likely would be directed at older children or adults.

- (3) Mało ze sobą rozmawiamy, **córko**. Mało. Jestem taki zajęty. Tyle mam pracy.

We talk too little, daughter. Too little. I am so busy. I have so much work.

The most frequent hypocoristic form of *córka* is *córeczka*, whose vocative form *córeczko* is found in the NKJP 284 times. It can be used towards young children and adults.

¹ *Córka* is morphologically a diminutive. The form *córa*, does still exist vestigially in Polish, but *córka* is the neutral term for daughter.

- (4) Martuniu, mnie też jest ciężko. Daj mi, **córeczko**, jeszcze jedne piwo z lodówki.
 Martha-dim, things are also hard for me. Give me, *córeczko*, one more beer from the
 fridge.

According to Wierzbicka (1992, p. 278), who discusses it when it is added to personal names, the suffix *-eczka* means:

- (5) *-eczka*
 I feel something good toward you
 of the kind that people feel toward children (e.g. *Haneczka*)

Wierzbicka (1992, p. 278)

This seems to fit *córeczka* perfectly, since the concept of a child is at the root of the meaning of daughter, but is more problematic when we consider another frequent family term, namely, *cioteczka* ‘auntie’ from *ciotka* ‘aunt’. Since an aunt is prototypically an adult (though there can be children who are aunts), I would suggest that the definition of *-eczka* be amended to include the following statement:

- (6) *-eczka*
 I feel something good toward you
 of the kind that people feel toward children (e.g. *córeczka*)
 or that children feel toward people and things they feel something good toward
 (e.g. *cioteczka*)

This would also account for the fact that many of the common nouns in *-eczka* have a distinctly child-sourced/-directed feel: *buleczka* “lit. little bun”, *chusteczka* ‘lit. little handkerchief’, *buteleczka* “lit. little bottle”, *bajeczka* “lit. little fairy tale”, etc.

The next form in terms of frequency in NKJP is *córus* (72 times), illustrated in (7).

- (7) Rozpakowała się, **córus**? – zapytała mama, stawiając w pokoju dwie siaty.
 Did you unpack, *córus*? – asked mom, putting down two bags.

Córus is a most curious word, as the suffix *-uś* is typically found with masculine stems, mostly personal names (e.g. *Wojtuś*, *Jacuś*), but also *tatuś* from *tata* ‘daddy’, *synuś* from *syn* “son” and *dziadziuś* from *dziadek* “grandfather”. In fact, *córus* ‘sweet daughter’, *matuś* (29 examples in NKJP) ‘mommy’, *mamuś* (122) ‘mommy’, and *babuś* (3) ‘grannie’ are the only feminine common noun examples.

Since *-uś* in *córus* and *matuś/mamuś* does not ascribe any masculine properties to mother, daughter or grandma, and it does not trigger masculine agreement (*moja córus*), it is most likely not the same suffix found in the *-uś* masculine nouns (*Wojtuś*, *tatuś*), especially since Polish (unlike Russian) names and forms of address are sex-differentiated and there are no unisex suffixes (Wierzbicka 1992, p. 270).

In some ways this form resembles the Russian truncated vocative or neo-vocative (this is what Anstatt (2003) suggests). In Russian, the old Slavic vocative has been lost except for a few frozen forms, but a new vocative form has arisen since the mid-19th century (Parrott 2010, p. 212) for names and kinship terms ending in -a. In those forms the final -a is omitted, e.g. *mam* from *mama*, *Tan'* from *Tan'a*, *Saš* from *Saša* (Parrott 2010, p. 212), though final syllables can be truncated as well: *ma* (from *mama*), *pa* (from *papa*), *ba* (from *babuška* ‘granny’). In Russian this appears to be quite productive, though phonologically restricted to those forms which have a penultimately stressed nominative (Parrott 2010, p. 212).

Truncation of terms of address is not limited to Russian, but appears to be a common cross-linguistic phenomenon. Yokoyama (1994) proposed that truncation can be viewed as an iconic representation of shortening of interlocutor distance. Yokoyama cites Greek, Baltic and Indonesian as languages which use it as a mechanism to create more familiar terms of address. We do not need to look further than the English *ma*, *pa*, *sis*, *unc*, *bro*, *Pat*, *Chris*, etc., to see this tendency at work.

It is true that shortening the form of address is an indication of shorter interlocutor distance and closer relationships. In English, *Bob* is closer to us than *Robert* and *Robert* is closer than *Mr. Templeton*. But this is not the whole story. This is the case when we speak to adults. When we speak to children, typically, the longer the form is, the more affectionate it is: English *Bobby* is more likely to be used toward a small child than *Bob*, Polish *syn* ‘son’ is less affectionate than *synek*, which is less affectionate than *syneczek*. The more diminutive suffixes you pile up, the more closeness you convey. Given that one of the key functions of diminutives is to indicate a small size, I would argue that the fact that diminutives are prototypically used in child-directed speech arises from the universal human propensity/desire to make the world smaller, friendlier and more bearable for our children. We want our children to believe that their world is cozy and safe, using whatever resources our languages have.

English does not have too many diminutives, yet the ones it does have have not gone out of style for generations. Parents in 2019 still use words like *doggie* to make dogs less threatening, *blankie* to make a *blanket* more inviting, *auntie Sue* to make *aunt Sue* more appealing, etc. These forms are typically longer than their base forms (*dog*, *aunt*) and sound softer in some not easily definable way (*blankie* vs. *blanket*).

So it seems to me that Yokoyama’s model of iconic interlocutor distance needs to be amended to allow for child-directed speech and diminutives which convey greater closeness, and yet lengthen rather than shorten terms and forms of address. I would argue that *child-directed terms* tend to be longer and softer and express more affection and warmth, by making the common objects sound smaller, softer and sweeter. In Polish, calling someone *Asia* rather than *Joanna*

definitely shortens the interlocutor distance among adults, but parents would most likely call their *Joanna Asieńka* rather than *Asia* to convey more closeness and love. Eating a *kotlecik* rather than a *kotlet* ‘cutlet’ or *buleczka* rather than *bułka* ‘bun’ sounds much more appealing and manageable.

This brings us back to *córus*, which conveys both the softness inherent in *córusia* and the familiarity found in English *sis* or *unc*. It is an anomaly given all I have just said: it resembles the Russian truncation (*Saš, Tan'*), yet unlike the Russian neo-vocative it is not new, it sounds distinctly archaic and old-fashioned. According to Szymczak (1966) the forms *matus* and *córus* have been attested since Middle Polish (*Maryś* is found in Jan Kochanowski’s (1530–1584) poetry). Also unlike the truncation trend in Russian and English, in Polish this phenomenon is restricted to a single suffix (*-usia* → *-us*).

Following Zalewski’s (1963, p. 288) suggestion, I would like to claim that, given their limited scope, the feminine forms of address in *-us* (*córus*, *matus*, *mamuś*, *babuś* plus several personal names) are driven/triggered by analogy with familial terms like *tatus* ‘daddy’, *synuś* ‘lit. little son’, *dziadzius* ‘grandpa’, rather than the general cross-linguistic truncation-as-closeness trend.

The vocative *córciu* from *córcia* occurs in the NKJP 33 times. The suffix *-cia* is characterized by Wierzbicka (1992) as “affectionate and patronizing” (278) and when added to names is typically used by mothers and aunts, not by romantic partners. It is cheerful and playful but can be interpreted as patronizing (279).

- (8) Ewo! Moja **córciu** miła! Wróczę późno, a więc sama zabierz się do gotowania.

Ewa-voc. My dear *córciu*. I will be late back, so you get started on the cooking.

Córeńka is perhaps the most affectionate form of *córk*a. It occurs in NKJP 17 times. Wierzbicka characterizes the meaning of *-eńka* as not only containing the regular affection component (“I feel something good toward you”), but also an additional loving component (“I feel something good speaking to you.”)

- (9) Tylko ubierz się ciepło, **córeńko**. Noc ma być pogodna i mroźna.

Make sure you get dressed warmly, *córeńko*. The night is supposed to be clear and frosty.

There are several other forms of *córk*a which can be used as form of address: *córunka* (15 examples of voc. *córunkiu* in NKJP), *córuchna* (12 examples of voc. *córuchno*), *córusia* (voc. *córusiu*, 1 example in NKJP), *córulka* (jocular, not used as a form of address). Szymczak (1966, p. 42) also lists *córuńka*, but neither *córuńka* nor the vocative *córuńko* occurs in the NKJP.

To summarize, there are 8 common forms of *córk*a ‘daughter’, which are attested in the NKJP in the vocative and which provide evidence that Poles frequently address their daughters using hypocoristic forms of this familial term. Their meanings vary from affectionate, to very affectionate, to jocular, pitying, patronizing, etc. In contrast, English has no diminutive form of daughter and it is highly unlikely that English speakers address their daughters as “daughter” or “my dau-

ghter". The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) contains 7,293 occurrences of "my daughter" perusals of about 1000 tokens yielded no appellative uses.

3. SONS

Turning to sons, the basic Polish word is *syn*. Its vocative form *synu* occurs in the NKJP 1,531 times. Looking at the collocation clusters, we can eliminate about 500 locative uses (with which the vocative is syncretic), about 80 where the word is used in a prayer addressing Jesus (e.g. *Jezu, synu Boży* 'Jesus-voc., son-voc. God-gen'), and about 20 curses (e.g. *psi synu* 'dog-gen son-voc., i.e. son of the dog', *diabli synu* 'devil's son-voc., i.e. son of the devil'). There are also a number of examples, where *synu* is used by a priest to address a penitent or parishioner. This leaves approximately 900 vocative uses addressed to a male offspring. It is typically not used toward little boys. Used to address a small child it sounds as if the parent were trying to tell the boy to "man up", be brave, be daring.

- (10) Nie przejmuj się, **synu**. Wiesz, że zawsze byłem pobłażliwy.
Don't worry, *synu*. You know that I have always been lenient..

The form *synku* is found in NKJP 692 times. Of these 11 are locative uses found after prepositions *o*, *przy* and *w*. The level of affection expressed here is somewhere between that of *córko* and *córeczko*. Addressing someone as *córko* is much softer than *synu* since *córka* is a morphological and historical diminutive. As a result, *synku* sounds more affectionate than *córko* (which corresponds to *synu* in terms of order of derivation), but not as loving as *córeczko* since the morphological equivalent of *córeczka* is *syneczek*.

- (11) Brawo, **synku!** – Rzuciłem się w stronę Franka, który uśmiechając się od ucha do ucha, wracał do swojej zwykłej kolorystyki.
Bravo, *synku!* I hurried towards Frank who, grinning from ear to ear, was returning to his natural color.

Syneczek is a diminutive formed from *synek*, and thus a more affectionate form. Its vocative *syneczku* is found in NKJP 88 times. Its meaning is comparable to *córeczka* though perhaps a little more loving and small-children-directed, since there is a three step word formation here (*syn-synek-syneczek*) vs. a two-step derivation of *córka-córeczka*.

- (12) Powiedz, **syneczku**, co będziesz robił, gdy będziesz duży?
Tell me, *syneczku*, what will you do when you grow up?

All of the occurrences of *syneczku* in NKJP are vocative, even though, this form (like *synku*) is syncretic with the locative. This is indicative of the fact that even more than its feminine counterpart *-eczka*, *-eczek* is a very affectionate affix, characteristic of family or in-group speech, especially when added to names or family terms (e.g. *Jureczek* ‘Georgie’ from *Jurek/Jerzy*, *wujeczek* from *wujek* ‘uncle’). When added to common nouns, it is used primarily in child-directed speech (*człowieczek* ‘little person’, *domeczek* ‘little sweet house’, *jasieczek* ‘little small pillow’, *ganeczek* ‘little inviting porch’) meaning roughly “very sweet, non-threatening, small and lovely thing or person”. When it is attached to a familial term or a name, it is used primarily as a form of address. If a parent were to talk about the fact that they think about their son (*o syneczku*) or sit by their son (*przy syneczku*) using this form, they would sound soppy, overly sentimental or maudlin.

In contrast, the form *córeczce* (locative and dative of *córeczka*) is found in NKJP 146 times, showing that parents are more likely to speak **about** their daughters using this term than they are willing to speak **about** their sons using *syneczek*. One reason is the fact that *córeczka* is not quite as affectionate as *syneczek* due to it being the second order diminutive and thus more appropriate for discourse outside of the family, but gender norms are most likely another: it is more acceptable to talk about a daughter as a sweet, small, cuddly being in public than it is to talk that way about a son.

The form *synuś* is not exactly parallel to *córus* as *-uś* is the expected masculine diminutive suffix (e.g. *tatuś* ‘daddy’, *dziadziuś* ‘grandpa’, *Jacuś*). It occurs in NKJP 81 times, 32 of which are direct address uses.

- (13) No i cóż mu poradzisz, **synuś?** Ani jemu nie pomożesz, ani jego rodzinie
And what will you tell him, *synuś?* You cannot help him or his family.

Wierzbicka (1992) says that forms in *-uś* “evoke lovable delightful small creatures” and defines the meaning of *-uś* personal names as follows:

- (14) Forms in *-usia* or *-uś* (e.g. *Martusia*, *Wojtuś*)
I feel something good toward you
of the kind that people feel toward children
I imagine that looking at you, people feel something good

(Wierzbicka 1992, p. 281)

I think that Wierzbicka’s definition is right, even though most of the uses of vocative *synuś* in NKJP seem to be addressed to adult sons, where the “lovable, delightful, small creatures” image usually does not apply. But the definition is formulated in a way that applies to *synuś* too. Parents looking at their adult son, could feel something good: nostalgia for the small child he had been, pride or pity in how he turned out. It seems to me to be a compromise form: soft and affectionate but not as child-oriented as *syneczek* and thus often used toward adult sons.

The vocative of *synuś*, *synusiu* occurs in NKJP 5 times (5 uses are locative). Examples show that it can be addressed to both small and adult sons.

- (15) Proszę się oduczyć takiego rzucania śliniaka. Nie ma w ogóle mowy, żebyś tak robił.
 Oj mój ty **synusiu** kochany! Najpiękniejszy na świecie!
 Please stop throwing the bib, it is unacceptable! Oh, my beloved, most beautiful
synusiu!

In addition to the 5 appellatively used forms of *syn* discussed above there are several others: *synunio* (voc. *synuniu*), *syneniek* (voc. *syneńku*), *syncio* (voc. *synciu*), and *synulek* (voc. *synulku*). Szymczak (1966, p. 38) also lists the less common *synczek*, *synaczek*, *synuchna*, *szynuszek*, *synuleczek*, and *synkcio*. Thus, as in the case of daughters, Polish parents of sons have plenty of hypocoristic forms based on the root *syn* to address their offspring².

English speakers use *son* as a form of address much more frequently than daughter (which is not really saying much). When *son* is used towards the speaker's child it is often in the context of giving manly advice, as in the following examples from the Corpus of Contemporary American English.

- (16) ... and sent him back to school with the words, "Remember, **son**, for them it is a fight, for you it is life and death."

The BNC provides other examples which seem to be addressed to the speaker's child:

- (17) 'Well, **son**, how about it?' he asked, giving Philip the tray.

But in English, *son* is most often used as a form of address by older men in a position of authority towards younger men who are not their children (and who in turn would tend to address the older men as *sir*). This can occur in hierarchically structured groups such as the military. It can also be a patronizing put down, and has been used as such in the US by white men towards black men, no matter their respective ages.

The Corpus of Contemporary American English lists 2,707 occurrences of *sonny* (out of 425 million words). The BNC lists only 210 (out of 100 million words), and of the 50 examples provided, the vast majority are uses of *Sonny* as first name or nickname (spelled with a capital S): *Sonny Rollins*, *Sonny Ramphal*, *Sonny Bono*, etc. *Sonny* frequently co-occurs with *boy* (95 times in COCA), and can be used towards one's own children, as in (18), but also toward people who are not as in (19), while others are ambiguous without the context (20). It can also sound patronizing.

- (18) **Sonny boy**, can your father give you a piece of his personal advice?

² *Synalek* is a jocular form that is typically not used as a form of address, but can be used about a son who is perhaps being naughty or acting as a smarty-pants.

- (19) ... Jack Kennedy's ambition to be President. Behind his back Johnson called him “**sonny boy**”, sneered at his meager accomplishments in the House and Senate.
- (20) I couldn't even budge it. “You practice lifting that, **sonny boy**, and you'll become Charles Atlas” he laughed.

To summarize the discussion of son and daughter as familial terms of address: Polish has 8 common hypocoristic forms based on *córka* and 9 such forms based on *syn*. There is a gender difference: some of the diminutives of *syn* are used primarily as forms of address, as they are considered too intimate to be used in discourse about one's sons. English has no hypocoristic forms of *daughter* and English speakers tend not to use *daughter* as an address form (apart from religious contexts). We do find examples of English *son*, *sonny* and *sonny boy* as forms of address, but they are often directed at other people's children and can be patronizing and condescending. Most speakers of English address their children by their names, nicknames, or terms of endearment.

4. CHILDREN

Polish parents also frequently use *dziecko* ‘child’. It is not possible to estimate the rate of the occurrence of *dziecko* as a form of address since the nominative and vocative (as well as the accusative) are syncretic and the NKJP reports 30,497 uses of this term, but a perusal of about a 1000 entries yields examples like (21). *Dziecko* can be used towards adult children though much less frequently than forms of *córka* and *syn*, it can also be used towards other people's small (not adult) children.

- (21) Biedne **dziecko**. Za dużo brazylijskich telenowel, za szybko chcesz dorosnąć!
Poor child! You watch too many Brazilian soap operas, you want to grow up too quickly!

Dziecko has several diminutive and hypocoristic forms³. Many of them are strongly imbued with compassion as they are often used in Christmas carols about the baby Jesus, who is to be pitied as he is born in the manger among the animals, lying on hay without a pillow, etc. (24) contains examples of *dzieciątko*, *dzieciątka*, *dziecię*, and *dziecineczko* from popular Polish carols.

- (22) a. Poszli, znaleźli, **dzieciątko** w żłobie.
They went and they found a child in the manger.
(Wśród nocnej ciszy ‘In the quiet of the night’)

³ *Dziecko* also has some interesting plural forms. The neutral plural is the irregular *dzieci*, but there are also *dziatwa*, *dziatki*, *dzieciarnia*, *dzieciska* all meaning ‘children’, none having a morphologically corresponding singular.

- (22) b. Przybieżeli do Betlejem pasterze, grają skocznie **dzieciąteczku** na lirze
 To Bethlehem the shepherds came, they play the lyre for the child.
 (Przybieżeli do Betlejem ‘They came to Bethlehem’)
- c. Podnieś rękę Boże **dziecię**, błogosław ojczyznę milą.
 Child of God, lift up your hand and bless our beloved fatherland.
 (Bóg się rodzi ‘God is being born’)
- d. Witaj **dziecineczko** w żłobie, Wyznajemy Boga w tobie.
 Greetings, little baby in the manger, we recognize the God in you
 (Pójdzmy wszyscy do stajenki ‘Let’s all go to the stable’)

Dzieciątko occurs in NKJP 237 times, with few appellative uses. It is mostly found in reference to baby Jesus.

- (23) To wszystko ona własnymi rękami robiła, ona, moje **dzieciątko** kochane!
 She did all this with her own hands, she, my dear *dzieciątko*.

Wierzbicka (1992) notes that the suffix *-qtko* is prototypically used to denote baby animals (e.g. *kociątko* ‘kitten’) and characterizes the meaning of the suffix *-qtko* as follows:

- (24) Names in *-qtko* (e.g. *Jasiątko*, *Marysiątko*)
 I feel something good towards you
 of the kind people feel towards baby animals
 I feel something good speaking to you
 I want to speak to you as if you were a baby animal, not a child
 (Wierzbicka 1992, p. 285)

Dzieciąteczko is the diminutive formed from *dzieciątko* and occurs in the NKJP 10 times. Again, mostly with reference to baby Jesus.

- (25) Dobrze, dobrze, moje **dzieciąteczko** kochane.
 Well, well my beloved *dzieciąteczko*.

There are 409 instances of *dziecię* (whose vocative is syncretic with nominative and accusative), though it seems to be used appellatively rather rarely. It has an archaic sense, and is often found in the phrase *Boże dziecię* ‘God’s child’.

- (26) Patrz **dziecię** i ucz się na złym przykładzie.
 Look, *dziecię*, and learn from the bad example.

Dziecina contains the suffix *-ina*, which typically suggests pity, compassion, disregard, or disdain (Pyzik 2000, pp. 312–313), e.g. *chłopina* ‘a pitiful man’, *babina* ‘a pitiful old lady’, *mieścina* ‘tiny, undeveloped town’, *sukienczyna* ‘thre-adbare, meager dress’, etc.). *Dziecina* does suggest pity and compassion and can be slightly patronizing as it foregrounds the frailty of the child. Perhaps for that

reason it is not often used about baby Jesus (being condescending about the son of God is not appropriate). It is found in the vocative 67 times in NKJP:

- (27) Uważaj na siebie, **dziecino**, jesteś blada. Twój profesor zanadto cię eksplotuje.
Take care of yourself *dziecino*, you look pale. Your professor is exploiting you too much.

Dziecinka (voc. *dziecinko*) is a diminutive formed from *dziecina* and, like *synek*, is a form that occurs primarily in the vocative (61 examples in the NKJP); it is too intimate to use when talking about one's child. It can be used towards adult children, as seen in (28), but is mostly directed at small children and often co-occurs with other diminutives.

- (28) **Dziecinko**, co ci przychodzi do tej główka – roztkliwiła się ciotka Agata.
Dziecinko, what ideas you have, teared up aunt Agata.

The form *dziecineczka* (voc. *dziecineczko*), seen in the carol in (22d), is a diminutive of *dziecinka* and is not found in the NKJP.

Searching for appellative uses of *child* in English presents similar difficulties (there is no unique vocative form). BNC reports 89 instances of *child* followed by an exclamation point. Many of them were of the *Don't treat me as a child!* variety, i.e. examples where *child* just happened to be at the end of the sentence. But there were also the following examples where *child* does appear to be used as a form of address, though, not necessarily to one's own child:

- (29) a. Dear **child**, never, never volunteer!
b. My dear **child**, stop! she cried in agitation.

Another English word, for child, namely *kid*, does have a hypocoristic form *kiddo*. It appears to be more common in American English (345 instances in COCA vs. 7 examples in the BNC). We could almost say that this is a vocative, as an overwhelming majority of examples are appellative.

- (30) a. Listen, **kiddo**, I'm going to get rolling.
b. "Jamie, get a move on, **kiddo**" he says from the door to the garage.

In summary, there are at least 7 hypocoristic forms based on *dziecko* "child", which Polish parents frequently use to address their children. In English, *child* can be used as form of address, but has no diminutive forms, though there is a fairly new near-vocative form *kiddo* (The OED cites its first use as 1905).

5. DISCUSSION

The existence of motherese, a speech register used by adults towards infants and young children, linguistically simplified and characterized by high pitch and exaggerated intonation, has been confirmed by a number of crosslinguistic studies

(Fernald (1985), Gleitman, et al. (1984), Matychuk (2005)). While many of these studies focus on pitch and other prosodic qualities of child-directed speech, and while there is currently no agreement as to its universality and status as a species-specific adaptation, it is clear that motherese exists in both Polish and English: in both languages parents coo at infants and use diminutives.

What I would argue is different about Polish, is that its child-directed discourse seems to be much richer than the comparable mode of communication in English. What I have focused on here are the child-directed familial terms of address. I have shown that Polish speakers often use the forms of the words *son*, *daughter* and *child* to address their children. These forms convey various shades of meaning, some of which I have illustrated with Wierzbicka's explications and my amendments, but they are universally affectionate and loving.

Why do English speaking parents not use similar terms to address their children? The simple answer is that they do not exist in English. But the deeper question is why do they not exist? It is not that English lacks diminutives and baby talk altogether; there are onomatopoeic and sound-symbolic expressions like *din-din*, *choo-choo*, *yum-yum*, *no-no*, as well the suffix *-y/-ie* in *tummy*, *blankie*, *dog-gie*, etc. The form *daughtery/ie* is probably ruled out on phonological grounds, but *sonny* is well-formed, and exists, and yet is not used by parents.

I would like to argue that the absence of child-directed familial terms is due to the cultural value of individuality, as formulated in (2). As in the armed forces being addressed as *private* or *soldier* has the effect of making everyone the same, not discriminating among individuals, being addressed as *son*, *daughter* or *child* diminishes individuality and assigns a person to a particular class. It is also telling that while English lacks forms of **familial** address for children, there are in fact separate forms of **formal** address for children, such as *Master*, the honorific used for boys in letter addresses, whose very meaning suggests autonomy, freedom, and independence.

In contrast, Polish parents do not see the family as a training ground for individuality; they relish the fact that someone is their *córka*, *syn*, or *dziecko* and convey their love through the different forms of these words.

This value of individuality in American culture can be seen in naming practices as well. While Polish names are typically names of saints, or ancient coinages (*Bogusław*, *Bolesław*, etc.) and are regulated by law, American first names are often simple nouns, such as Christian virtues (*Faith*, *Hope*, *Charity*), month names (*April*, *May*, *June*), flowers (*Daisy*, *Rose*), state names (*Georgia*, *Virginia*), last names (*Washington*, *Jefferson*), respellings (*Lyndon* for *linden*), and entirely made up words (*Latisha*) (Hock and Joseph 1996, pp. 308–312). The fact that Americans celebrate birthdays (which are unique), while Polish people celebrate name-days (which are shared with the people named for the same saint) is related to different religious traditions, but also underlines the differences in cultural values.

So, what do American parents call their children? They use first names and their diminutives, nicknames, and terms of endearment (*sweetie*). Are these terms any less loving than *córus*, *synus* or *dzieciątko*? Not by a long shot. But they are for the most part unique, that is, individual. In this context what are we to make of *kiddo*? I am not sure, but I would like to think that American parents are in need of an appellation that is not unique and at the same time conveys closeness, love and the family ties that exists between them and their child.

The large amount of diminutives and address forms yield a very rich register of child-directed speech in Polish and Slavic, which is largely missing in English. Sun (2013) enumerates three cultural aspects that must be explicitly taught in a foreign language classroom: historical background, customs, and psychology. Forms of address fall into both the customs and psychology categories as they illuminate the underlying cultural values of warmth and inclusiveness in Polish and individuality and respect in English.

REFERENCES

- Anstatt T., 2003, *Der polnische Vokativ: Aussterbende Kasusform oder produktiv verwendetes Wortbildungsmittel?*, "Zeitschrift für Slawistik" 50, pp. 328–347.
- Fernald A., 1985, *Four-month-old infants prefer to listen to motherese*, "Infant Behavior and Development", no. 8(2), pp. 181–195.
- Gleitman L. R., Newport E. L. and Gleitman H., 1984, *The current status of the motherese hypothesis*, "Journal of Child Language", no. 11, pp. 43–79.
- Hall E. T., 1976, *Beyond culture*, New York.
- Hock H. H., Joseph B. D., 1996, *Language History, Language Change and Language Relationship: An Introduction to Historical and Comparative Linguistics*, Berlin.
- Markus H. R., Kitayama S., 1994, *The Cultural Construction of Self and Emotion: Implications for Social Behavior*, in: S. Kitayama, H. R. Markus (eds.), *Emotion and Culture: Empirical Studies of Mutual Influence*, Washington D.C., pp. 89–130.
- Matychuk P., 2005, *The role of child-directed speech in language acquisition: a case study*, "Language Sciences", no. 27, pp. 301–379.
- Nisbett R. E., 2003, *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently... and Why*, New York.
- Parrott L. A., 2010, *Vocatives and Other Direct Address Forms: A Contrastive Study*, in: A. Grønn, I. Marijanovic (eds.), *Russian in Contrast*, "Oslo Studies in Language", no. 2, pp. 211–229.
- Pyzik J., 2000, *Przygoda z gramatyką: Fleksja i słowotwórstwo imion*, Kraków.
- Sun L., 2013, *Culture teaching in foreign language teaching*, "Theory and Practice in Language Studies", no. 3(2), pp. 371–375.
- Szymczak M., 1966, *Nazwy stopni pokrewieństwa i powinowactwa rodzinnego w historii i dialekach języka polskiego*, Warszawa.
- Wierzbicka A., 1992, *Semantics, Culture and Cognition: Universal Human Concepts in Culture-Specific Configurations*, Oxford.
- Wierzbicka A., 1999, *Emotions Across Languages and Cultures: Diversity and Universals*, Cambridge.

- Yokoyama O., 1994, *Iconic manifestations of interlocutor distance in Russian*, “Journal of Pragmatics”, no. 22, pp. 83–102.
- Zaleski J., 1963, *Rozwój form wołacza żeńskich rzeczowników osobowych typu Marysia, Anulka, paniusia*, “*Onomastica*”, no. 8, pp. 261–291.

Corpora

British National Corpus (BNC) <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/>
The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) <http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/> [28.08.2019].
Narodowy Korpus Języka Polskiego (NKJP) <http://nkjp.uni.lodz.pl/index.jsp> [28.08.2019].

Katarzyna Dziwirek

JAK MÓWIMY DO DZIECI? FAMILIJNE FORMUŁY ADRESATYWNE W JĘZYKU POLSKIM I ANGIELSKIM

Slowa kluczowe: formuły adresatywne, dzieci, kulturowe scenariusze, kolektywizm, indywidualizm, nauczanie języka polskiego jako obcego

Streszczenie. Przekaz kulturowy w glottodydaktyce przejawia się nie tylko w transmisji wiedzy o tradycjach, zwyczajach czy historii danego kraju, ale również w uwrażliwieniu studentów na podstawowe idee i zachowania obcej kultury. Obecny artykuł przedstawia zasadnicze kontrasty między polską i angielskojęzyczną kulturą i ich wpływ na język używany w gronie rodziny. Polscy rodzice często używają zdrobnień familialnych terminów syn, córka czy dziecko, co nigdy nie zdarza się w angielskojęzycznych rodzinach. Artykuł pokazuje, że te różnice wypływają z różnic kulturowych. Kultura polska jest kulturą kolektywistyczną i jedną z jej podstawowych wartości jest serdeczność. Kultura anglojęzyczna jest kulturą indywidualistyczną, w której niezależność jej naczelną wartością.