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The development of the lexemes for 'uncle/aunt', 'cousin' and 'brother/sister-in-law' in Hispano-Romance and Polish in a comparative perspective

Abstract

The aim of the article is to compare the development of some family-related vocabulary from Latin (with PIE backgrounds) to Hispano-Romance with the old and modern Polish terms. The comparative analysis covers the words for 'uncle'/'aunt', 'brother/sister-in-law' and 'cousins'. The author tries to explain lexical changes with reference to social changes that took place over the centuries.

Keywords: etymology, comparative ethnology, lexical changes, family

1. The purpose of the article

Kinship and affinity are lexical fields that attracts the interest of linguists. Their evolution reflects the nature of changes which have taken place within social institutions over time. According to Polish etymologist Aleksander Brückner (1998: 27), kinship and affinity were of great importance in primitive life, hence the abundant, archaic terminology. He adds that languages retain the old names for the closest members while eliminated or exchanged less important words by more general terms or borrowings from other languages.

The objective of this article is to compare the evolution of some Latin kinship and affinity terms with their Hispano-Romance (HR) derivatives in contrast to the corresponding Polish terms. The analysis which we propose to present may be interesting if we take into

account the words of the American anthropologist and ethnologist Henry L. Morgan who says that Latin and Old Polish had the most abundant kinship and affinity terminology within the IE language family (Morgan, 1997: 40). The two terminological systems, in their old stages, correspond to the Sudanese kinship system where each collateral of Ego's parents was designated by a specific term. We can admire this ancient richness and its decline analysing the words for 'uncle'/'aunt', 'brother/'sister in law' and 'cousins' to whom we want to pay special attention.

2. Selected Latin and Hispano-Romance terms for the relatives by consanguinity and affinity

Latin, from which Hispano-Romance originated, distinguished *cognati* 'relatives by consanguinity' and *affines* 'relatives by affinity'. This difference was confused, especially in the language of Christians who used the two words as synonyms. Over time the *cognati* acquired the meaning of *affines*.

2.1. The Latin and Hispano-Romance terms for 'uncles' and 'aunts'

The Latin terms denoting father and mother siblings are of the Indo-European origin. It should be noted that in relation to 'aunt', in the PIE language (Proto-Indo-European), reflecting the Omaha kinship system, only the term for 'mother's sister' *$meh_a truh_a$ can be reconstructed (Mallory, Adams, 1997: 36). It is almost impossible to reconstruct a PIE word for father's sister. The IE languages show that this designation is derived often from the word for 'father' (Mallory, Adams, 1997: 36). In Latin, the term for the father's sister is probably a derivative from *amma* 'mother' (Walde, 1910: 35; de Vaan, 2008: 38), although it is possible (Muller, 1926: 26) that it is the result of the evolution of the compound *$\ăm$- (< *amma*) and the infant's babble word *tătă* 'daddy'. As one might suppose, the Latin terms for 'father's brother' and 'mother's sister' are derivatives of the names for father and mother, hence *patruus* (pie. *ph_2ter 'father') and *matertĕra* (> Lat *măter* 'mother'). Isaczenko (Szymczak, 1996: 95) believes that the relation between the PIE words *ph_2tr-u- 'father's brother' and *ph_2ter 'father' testify to the presence of the ancient structure of the family in which the father's brother was also considered as a father. The history of the term for 'maternal uncle' *avuncŭlus*, the diminutive, which derives from PIE *h_2euh_2- 'grandfather on mother's side', raises a lot of discussion. It has been argued that equating a mother's brother with her father is due to the fact that when the maternal grandfather died, her eldest brother would assume the father's position and was considered as a potential grandfather (Mallory, Adams, 1997: 411–412).

In spoken Latin the old denominations have been unified: the analysis of the vocabulary included in *Romanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* shows that only *avuncŭlus* and *amĭta* survived in the spoken language of Romania. In addition, a new denomination

of Greek origin *thius/thia* appeared. We find it in Hispano-Romance where it dominated over time the other terms. It was probably a fancy foreignism used at the beginning only in feminine form which is more open to this type of innovation (Corominas, Pascual, 1983: 501). The inscriptions show that the Greek word eliminated the term *avuncŭlus* only very late in the Hispano-Romance which however remained in use in some peninsular languages, for example in Catalan *oncle* (Menéndez Pidal, Lapesa, 2003: 623). The words *tius* and *tia* are attested in the texts of the Peninsula of the ninth century: in the codex *Becerro Gótico* (year 857) of the cathedral of Oviedo we find the masculine „tii nostrii domini Adefonsi" and in the *Cartulario de Santa María de puerto de Santoña* in 863 the feminine: „per tradictjonem tie nostre Galle" (Menéndez Pidal, Lapesa, 2003: 623). The *Glosas Silenses* from the middle of the tenth century explain *abunculus* and *matertĕra* with *tio* and *tia*, what confirms that these terms were more understood in some peninsular region (Corominas, Pascual, 1983: 501).

Class. Lat. *patrŭus* 'paternal uncle'/ Vulg. Lat. *thiu(m)* 'uncle' > HR *tio*
Class. Lat. *amĭta* 'paternal aunt'/ Vulg. Lat. *thia(m)* 'aunt' > HR *tia*
Class. Lat. *avuncŭlus* 'maternal uncle'/ Vulg. Lat. *aunculu(m)* /HR *thiu(m)* 'uncle' > HR *tio*
Class. Lat. *matertĕra* 'maternal aunt'/ Vulg. Lat. *thia(m)* **'aunt'** > HR *tia*

2.2. The Latin and Castilian terms for cousins of the first degree

No common IE terms can be reconstructed for the different type of cousins (Mallory, Adams, 1997: 133). The ancestors of the Romans had to create their own terminology in this area. The denomination most widespread was *consobrīnus/a*, a term used for any parents' siblings' child of the first degree. The additional terms were used for the child of the father's side: *amitīnus* (< *amĭta* 'father's sister) 'father's sister child' and *frater* or *soror patruelis* 'father's brother'son', 'father's brother'daughter'. De Vaan (2008: 566) proposes the etymology of Lat. *consobrinus/a* 'son/daughter of the mother's sister' as **kom+swesrīno/a* 'belonging to the sister'. This etymology reveals that this noun must have originally designated the first-degree cousins of the mother's sister and only later all the first-degree cousins. The meaning of the first degree was with the passage of time specified by the adjective *primus/a* which absorbed in Castilian the noun to denominate the cousin. In Hispano-Romance, the derivatives of *consobrinus/a* are attested in *cusino, cosino, kosina, kusino* (Menéndez Pidal, Lapesa, 2003: 180), for example in the *Glosas Silenses* of the end of the tenth century: *consobrina [cusina]*. It was coined the new formations quasi based on the structure *con+sobrinus*: *cum+germanus*: *cum* 'with' + *germanus/a* 'carnal brother/sister': *coiermano* (with different variants) (Menéndez Pidal, Lapesa, 2003: 145), sometimes with addition of the adjective *primo*. In *Notes et documents sur l'histoire du royaume de Léon* of the year 935, we read „Pro quod tu, coniermanus meus Froilanem" (ibidem), in the *Cartulario de San Vicente de Oviedo* of 948: „Ego Vimara Episcopus tibi congermano meo frater Adefonsus, salutem in Domino" (ibidem), in the *Tumbo del Monasterio de Celanova* of the year 1009: „prima coniermana".

Mother's sister's child Class. Lat. *consobrīnus/consobrīna* Vulg. Lat. *consobrinus /consobrina* HR *cumiermano* (*primo*)/*cumiermana* (*prima*), *cusino/cusina*
Mother's brother's child Class. Lat. *consobrīnus/consobrīna* Vulg. Lat. *consobrinus /consobrina* HR *cumiermano* (*primo*)/*cumiermana* (*prima*), *cusino/cusina*
Father's sister's child Class. Lat. *consobrīnus/ consobrīna, amitīnus/ amitīna* Vulg. Lat. *consobrinus/consobrina* HR *cumiermano* (*primo*)/*cumiermana* (*prima*), *cusino/cusina*
Father's brother's child Class. Lat. *consobrīnus/frater patruēlis/soror patruēlis* Vulg. Lat. *consobrinus/consobrina* HR *cumiermano* (*primo*)/*cumiermana* (*prima*), *cusino/cusina*

2.3. The Latin and Castilian terms for 'brother' and 'sister-in-law'

The reconstruction of IE vocabulary reveals that PIE made a distinction for the four people whom the term 'brother-in-law' may be applied. The derivatives of two of them we find in Latin: **daih$_a$wer* > *lēvir* 'husband's brother' and **ĝ(e)m(h$_x$)ros* > *gĕner* 'sister's husband' (Mallory, Adams, 1997: 84–85). In the case of the term for 'sister-in-law' PIE made a distinction of three of the persons who may be designated by it. Latin inherited two of them: **ĝl̥h$_3$wos* 'wife's sister' > Lat *glōs* and **ienh$_2$ter* 'husband's brother's wife' > Lat *ianitrĭces* 'wives of brothers'. Only one of these terms, *gĕner*, survived in Roman languages in the meaning of 'son-in-law'. In the peninsular area they were replaced by the word *cognātus/a* (HR *cuniato/a* > Cast. *cuñado/a*), originally 'sprung from the same stock, related by blood, kindred', and later, in the language of Christian 'relative by affinity'(Corominas, Pascual, 1984: 294). The Hispano-Romance text of *Chartes de l'église de Valpuesta du IXième au XIi^{ième} siècle* enumerated in the year 900 „Germanis, filiis et cognatis" (Menéndez Pidal, Lapesa, 2003: 179). The texts of that period use the term *coiermano/a* < lat. *cum + germanus/a* 'with + carnal brother/sister' although its meaning is difficult to define (ibidem: 145).

Class. Lat. *lēvir* 'husband's brother'/vulg. Lat *cognatu(m)* > HR *cuniato* 'brother-in-law'
Class. Lat. *gĕner* 'sister's husband'/vulg. Lat *cognatu(m)* > HR *cunissdato* 'brother-in-law'
Class. Lat. *glos* 'wife's sister'/vulg. Lat *cognata(m)* > HR *cuniata* 'sister-in-law'
Class. Lat. *ianĭtrices* 'spouses of brothers with each other' > Vulg. Lat *cognate*

2.4. Terminological changes in late Latin as a consequence of social changes

The process of the parallelization and the simplification of the bifurcated terminology occurred in late Antiquity and was imposed in the Romance languages (Mitterauer, 2000: 14, 17, 25). The evolution of the old unilineal and agnathic system (blood relationship by male line) and the terminological indistinction of the parallel members of the maternal and paternal family was undoubtedly the consequence of the decline of the *matrimonium cum manu*, through which the woman passed to depend on the absolute power of her husband, if he was *pater families*, or to *pater families* of her husband, losing the right to inheritance from her family of blood. The diffusion of the freer form of marriage, *matromonium sine manu*, which began to be frequent from the Principality (Betancourt, 2007: 413), was linked to the change in the social position of the woman who retained the right to family inheritance and ceased to belong to her husband's group. This evolution made it possible for women and their matriline ancestors to have greater importance than before and equal position in the family (Loring García, 2001: 14).

3. The Selected Polish terms for the relatives by consanguinity and affinity

3.1. Polish terms for 'uncles' and 'aunts'

OPol *stryj* 'paternal uncle' > MPol. s*tryj* (rare) *wuj, wujek*
OPol *ciotka* 'paternal aunt' > MPol. *Ciotka*
OPol *wuj* 'maternal uncle' *wuj* > MPol. *Wuj*, *wujek*
OPol *lela* 'maternal aunt' / MPol. *Ciotka*

The etymology of the word *stryj* (/*str*/</*ptr*/) and *wuj* (< *h_2eu-jo*) (Boryś, 2005: 716), common *grosso modo* with the etymology of Lat *patruus* and *avunculus,* reveals the analogical, patriarchal family structure of Latin and ancient Slavic family.

The generalization of the term *wuj* 'maternal uncle' can be considered as the result of the diffusion of the emotionally intense meanings that characterize contacts with maternal relatives and the influence of Christianity and Latin (Szymczak, 1996: 154; Szynkiewicz, 1992: 292). The unification process also affected the name of the maternal and paternal aunt. The generalization of the paternal term, the infant's babble word *ciotka* < PSl. *teta*, however enters in this case in opposition with the just mentioned change of the term for 'uncle'.

3.2. The Polish terms for 'cousins'

OPol *cioteczny brat* 'son of the paternal sister' > MPol *cioteczny brat / kuzyn*
OPol *brat wujeczny* 'son of the maternal brother' > MPol *kuzyn*
OPol *ciotczany brat* 'son of the maternal sister' > MPol *cioteczny brat / kuzyn*
OPol *siostra wujeczna* 'daughter of the maternal sister' > MPol *kuzynka*
OPol *ciotczana siostra* 'daughter of the paternal sister' > MPol *cioteczna siostra/ kuzynka*
OPol *ciotczana siostra* 'daughter of the maternal sister' > MPol *cioteczna siostra/ kuzynka*

The word *kuzyn* is the 18th century loan word of the French *cousin* 'cousin' (Szymczak, 1996: 120) which unified in some measure ancient descriptive terms. Some of them remain however in use.

3.3. Polish terms for 'brother' and 'sister-in-law'

OPol 'brother's wife' *jątrew* > MPol *bratowa*
OPol 'sister's husband' *swak* > MPol *szwagier*
OPol 'wife's brother' *dziewierz* > MPol *szwagier*
OPol 'husband's sister' *zelwa* > MPol *szwagierka*
OPol 'wife's brother' *szurza* > MPol *szwagier*
OPol 'wife's sister' *świeść* > MPol *szwagierka*

The old rich terminology, richer than in Latin, disappeared with social changes and decomposition of old family living in one community. In consequence, the ancient denominations were replaced in successive times by the 16th-century loan from the German word *Schwager* > MPol. *szwagier* (Boryś, 2005: 609) which is in use today.

3.4. The terminological changes in the Polish as the consequence of social changes

The simplification of the kinship and the affinity terminology is related to the decline of the patriarchal territorial communities called *opole* which existed in Poland until the end of the 16th-century and beginning of the seventeenth century (Szymczak, 1996: 195–196; Szynkiewicz, 1992: 289–290). Its decomposition led to changes in the character of the family relationships and affected the abundant terminology inherited from the pre-Slavic era. The old terms were replaced by the French and German foreignisms and fell into oblivion.

Conclusions

The changes which occurred in the passage Latin > Hispano-Roman and Old Polish > Modern Polish consisted in the simplification and the unification of the terminology. They had a similar character but took place in a very different time. The both were related to the

social changes and the decline of the archaic patriarchal structure of the family where part of the husband's family assumed great significance. A similar evolution also happened in other IE languages, which can be confirmed by parallel analysis.

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Streszczenie
Rozwój leksemów oznaczających wujka/ciotkę, kuzynów, szwagra/ szwagierkę w hispano-romańskim i polskim w perspektywie porównawczej

Celem artykułu jest porównanie rozwoju słownictwa związanego z rodziną w języku polskim i hispano-romańskim na tle łacińskim. Analiza porównawcza dotyczy nazw wujka/ciotki, szwagra/szwagierki i kuzynów. Autorka próbuje wytłumaczyć zmiany leksykalne zmianami społecznymi, które miały miejsce na przełomie wieków.

Słowa kluczowe: etymologia, etnologia komparatywna, zmiany leksykalne, rodzina