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**[Slide 1]**

## **The conceptualization of emotions in standard Polish and in “guides to emotions and values” for children**

(with an example of the category of WSTYD/SHAME-like-emotions) – a comparative analysis

### **I. Introduction**

You can see here [on slide 1] **two illustrations** taken from *The Great Book of Emotions* (*Wielka księga uczuć*) by Grzegorz Kasdepke, which is aimed at pre-school children. How would you label the emotions which the main characters presented here might feel? A puppet clown is sitting in the corner and trying to hide because somebody said something offensive to him. Ms Miłka, a teacher of a group of pre-schoolers, is turning red because her pupils told her that she had come to school with curlers on her head.

Both feelings shown here are described in the Polish book by the same term: *wstyd*, but they could be categorized in different ways – as separate categories – in other languages, for example in English as *shame* and *embarrassment*. It would be interesting to determine whether the authors of children’s books follow the patterns of conceptualization that are characteristic of general Polish or whether they use language in a specific way – modifying concepts that are so important for individuals and for society at large.

My presentation is, in essence, a comparative analysis of the linguistic conceptualization of emotions in standard Polish and in “guides to emotions and values” for children. I’d like to focus on examples of emotions from the category of WSTYD/SHAME.

**[Sl. 2]** First of all, an **outline** of the presentation. I’ll give a brief introduction to the data and methods used in my research. Then I’ll move on to present the results of the analysis, concentrating on the ways of phrasing WSTYD/SHAME in standard Polish and in texts for children, looking in more detail at different structures with the lexeme *wstyd* and their functions. Next, I will characterize the typical SUBJECT of the emotion called *wstyd* and compare conceptual models based on various relations between a SUBJECT and a CAUSATOR of the feeling. An example of the model of MORAL SHAME will be analyzed in the context of other conceptual models, differentiated due to various elicitors of the emotion. Afterwards we’ll be taking a look at selected differences in the metaphorical conceptualization of SHAME and in its evaluation as it is observable in the general corpus and in children’s books. Then I’d like to round off with a summary conclusion.

**[Sl. 3]** Let us turn now to the data and methods of my research. Two **main sources** of data have been analyzed:

1) First, modern Polish dictionaries (ISJP, USJP, WSJP) and the National Corpus of Polish – which represent general Polish.

2) Second, twenty books for children aged from 4 to 11. These “guides to emotions and values” were written mostly by Polish authors, usually overseen by psychologists who recommended them as aids in the emotional development of pre-schoolers and first-third graders. The books are listed in the bibliography at the end of your handouts. The main goal of these publications is to improve children’s emotional competence, as the age between 4 and 11 is a period in their lives when regulation of children’s emotion turns away from “being governed by the actions of external social agents” to “depending on social conventions which define standards of comportment with respect to emotional speech and behaviour” (Magai 2008: 380). And according to Havighurst, Harley and Prior (2010), “fostering the development of children’s emotional competence” leads to “enhancing social and behavioral functioning” in their later lives (Havighurst, Harley, Prior 2010). So, studying guides to emotions aimed at children is an insightful exercise in terms of both scientific value and social reasons<sup>1</sup>. The corpus of books for children was collected by myself in electronic version and then analyzed using the program AntConc 3.4.3w.

Regarding **methods**, the analysis of the data concerned the frequency of lexemes and lexical structures connected with Polish WSTYD/SHAME in both corpora, and their cognitive content – including selected conceptual aspects and models of the emotion, as well as metaphorical patterns of its conceptualization.

## **II. Results of the analysis**

**[Sl. 4]** Moving on to the main part of the presentation, I’ll start with the problem of phrasing WSTYD/SHAME in general Polish and in children’s books.

As the following slide shows, **the noun *wstyd*** is used in modern Polish as a **general term** which includes many other more specific names of emotions and emotional attitudes. Here there is a lead to a series of articles dealing with WSTYD that was published in the

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<sup>1</sup> The authors of the Emotion Coaching Parenting Program “Tuning into Kids” state that: “Emotional competence includes skills in emotional expressivity, emotion regulation, and emotional knowledge, which help a child to behave prosocially, develop friendships, respond appropriately to conflict, focus attention and achieve other important developmental goals [...]. Emotional competence is closely linked to social competence, academic achievement, language and cognition, physiological development, and physical health as well as to behavioural adjustment [...]” (Havighurst, Wilson, Harley, Kehoe, Efron, Prior 2013: 248).

popular monthly magazine “Wysokie Obcasy Extra” in September 2014. The nouns: *nieśmiałość* ‘shyness, timidity’, *zażenowanie* ‘embarrassment’, *speszenie* ‘embarrassment, disconcertedness’, *lęk przed wystąpieniami* ‘fear of speaking in public’, as well as *poczucie winy* ‘guilt’ and *przyzwoitość* ‘decency’ are listed here as hyponyms for their hiperonym *wstyd* ‘shame, embarrassment’. Take a look at Picture 1 on [page 2 in your handouts](#). It shows more Polish words connected with the category of SHAME. The English translations are given [on page 3](#). The lexical field of Polish WSTYD/SHAME has been reconstructed based on an analysis of lexicographic data (Mikołajczuk 2012).

**[Sl. 5]** Dictionaries reveal little as regards **the relative important of each lexical family** in the whole system. To shed light on this aspect, I investigated the incidence of various words representing the general category of WSTYD/SHAME-like-emotions in the National Corpus of Polish and in the children’s books. According to the general corpus two words: *wstyd* ‘shame, embarrassment’ and *wstydzić się* ‘to be/to feel ashamed, embarrassed’ are the most significant – they occur in the corpus of about 250 million words over 7,500 and over 5,500 times, respectively, whereas no other word from the same field has even 4,000 hits. What’s more, most of them occur in this corpus less than 2000 times.

The most frequent nouns and verbs denoting SHAME in the children’s books belong to the lexical family of ‘wstyd’ too. The graphs [on page 4 in your handouts](#) show this. To be more exact, the majority of references to SHAME in the range of their parts of speech are covered by **the noun** *wstyd* ‘shame, embarrassment’ and **the verbs**: *wstydzić się* ‘to be ashamed, embarrassed’, *zawstydzić się* ‘to become ashamed’ and *zawstydzić/zawstydząć* ‘to shame sb’ (in perfective and imperfective meanings). But it is worthwhile observing that apart from the most common words with the root –*wstyd-*, representing the lexical family of *wstyd*, there are also many other much less “popular” nouns and verbs, which are only occasionally used to describe more specific variants of SHAME. In contrast, **adjectives and adverbs** from the same semantic field are, both in the general corpus and in the children’s books corpus, not dominated by the family of *wstyd* – according to graphs [on page 5 in your handouts](#) *nieśmiały* ‘shy, timid’ is the most popular adjective, and *głupio* ‘stupidly’, *niepewnie* ‘uncertainly, insecurely, timidly’, *nieswojo* (lit.: un-selfy) ‘uncomfortably’ and *nieśmiało* ‘shyly, timidly’ are the most frequent adverbs concerning SHAME. However, if we take into account whole lexical families engaged in SHAME descriptions in children’s books (as shown on the last graph – [on page 5 in your handouts](#)) and in the general corpus, we can draw a conclusion that

words with the root *wstyd* are the most representative for the category of SHAME in Polish<sup>2</sup>. With this in mind, we'll now turn our attention in more detail to *wstyd* and *wstydzić się*.

[Sl. 6] The lexeme *wstyd* is prototypically used in Polish texts as a noun – to describe someone's feeling, its symptoms etc. or to define the feeling itself, e.g.: *Poczuł wstyd* – 'he started to feel shame / he was ashamed/embarrassed'. But it can also occur in Dative-structures in the role of an adverb (or a verb). The name of a SUBJECT of shame is used in such a structure in the Dative, not the Nominative, indicating a subordinative function of the SUBJECT. Due to such a structure someone who feels shame seems not to have full control of her/his emotion (cf Taylor 2007: 506; Wierzbicka 1999b: 174-179). This structure occurs in a sample of 200 concordances of *wstyd* in the National Corpus of Polish, almost 3 times more frequently than in the children's books. Perhaps it is marginalized by the authors of the "guides to emotions", as one of their aims is to teach children how to control their feelings.

There are also other structures with *wstyd* more typical for the general corpus than for the children's books. These are expressions used in purely expressive function and/or in reprimands, such as: *Ale wstyd!* 'For shame!', *Wstyd powiedzieć* 'It's embarrassing to say that'. They cover more than one quarter of examples taken from the general corpus and only two point two percent of examples from the children's books. The reason for this difference could lay in the different core functions of the children's books and the texts collected in the general corpus. "Guides to emotions" for children should give their readers knowledge of emotions and useful advice on how to manage feelings, so the most important roles are played by the didactic and the cognitive functions. The majority of texts gathered in the general corpus represent fiction aimed at adults and written by authors who wanted to express their feelings and thoughts, and to create their own visions of the world. Accordingly, expressivity seems to play an important role in such texts. Moreover, a large number of works gathered in the National Corpus of Polish were published in the twentieth century, whereas the children's books analyzed in this study date from 2004 – 2015, so they could represent modern tendencies in ways of speaking and thinking about WSTYD/SHAME.

[Sl. 7] If we look at the conceptual structure of emotions such as shame, we should take into consideration the characteristics of a **typical SUBJECT** of the emotion. The following table shows that in the children's books the people who are most often described as feeling *wstyd* or

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<sup>2</sup> The proportion between the two most frequent lexical groups from this field, namely 'wstyd' and 'nieśmiałość', is in the ratio of almost 3 to 1 in the general corpus and even more than 6 to 1 in children's books (in NP: 'wstyd' = 17 911, 'nieśmiałość' = 6 553; in ChB: 'wstyd' = 308; 'nieśmiałość' = 48).

*wstydzą się* 'are ashamed/embarrassed' are children and teenagers. The general corpus features mainly adults. This is well-founded as it tallies with two different target audiences – children and adults, respectively. But what might surprise you to learn is that whereas **boys** are equally ashamed/embarrassed as **girls** in the children's books, the sample from the general corpus tells a different story: **men** feeling shame/embarrassment are mentioned almost twice as often as **women**. Lack of differences in the frequency of male and female SUBJECTS of shame in the children's books may well be no accident, as the intention of the authors and psychologists cooperating with them could be to convince children that all people, regardless of gender, feel shame and embarrassment. On the other hand, it is hard to account for the majority of male subjects of shame in the general corpus – especially in the context of the stereotypical belief that females, not males, are most likely to feel shame, to be shy [as is confirmed e.g. in an established simile: *wstydlivy jak panienka* 'shy, bashful like a young girl = very shy (about boys and men)']<sup>3</sup>.

Importantly, both the general corpus and the corpus of children books confirm that *wstydz*/shame is **an emotion of humans not animals** – which tallies with its categorization as a moral feeling, something that many psychologists and philosophers would confirm (cf Darwin 1872/1988; Haidt 2003; Lewis 2005, 2011; Wojtyła 1960).

**[Sl. 8]** Taking into consideration the relation between a SUBJECT of *wstydz*/shame and a CAUSATOR of this emotion we can distinguish at least four models of conceptualization:

- I. The model of **an individual's subjective shame**, when the subject is a causator of her/his own shame, namely when (s)he is convinced about his wrong behaviour or unaccepted features.
- II. The model of **collective shame**, when a subject is ashamed because someone close to her/him did something wrong or has unaccepted features (this is the case of "extended self" (kin, friends and community, country) according to Ogarkova, Soriano, Lehr 2012: 264).
- III. The model of **a witness's shame**, when a subject is only an independent observer of someone who has found himself in an embarrassing situation.
- IV. The model of **external shame** and/or **shame of humiliation**, when a (potential or real) subject of shame is an object of external reprimands and/or of humiliation.

Textual examples of these models are seen [on page 6 in your handouts](#).

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<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the fact that most of the texts gathered in this corpus were written by men may influence this, but male authors use the lexeme *wstydz* only a little bit more often than females (approximately 6 times per text, whereas women – almost 5 times per text), although in the case of the verb *wstydzić się* the reverse is true (men use it on average 3 times per text, and women – almost 5 times per text). Thus the question remains open.

**[Sl. 9]** The analysis of examples with the lexeme *wstyd* in both corpora shows that the model of **an individual's subjective shame** is most common there. What might come as a surprise is the lack of **collective shame** in extracts from the children's books, and, in contrast, the clear evidence of it in the general corpus. This omission in the "guides to emotions" seems to be intentional. The marginalization of collective shame is also confirmed there by a few fragments with the verb *wstydzic się* – although they evoke collective shame, they show it only in negative contexts: a feeling which is harmful or useless for the individual subject. This individualistic perspective seems to be close to the conceptualization of emotions typical for English speakers. Thus we might inquire if it has something to do with the anglocentric perspective of which many psychologists are accused (cf Wierzbicka 1999b,c, 2004).

It is interesting that the model of **external shame** is represented more strongly in the children's books than in the general corpus. We might ask if this is connected with the fact that pre-schoolers and first to third graders are mostly influenced by external opinions and social conventions, as was mentioned earlier (cf Magai 2008: 380; also Brzezińska, ed., 2005).

**[Sl. 10]** If we look into an aspect of **typical causes** of shame, such as transgression of moral norms, the subject's features – unaccepted but often independent of her/him (such as her/his appearance, origins, illnesses, etc.), as well as public activity, breaking social conventions or violating someone's privacy and intimacy, **MORAL SHAME** seems to be especially interesting from an historical point of view, and it is this subject that we'll examine now in more detail.

**[Sl. 11]** If we understand **MORAL SHAME** as the feeling of somebody who is aware of having done something wrong, something harmful to other people, and who fears the social consequences of that, the evidence of this model is quite rare in the children's books (it covers only 6% of examples including *wstyd* or *wstydzic się*). Meanwhile, in the general corpus, it seems to be more important, as I managed to identify it in 27% of the examples including *wstyd* or *wstydzic się* in the analyzed sample. The marginalization of this model in the children's books might confirm the hypothesis that the historically significant way of thinking about shame as "the last barrier against moral wrong" is becoming less common in the modern conceptualization of **WSTYD/SHAME** in Polish. Linguistic data, both historical and contemporary, evoked by Ewa Jędrzejko in her paper on **WSTYD** in Polish (published in 2000), seem to catch this change, but this is in contrast to the thesis proposed by Zofia Zaron, who does not accept a negative evaluation of "Polish shame" because of its moral value

(Zaron 2006: 397). It is interesting to look at this discussion from an external point of view, bearing in mind for example Anna Wierzbicka's analysis of important changes in the meaning of English *shame* and in the role which *shame* and *embarrassment* used to play and now play in English-speaking societies (Wierzbicka 1992, 1999a; see also Tissari 2006). There is also some evidence taken from **psychologists'** works. For example, according to Tomasz Maruszewski most adults in Poland, especially politicians and celebrities, almost never feel shame because of moral wrong nowadays, even though they are often ashamed or embarrassed of situations which are independent of them (cf Maruszewski 2004). In the light of this statement we can suppose that the decline in the number of examples of MORAL SHAME registered in modern children's books could be evidence of its decreasing role in the conceptualization (and experience?) of WSTYD/SHAME in **modern Polish**. Since the texts included in the general corpus were published between the beginning of the twentieth century and 2010, the bigger evidence of MORAL SHAME in this corpus may be connected with older ways of thinking and feeling. Naturally, this hypothesis needs more detailed interdisciplinary studies.

We should also consider the **young age of the target audience** of the "guides to emotions" – if someone believes that moral problems are too serious for children, (s)he would marginalize this issue in children's books. However, according to developmental psychologists, pre-schoolers start to develop their moral skills at a very early age, and so between 4 and 11 is appropriate to discuss moral problems. Therefore, young age cannot explain the marginalization of MORAL SHAME in the children's books.

**[Sl. 12]** Finally I'd like to draw our attention to **conceptual metaphors** of SHAME used in the general corpus and in the children's books. As the next slide shows, the most exploited source domains of SHAME metaphors in the "guides to emotions" are, first, positively evaluated persons: an ADVISER, A HELPER and even a FRIEND (e.g. in such expressions as: *wstyd radzi, żeby...* 'shame advises you to...', *wstyd pomaga* 'shame helps' and *zaprzyjaźnij się ze swoim wstydem* 'make friends with your shame'). In the general corpus, however, an AGGRESSIVE PERSON, a WILD ANIMAL and FIGHT constitute the basis for the animization and personification of SHAME (as in expressions: *targany wstydem* 'tormented by shame', *wstyd by mnie zeżarł* 'shame would devour me', *zwycięstwo nad wstydem* 'a victory over shame'). Second, typical for children's books but marginal in the general corpus is the image of an object which is so difficult that a SUBJECT requires deep knowledge about it and to learn how to deal with it. The latter uses more often a metaphor of

tasteless or overeaten FOOD and DRINK (e.g. *Najadłem się wstydu* lit: ‘I overate shame’ – ‘I was ashamed’) or a metaphor of FIRE (e.g. *Plonął ze wstydu* ‘he was burning with shame’) – which turns our attention to most typical symptoms of wstyd/shame: reddening of the face and feeling hot. The source domains used most frequently in the children’s books seem to be rather new in our thinking about SHAME, and they are frequently used to indicate a positive evaluation of this emotion. On the whole, children learn from these books that shame is not only bad but also – and almost to the same extent – good for the SUBJECT, whereas in the general corpus its negative evaluation is strongly highlighted. A modification of the concept which leads to a positive evaluation of the feeling seems to be useful in the children’s books, as it helps the authors of the “guides to emotions” to convince children that SHAME should be accepted and so felt and expressed in an appropriate way, which needs some effort and learning. In the general corpus, however, the image of SHAME is much more negative, as the emotion is shown as something dangerous, unpleasant and uncontrolled.

### III. Conclusions

**[Sl. 13]** In sum, both similarities and differences in the conceptualization of WSTYD/SHAME visible in the general corpus and in the children’s books are worthy of our attention. The analyzed corpora confirm that wstyd/shame is seen as a human emotion, most often felt as an individual’s subjective feeling, quite often driven by external reprimands and acts of humiliation, and evaluated not only negatively, but also positively. Equally, there appears to be both an intention and a conscious decision by the authors and experts (mainly psychologists) of the analyzed “guides to emotions and values” for children to marginalize collective shame and moral shame in the children’s books, to provide balance in the number of male and female subjects of shame in the same corpus, to highlight the role of learning and understanding of emotions as well as regulating them, in these texts.

**[Sl. 14]** Thus, we should list many factors which could influence the conceptualization of WSTYD/SHAME visible in the analyzed texts:

1. **Target audience** (age, experience, needs and interests).
2. **Authors and experts** (knowledge, beliefs and intentions).
3. **Language** in which a text is prepared (and language of translation, where applicable) as well as other languages known to authors and experts and modifying their ways of thinking (e.g. English as a tool of international communication between psychologists).
4. **Genre** of texts and **main functions** of various texts (e.g. education and cognition vs. expression and interpretation).

## 5. Time at which a text is prepared and then read.

[Sl. 15] All of them seem to be so important in **shaping our concepts** and in **their internal diversity** that it is worth taking them into consideration and studying them in more detail in the context of linguistic conceptualization of emotions. In this presentation I managed to show only a small part of such investigations, concentrating on corpora studies and metaphors. Much work remains to be done and many questions to be asked in multidisciplinary research.

As we can agree with Shiota and Keltner writing that:

Just as with color, there may be an underlying, biological foundation for emotion that is imperfectly reflected in the vocabulary we use to discuss emotional experience in the social world. Both the **biological foundation of** and **cultural influences on emotion** have significant implications for human experience and opinion, and are worthy of intensive study. They should be considered **complementary, not competing, approaches** to a fascinating and complex topic [Shiota, Keltner 2005: 35].

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## II. Data

**A. National Corpus of Polish (NP):** *Narodowy Korpus Języka Polskiego* – search engine: PELCRA, available at: [www.nkjp.pl](http://www.nkjp.pl) [accessed: December 2014 – March 2015].

## B. Dictionaries

**ISJP:** *Inny słownik języka polskiego*, ed. M. Bańko, 2 vol., Warszawa 2000: PWN.

**SJPD:** *Słownik języka polskiego*, ed. W. Doroszewski, 11 vol., Warszawa 1958-1969: Wiedza Powszechna – PWN; CD-ROM: PWN, 1997. Available at: <http://www.sjpd.pwn.pl> [accessed: July 2014 – March 2015].

**USJP:** *Uniwersalny słownik języka polskiego*, ed. S. Dubisz, 4 vol., Warszawa 2003: PWN.

**WSJP:** *Wielki słownik języka polskiego*, ed. P. Żmigrodzki, PAN. Available at: <http://wsjp.pl> [accessed: July 2014 – March 2015].

### **C. The corpus of „guides to emotions and values” for children (ChB):**

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8. Częścik J., 2013d, *Poznajemy emocje IV: Strach i wstręt*, Gdańsk: Harmonia.
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12. Kołyszko W., 2004b, *Zakłète miasto i sekrety smutku*, il. W. Kołyszko, Gdańsk: GWP.
13. Kołyszko W., 2005, *Smok Lubomił i tajemnice złości*, il. W. Kołyszko, Gdańsk: GWP.
14. Kołyszko W., 2008, *Wyspa HopSiup i potęga radości*, il. W. Kołyszko, Gdańsk: GWP.
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### **Additional materials:**

1. PowerPoint presentation
2. Handout

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