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A linguistic look on boredom: causes, trends and ways of expression

According to Healy, boredom has been seen as a typical experience of a modern man for a long time (Healy 1984). Industrialized societies have created a favorable environment for providing not only productive machinery and consumer goods but they have also devised the notion of spare time as opposed to working time, a completely new phenomenon in the history of mankind (Friedmann 1960). It is claimed that in affluent, free and technologically advanced societies boredom is becoming a more and more significant problem both from an individual and social perspective (Bernstein 1975). Interestingly enough, boredom may occur either in an industrial and bureaucratic as well as in allegedly creative and self-fulfilling knowledge work (Costas, Kärreman 2016). All these considerations lead us to an attempt at analyzing boredom in a truly interdisciplinary way. Our research is deeply rooted in the theory of linguochronologization (also called linguochronography) and photodocumentation (Wierzchoń 2008, 2009), i.e. we delve into the past in order to find the earliest record of a given word or phrase with respect to the representative corpus of Polish texts comprising data from the years 1800-2000. In our view, this highly computerized linguistic method could well be used in boredom studies.

The aim of the paper is multidimensional. Firstly, our intention is to investigate boredom in a strictly linguistic fashion, i.e. to compare the usage of common Polish phraseological units and collocations and present the history of their productiveness in a form of automatically generated graphs. The examples of analyzed units derived from Polish dictionaries are *nudy na pudy*, *nudzić się jak mops*, *nudny jak flaki z olejem*, *przejmować nudą*, *(komuś) nudzi się*, *zabijać nudę*, *nuda ogarnia (kogoś)*, *umierać (wyć) z nudów*, *zdychać z nudów*. Moreover, the collocability of the noun *nuda* (e.g. *wielka*, *potworna*, *zabójcza*) and adjective *nudny* (e.g. *człowiek*, *zajęcie*, *książka*, *rozmowa*) will be examined. In the latter case, the emphasis will be

placed on an attempt to answer which objects, people and phenomena have caused language users to use boredom-related expressions. This will help us conduct research on the causes of boredom. A broader outlook will be provided by comparing the frequency of boredom-related expressions with working time statistics in order to measure the relationship between leisure and linguistically expressed boredom.