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## LINGUISTIC BLUNDERS IN PUBLIC DISCOURSE AS CULTUREMES

The aim of the paper is to analyse how a blunder made in public discourse can develop into a cultureme of complex nature and rich stylistic potential. The issue is discussed on the example of a case study of a Polish mistake made by a politician Witold J. Waszczykowski in 2018.

*Key words:* cultureme; figurative language; intertextuality; linguistic blunder; public discourse.

## ЯЗЫКОВЫЕ ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКИ В ПУБЛИЧНОМ ДИСКУРСЕ КАК КУЛЬТУРЕМЫ

Целью работы является анализ того, как грубая ошибка в публичном дискурсе может развиваться в культурему сложной природы и богатого стилистического потенциала. Вопрос обсуждается на примере случая польской ошибки, допущенной политиком Витольдом Вашиковски в 2018 году.

*Ключевые слова:* культура; образный язык; интертекстуальность; лингвистическая ошибка; публичный дискурс.

From a linguo-cultural perspective, a verbal cultureme can be defined as a linguo-cultural unit, word or multiword expression, which has a culture-embedded

meaning [1, p. 295]. Culturemes tend to express complex semantic notions and evoke cultural connotations. Many of them originate from the broadly understood cultural background: history, traditions, customs and other suchlike areas. However, new units, including culturemes, may also come into existence as a result of a linguistic blunder made in the process of communication [2], as it is the case with those occurring in various forms of public discourse.

The speaker who makes a statement in public is exposed to stress, thus it can be expected that mistakes may occur, especially in live communication, in situations when the utterances are produced as hoc, not read. The mistakes which for some reason draw attention of the audience can be retained in the lexicon. It can be assumed that in some cases such items can develop their own properties and become culturemes.

From a Polish perspective, one of such linguistic blunders is the invented name *San Escobar* which was coined by Witold Jan Waszczykowski who served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2015 to 2018. The politician used it in an interview after his visit to the UN in New York in 2017. In his statement *Mamy dobre stosunki z San Escobar* [lit. We have good relations with San Escobar], Waszczykowski used the name of a non-existent country, *San Escobar*. In fact, the politician intended to refer to Saint Kitts and Nevis, as clarified in his and Joanna Wajda's, the Foreign Affairs Ministry spokeswoman, clarification. The source of the blunder may be an incidental association of the aforementioned toponym with the name of Pablo Escobar, the Colombian drug baron. As a result of a contamination [3, p. 54], the speaker produced the fictitious place name.

The fake toponym was immediately identified and commented on by native speakers of Polish. Inter alia, it is attested by the fact that Waszczykowski was presented with the Silver Mouth award in 2017. It is annually awarded by Radio Station 3 for original, awkward or funny public statements. Listeners vote for the candidate utterances and the one with the majority of votes is given the Silver Mouth. Thus, *San Escobar* gained a special status in the modern Polish language.

It can be concluded that the toponym *San Escobar* became part of the linguo-cultural lexicon: it began to be used in online communication, for instance, in many memes. Some of them feature the politician who coined the name, while others employ the proper name in various ways, without references to its origin. On the Internet, it has gained great popularity, for instance, Internauts created a map presenting the location and geographical features of *San Escobar*, with its capital *San Subito*. They also developed the concept further, proposing its own flag and currency. From a linguistic perspective, the cultureme is also interesting in terms of word formation. Almost 300 invented place names are found on the map of *San Escobar*. They are jocular and carry semantic references to Polish politics, voicing the mocking and critical attitudes to the authorities [3].

To sum up, it should be emphasized that the case study shows that public discourse blunders may have gained linguo-cultural importance, evoke cultural connotations and become culturemes. They can develop rich semantic, stylistic and discursive potential, which makes them attractive for language users who employ them in a variety of contexts, often in an original and creative way.

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