

WHAT IS *RIGHT* IN TRANSLATION: CROSS-CULTURAL DIFFERENCES FROM LINGUISTIC POINT OF VIEW

EGLĖ MARKUCKAITĖ, JONĖ GRIGALIŪNIENĖ

Department of Translation and Interpreting Studies

Faculty of Philology

Vilnius University

jone.grigaliuniene@ff.vu.lt

egle.markuckaite@gmail.com

The present paper reports on the study of the cultural word *right*, which is arguably one of the most culture-specific words in the English language (Wierzbicka 2006, 64). One of the means of measurement of culture-specificity is its translation into other languages. In the present study, the Parallel English-Lithuanian Corpus, compiled at the Centre of Computational Linguistics of Vytautas Magnus University, was used as the basis for checking the translations of the word *right*. Both quantitative and qualitative methods of research were applied in distinguishing the senses of the English word *right* and its correspondences in Lithuanian as well as making some inferences regarding the possible cultural differences. The research findings show that while the concept of the English word *right* is based on respect for rational thinking, logical deductions, and evidence, the Lithuanian correspondences are associated more with metaphysical truth and the dichotomy between GOOD and BAD.

1. INTRODUCTION

The relation between language and culture has been of particular interest to linguists at least since Wilhelm von Humboldt (1836), developed by Sapir and Whorf in the early twentieth century and recently elaborated by Geertz (2000), Goddard (2008), and especially by Wierzbicka (1980, 1988, 1992, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2013). The focus of the present paper will be to check the culture-specificity of the so-called cultural word *right* through the study of its translations into Lithuanian, using the English-Lithuanian parallel Corpus, compiled at the Centre of Computational Linguistics of Vytautas Magnus University. The paper will investigate the question of the meaning of the word *right* in the original text and analyse the ways it is rendered in the target text. It will also address the issue of the differences between Anglo culture and Lithuanian

culture as suggested by Lithuanian translations of the English word *right* and look into what kind of inferences can be made about the two cultures.

2. CULTURAL KEY WORDS

The idea of key cultural words has been tackled by numerous scholars of cultural studies and linguistics, namely, Evans-Prichard (1940), Williams (1976, 1983, 1985), Moeran (1989), Parkin (1997), Stubbs (2001), and Bennett, Grossberg and Morris (2005), etc. Yet, as Goddard (2004b) asserts, it was Wierzbicka who was the first to use a rigorous semantic analysis of cultural words.

Cultural key words are said to be words that are revealing of a particular culture's beliefs and values. Cultural words, as Goddard (2004a, 148) claims, "are conceptual 'focal points' for entire cultural domains, such that studying them leads into a dense complex of cultural values, attitudes, and expectations". By exploring these focal points in depth, Wierzbicka (1997) suggests, we may be able to show the general organizing principles which lend structure and coherence to a cultural domain as a whole. These principles are often claimed to have an explanatory power extending across different domains.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present corpus-based research employs both quantitative and qualitative methods to compare the senses and uses of the English key word *right* and its Lithuanian translations and to offer an insight into the possible existence of differences between Anglo culture and Lithuanian culture. The data used in this paper come from the Parallel English-Lithuanian Corpus compiled at the Centre of Computational Linguistics of Vytautas Magnus University. The Parallel English-Lithuanian Corpus (hereinafter referred to as PELC) consists of 70,813 sentences, or 2,023,005 words.

In the PELC, the English keyword *right* has been automatically found 724 times in 31 legal, publicistic and news articles and 9 fiction and non-fiction books. In a significant portion of the 724 instances found in PELC, *right* serves as a countable noun and is in many cases translated as *teisė*, a legal construct to be understood as entitlement to have or do something, or as a noun or an adjective translated as *dešinė* or its derivatives, used to indicate a spatial direction or denote a political inclination. Since these examples would definitely not yield many valuable insights to the existence of cultural differences between Anglo culture and Lithuanian culture, they will be excluded from further discussion. In addition, the analysis also excludes *right* as an adverb of an emphatic or modifying function, usually used to make a certain expression more accurate and precise or emphasise it, e.g. *I'm busy right now*; *There's the problem, right there*; *I'll locate the director right away*, etc. Setting aside cases like these, this leaves us with 305 occurrences of *right* retrieved

from 8 legal, publicistic and news articles and 9 fiction and non-fiction books which will be further classified and the most typical and interesting instances will be discerned.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is argued that the emergence of the concepts of *right* and *wrong* is connected with the British Enlightenment, especially the ideas developed by John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*: acknowledgement of the limitations of human knowledge, respect for facts, the value of accuracy and rationality, the value of autonomy, the peculiar character of the British empiricism (rationalism cum empiricism), their distrust of metaphysics and the decline of British people's interest in 'truth' (Wierzbicka 2006). Truth in Anglo culture is regarded valuable only if it is based on rationality and experience. In Lithuanian philosophy and Lithuanian culture, however, the understanding of truth seems more judgment than reason-based. As stated in *Lietuvos Filosofinė Mintis: Chrestomatija*, compiled by Gediminas Mikelaitis (1996), Lithuanian philosophers Konstantinas Sirvydas, Juozas Šalkauskis, and Vosylius Sezemanas see truth as a moral value depending on the will and righteousness of a person. If truth is defied, what is true and what is untrue cease to be opposites. In other words, the acknowledgment of truth is not a free-standing phenomenon, but is shaped by a person in whose mind truth is what he or she wants it to be. Therefore, truth is neither objective, nor constant, but depending on the judgment of the one who evaluates it. Stasys Šalkauskis (ibid.), similarly, asserts that truth is the correspondence of thought to reality. In its sense and purpose, knowledge must be true, that is, it has to correspond to reality and the real condition of things.

The 'distrust of metaphysics', common in Anglo culture, did not prevail in Lithuanian culture. In the Lithuanian mindset, facts and knowledge were and still are not appreciated better than truth. Subconsciously, a Lithuanian speaker would opt to find the truth rather than knowledge. Table 1 provides frequencies of the words *fact*, *truth*, *true*, as well as corresponding forms in Lithuanian taken from two corpora, that is, the BNC for the English language and the Corpus of Contemporary Lithuanian for the Lithuanian language (both corpora are of approximately the same size).

Table 1. *Frequency of occurrence of the words fact, truth, true and fact* and ties* in BNC and PELC corpora*

BNC		PELC	
<i>Fact</i>	36,295	<i>Fact*</i>	10,215
<i>Truth</i>	7,865	<i>Ties*</i>	27,279
<i>True</i>	17,577		

As Table 1 shows, the number of the instances of *fact* retrieved from the British National Corpus (hereinafter referred to as the BNC) is 36,295, whereas the numbers of instances of *truth* and *true* are 7,865 and 17,577, respectively, or 25,442 if combined together. It can be obviously seen that the number of the occurrences of *fact* is much greater than that of *truth* and *true*. Thus, as we consider the BNC to be one of the main reference points for the English language, we can claim that the use of *fact* is considerably more spread in English than *truth* and *true*, thus suggesting that the very concept of *fact* is more natural and preferred in Anglo world than truth. Yet the tendency in the Lithuanian context is, interestingly, completely reverse, as the number of the occurrences of *tiesa* and all its inflectional derivatives is 27,279 against the nearly three-times-smaller number of 10,215 occurrences of *faktas* and its inflectional derivatives.

Wierzbicka (2006) argues that languages other than English do not have equivalents of *right* and *wrong*, since these are purely Anglo-specific modern concepts, but they nevertheless do have exact semantic equivalents of *good* and *bad*, and *true*. Interestingly, it has been discovered that the bigger part of Lithuanian translations is rendered not by the use of the concepts relating to knowledge, rationality, reason and logicity, but the use of the concept TRUE as in *tiesa*, *teisybė*, *teisingas*, *teisus*. In the PELC, we find 10 instances of *right* as *tiesa* and 8 instances of *right* as *teisybė*, the two words being interchangeable synonyms of each other and exact equivalents of the concept TRUE, as well as 32 instances of *teisingas*, and 41 instances of *teisus*. Out of the final corpus data, exponents of the universal human concepts TRUE amount to nearly half of the samples, while the second half is comprised of more varied translations. This is particularly revealing, because the high proportion of the equivalents of the concept TRUE confirms the claim, at least partially, that cultures other than English, might really have no exact equivalents of *right* and *wrong*.

4.1. Senses of *RIGHT*

In the present paper, no attempt will be made to present and deal with all the possible aspects of the word *right*. Instead, the paper will offer a glance into the ‘moral’ and ‘intellectual’ senses of the word *right*, as these proved to be the most important and revealing of Anglo culture and most relevant in disclosing the cultural differences.

*4.1.1. The “moral” sense of *RIGHT**

Taylor (1989) and Porpora (2001) commented on the “separation of morality from its religious roots” and linked it with the idea that all beliefs require rational justification. “A “right” decision is like a “right” solution to a problem (mathematical, logical, ethical, or practical): it can be justified with reference to a set of procedures, rules, or criteria” (Wierzbicka 2006, 80). In the Lithuanian mindset, however, a decision which is morally *right* will never be as justified as a solution to a mathematical problem, as it is doubtful

whether morality in the Lithuanian context is as detached from religion as it is in the Anglo context:

- (1) *But I also believe, with St. Peter, "that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him."*
Be to, drauge su šv. Petru tikiu, „jog Dievas nėra šališkas. Jam priimtinos visos tautos ir žmonės, kurie pagarbiai jo bijo ir daro tai, kas gera“.
- (2) *Everywhere in God's plan for His creation, joy rewards right action.*
Dievo kūrinijos plane geri darbai apdovanojami džiaugsmu.

If one wants to view himself or herself righteous under the eyes of God, as shown in Examples (1) and (2), his or her actions *have* to be right and pious to be acceptable. *Right* in cases like this does not relate to intellectual judgment or the mental faculty. Neither does it bear a social sense. What it is concerned with is morality: moral values, moral standards, and the moral code. In a Christian world, it is important to feel led and accepted by God when the day comes; therefore, a devout Christian has to exhibit behaviour adhering to conventional moral principles. In the Anglo mindset, such behaviour is *right* behaviour. In the Lithuanian mindset, on the contrary, it is *good* behaviour. This is evidenced in the translations offered in Examples (1) and (2), as *right* here is rendered by *geras*, a Lithuanian equivalent of the English *good*.

Wierzbicka has noted that languages, other than English, “tend to rely, in moral discourse, on the universal concepts GOOD and BAD and, in conversational contexts, on the universal concept TRUE” (Wierzbicka 2006, 64). The dichotomy between GOOD and BAD in Lithuanian culture, as opposed to the dichotomy of RIGHT and WRONG in modern Anglo culture, is of significance here:

- (3) *In less "civilized" families what was considered loving communication might include acting out or rationalizing negative feelings through physical punishment, yelling, spanking, whipping, and all kinds of verbal abuse-all 'm the name of trying to help the children learn right from wrong.*

Tiesa, žemesnio intelekto šeimose į gerų tarpusavio santykių sąvoką įėjo ir neigiami jausmai, išreiškiami fizinėmis bausmėmis, riksmomis, pyla, plakimu, barimu ir visokiais žodiniiais įžeidimais. Jais norėta padėti vaikams atsirinkti, kas *gera* ir kas bloga.

Indeed, in a significant number of cases, in moral and other discourses, the English key word *right* has been translated as *geras*, an equivalent of *good*. While everyday Anglo discourse has been distrusting metaphysics, believing in reason, and grounding in rational ethics, *geras* in Lithuanian discourse, on the other hand, does not involve rationality or empirical support. According to the Modern Lithuanian Dictionary (hereinafter referred to as DŽ), there are seven senses of *geras* as an adjective, namely: 1) having positive features, appropriate, useful; 2) kind, merciful, mild;

3) knowing his job well, talented, smart; 4) pleasant, comfortable, cosy; 5) fair, big; 6) profitable; 7) healthy, strong. Of course, it should be taken into consideration that the DŽ includes a limited number of words and does not list every possible shade of meaning a word might have. Yet the definitions provided are sufficient enough to see that the Lithuanian *geras* is different from the English *right*, and the meanings it conveys are not grounded in reason as much.

(4) *I sincerely, deeply, fervently longed to do what was right; and only that.*
Aš nuoširdžiai, giliai ir karštai troškau daryti tai, kas teisinga, daugiau nieko.

(5) *It is right, noble, Christian: yet it breaks my heart!*
Tas nutarimas teisingas, kilnus, tikrai krikščioniškas, bet jis drasko man širdį.

In Examples (4) and (5), the Lithuanian *teisingas*, an equivalent of *true*, *fair*, and *just*, serves as the correspondence of the English *right*. The DŽ explains *teisingas* as follows: 1) establishing the truth, impartial: *just opinion, just decision*; 2) well-deserved: *fair penalty*; 3) worth being satisfied: *fair claim*. *Teisingas* is morphologically and semantically related to *tiesa* and *teisybė*, both equivalents of the English *truth*. Dictionary definitions do not really imply the ‘moral’ sense of the word, although the context shows otherwise. Yet what is important here is that the Lithuanian translations are once again based on the metaphysical concept TRUE. According to the philosopher Antanas Maceina (2004), *tiesa* “truth” in the Lithuanian mindset is always of a moral nature. What is *true*, is always straight, unambiguous, and not a matter of lies. *Tiesa* is also tightly connected with *teisybė*, as the two words can be used interchangeably. However, *teisybė* is essentially of a virtuous nature.

4.1.2. The “intellectual” sense of *RIGHT*

In a significant proportion of all cases, the English key word *right* primarily imparts the meaning of rationality and reasonableness, thus making ‘Intellectual’ the prevailing notional group of all the data analysed, and, possibly, the most usual and essential sense the word bears. In more than half of all the instances found, *right* is used to express one’s agreement with an opinion or a statement or to say that something is correct or appropriate.

(6) *Am I right, Baroness Ingram, of Ingram Park?*
Juk aš sakau tiesą, baronese Ingrem iš Ingrem Parko?

(7) *You know, young lady, you’re right.*
— Žinote, jaunoji ledi, jūs esate teisi.

(8) *He’s right, commander.*
— Jis sako tiesą, viršininke.

(9) *My lily-flower, you are right now, as always.*
 Mano gražioji lelija, tavo teisybė kaip ir visada.

(10) *Mr. Kohler is right, Vittoria said, the idea belonged to Lemaitre.*
 — Ponas Koleris yra teisus, — pritarė Viktorija. — Idėja priklauso Lemaitrė.

As seen in Example (6), what the interlocutor intends by saying *Am I right (...)?* is not really to ask for evaluation of the correctness of her statement, but to evoke approval of her thinking. The accuracy of expression is in this case important, but not as much as the appreciation of the words said. The question – *Am I right?* – prompts the addressee to confirm the expectation of a positive answer, stating that “yes, it is like she says”. It also functions to facilitate the conversation and stimulate further discussion. As evidenced in subsequent Examples (6–10), *right* in many cases shows that something that a person has said or done is considered acceptable. By saying that something is *right*, he or she approves of what has been said and considers it to be well-spoken and, most importantly, in line with his or her own knowledge or opinion, and, therefore, – justified.

Furthermore, a wider context concerning Example (10) would show us that the interlocutors are discussing the origin of the Bing Bang Theory. In Example (10), Vittoria acknowledges that what Mr Kohler said, by having previously suggested that the author of the idea was a Catholic monk named Georges Lemaitre, is correct. Vittoria shows that she apparently agrees with Mr Kohler’s claim and adds a supplementary comment in support to the remark she considers being correct. The back translation of the sentence could sound in the Lithuanian language as follows: “*Mr Kohler is right,*” *Vittoria agreed, “the idea belongs to Lemaitre.”* As seen, the translator has chosen *teisus*, just like in Example (7), as an equivalent to *right*. *Teisus* might indeed be treated as an equivalent to *right*, yet while the English *right* here denotes *I agree* and serves as *correct*, an assumption derived from rational deductions, the Lithuanian *teisus* here primarily implies *corresponding to truth*. In Example (10), both sentences – the original one and its translation – signify that a statement of Mr Kohler is considered to be proper, however, while the message of the text in the source language is conveyed via seeking rationalising, the message transmitted by the text in the target language is generated via seeking truth.

Interestingly, while *right* in English sentences like these functions as an expression of an agreement based on intellectual judgment or some interpersonal knowledge, its Lithuanian correspondences – *teisus, tiesa, teisybė*, all morphologically and semantically related to truth – tend to convey agreement not via testing claims through reason or factual knowledge, but grounding them on the concept of truth. Thus, Lithuanian correspondences do not state that something is merely and simply in agreement with someone’s thinking as much as they do acknowledge that its validity is being tested via truth-finding.

To say that something is *right* means not only that a statement is viewed as acceptable, but that it is also considered correct. Thus, *right as justified by an appeal to reason, available evidence, agreed to by both sides* and *right as correct* are intrinsically related and closely tied, and the two meanings are too entangled to always fully differentiate and separate from one another. However, while in some cases, as seen in Examples (6–10), *right* communicates the foreground meaning of ‘I agree with what you say,’ in others it primarily imparts the meaning of ‘What you say is correct.’

(11) *Langdon realized Kohler was right.*

Lengdonui teko pripažinti, kad Koleris yra teisus.

(12) *Plato was right when he saw in this doctrine the enemy of his caste state; and he hated it more than any other of the ‘subversive’ doctrines of his time.*

Platonas nesuklydo, šią doktriną traktuodamas kaip savosios kastomis grįstos valstybės priešą, todėl nekenė jo labiau už bet kurią kitą savo meto „griaunamąją“ doktriną.

Thus, in Example (11), it is not that Langdon comes to the realisation that he agrees with what Kohler has said, but that he understands these words are accurate. Of course, by admitting that something is correct, one acknowledges that he or she has tested the credibility of the fact said and consequently agrees with it. However, although acclaiming a statement to be accurate goes together with eventually agreeing with it, *right, as agreeable to both sides*, is in these cases not the primary meaning. The Lithuanian translation of the sentence renders *right* as *teisus*. The back translation of the sentence in the Lithuanian language would be similar to: “*Langdon had to admit that Kohler was truthful.*” Most likely, what is meant by saying that something is true or someone is being truthful is that the thing or person in question is said to be corresponding to reality or truth and speaking of what is true rather than what is factually correct.

Similarly, in Example (12), the speaker does not really state that he agrees with Plato’s ideas, but he regards Plato’s ideas to be specifically in agreement with his own. A different opinion, as the Lithuanian translation implies, would be regarded as a mistake, whereas his opinion is viewed as correct. The translator has rendered the component “Plato was right” by “Platonas nesuklydo,” which, when literally back-translated, would sound “Plato did not make a mistake”. The translation suggests that a deviation from the thinking of the author of the statement would be treated as a mistake and would thus make Plato’s ideas seem erroneous. The source text, although imparts the meaning of correctness, does not bear an evident semantic component of a mistake: to say that something is correct or that someone made a correct choice does not necessarily mean there should be some mistake involved. By translating the English key word *right* by *(ne)klysti* or *(ne)apsirikti*, the translator conveys the meaning of something being judged as correct; however, such translations, including the semantic component of mistake, also attach a different shade of meaning the source text might not even have.

Table 2. *Lithuanian translations of somebody is/was right phrase*

	Number of occurrences	Percentage (%)
Teisus	20	52
Neklysti/neapsirikti	6	16
Teisingai	3	8
Teisybė	2	5
Tiesa	1	3
Miscellaneous	6	16

Table 2 illustrates all the Lithuanian translations of the English phrase *somebody is right* as evidenced in the PELC. Notably, more than half of all the instances of Lithuanian translations, i.e. 52%, feature *teisus* or its derivative as an equivalent to *right*. With concordance lines containing *teisus*, *teisingai*, *teisybė* and *tiesa*, the cognates deriving from the root *teis** and *ties**, both closely related to *truth*, account for as much as 68% of all the provided Lithuanian correspondences of the phrase, with the only exceptions being sporadic translations of various sorts as well as *neklysti/neapsirikti*, implying that somebody's opinion or claims are without mistakes involved and are therefore correct. Consequently, an assumption could be made that to be *right* in the Lithuanian mindset in general means "to say and know the truth."

4.2. THAT'S RIGHT and RIGHT

The intellectual sense of right is clearly felt in the phrase *That's right*, which is very often used in dialogues. Grigaliūnienė (2013) conducted a study of the use of the word *right* in Lithuanian learner of English speech and compared its status and use in two spoken corpora, that is, the LOCNEC (the Louvain Corpus of Native English Conversation) for native English speech and the LINDSEI-LITH (the Lithuanian component of the Louvain International Database of Spoken English Interlanguage) for Lithuanian learner English speech. Grigaliūnienė has discovered that "in comparison to native speakers, Lithuanian learners of English use the word *right* in their speech according to their own specific patterns and purposes" (2013, 217). It is interesting that Lithuanian speakers of English tend to use the English key word *right* more extensively in collocations such as *right now*, *right place*, *was right*, *right in front*, or *right when*, which is not the case with native speakers of English, but do not use the phrase *That's right* in their speech at all. It might be implied that Lithuanian learners of English do not really comprehend the meaning of *That's right*, as the use of the phrase *That's right* is culture-specific and, therefore, unnatural in the Lithuanian mindset. As Grigaliūnienė notes, Lithuanian learners tend to indicate understanding and compliance by the use of such response items as *okay*, *yes*, *of course*, or *yes of course*. It therefore seems that native speakers of English, as

Grigaliūnienė claims, use the word *right* to show their involvement with the interlocutor, whereas non-native speakers are more concerned with exactness and are less interactional, which, as a result, might be the reason why native speakers view non-native speakers as uncooperative or impolite.

Meanwhile, the present research has found that the English phrase *That's right* is most generally, with only two exceptions, translated by the use of the metaphysical concept TRUTH. Interestingly, not a single instance has been found where *That's right* would be translated as *okay, yes, of course, or yes of course*. The different findings concerning the Lithuanian correspondences of the English key word *right* in spoken discourse as observed in Grigaliūnienė's study and the present research show there are differences in the use of *right* in spoken dialogues and written dialogues.

(13) *Yes, that's right.*

Taip, tai teisybė.

(14) *Isn't there a stream somewhere near here?" he whispered.*

That's right, there is a stream.

– Ar čia kur nors arti nėra upelio? – sušnibždėjo jis.

– Teisingai, yra upelis.

(15) *That's right!*

– Teisingai!

In PELC, the conversational routine *That's right* has been recorded 13 times. As it has been already mentioned, out of thirteen, eleven instances have been translated by the use of the universal concept TRUE, as some of the examples provided above show. While *all right* can occur in different contexts and not necessarily in spoken discourse, the Corpus displays a tendency of it to appear in dialogues more often. Similarly, *That's right* seems to be functional mostly in dialogues as well. *That's right* usually comes forward as a conversational response to somebody else's statement. The speaker thus evaluates the claim with reference to some factual knowledge and evidence. For instance, Example (14) is the reply to the question "Isn't there a stream somewhere near here?" Notice that the question is somewhat declarative and endorses a belief that there must be, or should be, if memory serves the interlocutor *right*, a stream nearby. The negative question thus calls for confirmation. By answering *That's right*, the speaker confirms that the presuppositions of the interlocutor are indeed correct with regard to the evidence – the knowledge that the stream is to be found nearby – the speaker holds. Moreover, the speaker also shows his or her cooperation and engagement in conversation. Meanwhile, the confirmation given in the Lithuanian translation of the phrase, just like in Examples (13) and (15) seems to be expressed in a less factual manner, as it is based on what one considers to be *teisinga* "true" rather

than characterised by facts.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the present research have revealed that the culture-specific English key word *right* – whether used in intellectual senses or moral senses – is rendered in the overwhelming majority of Lithuanian correspondences by the concept TRUE, a semantic primitive. The English *right* is different from Lithuanian truth-related exponents, as it is found to be based on logical deductions, reasonable thinking, and evidence, with metaphysics being distrusted, while the Lithuanian correspondences of the word are, on the contrary, grounded in truth. The dichotomy of TRUE and UNTRUE in the Lithuanian translations of the English key word *right* is supplemented with the dichotomy of GOOD and BAD, with GOOD and BAD being treated as universal concepts.

With such differences between the lexical items of the source text in English and those in the target text in Lithuanian, subtle shifts or changes in meaning are likely. However, they are unavoidable, because while translating culture-specific instances like these involving *right*, translators are challenged to perceive the intrinsic semantic peculiarities of the word of a different culture and express it in a natural manner in home culture. Yet the differences in meaning in the semantic content of the English key word *right* and its Lithuanian correspondences do not only apply to the lexicon of the two cultures. Instead, these differences show that the very mindsets of both cultures might differ as well. It is questionable whether the Lithuanian speaker of English is capable of fully understanding the underlying fundamental meaning aspects of *right*, as, for a Lithuanian speaker, this is a concept of an alien culture. As Maceina claims (2004, 192), “what has not been named, is not mine, is not for me, is not in me; it is outside my existence altogether.” An unknown phenomenon, as *right*, is beyond comprehension because it is part of a very different culture. According to Maceina (2000, 310), “translation does not provide comprehension; translation is based on comprehension.” Indeed, the very subtle meaning lying in the English word *right* does not always reflect in Lithuanian translations. However, it would be impossible to retain the meaning of culture-specific concepts unaltered and still preserve it natural in the target language.

The present research focused on the semantic and functional properties of the English key word *right* and its Lithuanian translations as well as the existence of cultural differences between Anglo culture and Lithuanian culture. However, this study is limited to the data provided by the Parallel English-Lithuanian Corpus which includes only written material from legal, publicistic and news articles as well as fiction and non-fiction. The research complements what has been already done in the field and encourages further studies into the concepts *right* and *wrong* in academic and other contexts across different languages, which, due to the limited scope of the paper, could not have been done.

DATA SOURCES

PELC – Parallel English-Lithuanian Corpus, available from: http://donelaitis.vdu.lt/main.php?id=4&nr=1_2_1. [Accessed on 24 November 2013].

BNC – *British National Corpus*, available from: <http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/>. [Accessed on 24 November 2013].

REFERENCES

- Bennett T., Grossberg L., Morris M., eds. 2005. *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Malden: Blackwell.
- Evans-Pritchard E. E. [1940] 1968. *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Geertz C. 2000. *Culture, Custom and Ethics*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Goddard C. 1997. Cultural Values and ‘Cultural Scripts’ of Malay (Bahasa Melayu). *Journal of Pragmatics* 27 (2), 183–201.
- Goddard C. 1998. Bad Arguments against Semantic Primitives. *Theoretical Linguistics* 24 (2/3), 129–156.
- Goddard C. 2003. *Whorf meets Wierzbicka: Variation and Universals in Language and Thinking*. *Language Sciences* 25 (4), 393–432.
- Goddard C. 2004a. ‘Cultural scripts’: A New Medium for Ethnopragmatic Instruction. *Cognitive Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition, and Foreign Language Teaching*, eds. Achard M., Niemeier S. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 143–163.
- Goddard C. 2004b. Semantic Primes within and across Languages. *Contrastive Analysis in Language: Identifying linguistic units of comparison*, eds. Dominique W., Defrancq B., Coleman T., Noël D. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 13–43.
- Goddard C. 2005. *The Quest for Meaning...: Communication, Culture and Cognition*. Biddeford: University of New England.
- Goddard C., ed. 2008. *Cross-Linguistic Semantics*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Goddard C. 2012. ‘Early interactions’ in Australian English, American English, and English English: Cultural Differences and Cultural Scripts. *Journal of Pragmatics* 44, 1038–1050.
- Grigaliūnienė J. 2013. The Status and Use of the Word *RIGHT* in Native Speaker and Learner Speech: A Case of Lithuanian Learners of English. *Anglistics in Lithuania: Cross-Linguistic and Cross-Cultural Aspects of Study*, eds. Šeškauskienė I., Grigaliūnienė J. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 209–225.
- Humboldt W. V. 1836. *Über die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaues und ihren Einfluss auf die geistige Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechts*. Berlin: F. Dümmler.
- Locke J. [1690] 1959. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Maceina A. 2000. *Raštai VI*. Vilnius: Mintis.
- Maceina A. 2004. *Raštai IX*. Vilnius: Margi raštai.
- Mikelaitis G. 1996. *Lietuvos filosofinė mintis: Chrestomatija*. Vilnius: Aidai.
- Moeran B. 1989. *Language and Popular Culture in Japan*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.

- Parkin R. 1997. *Kinship: An Introduction to Basic Concepts*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Porpora D. V. 2001. *Landscapes of the Soul: The Loss of Moral Meaning in American Life*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Stubbs M. 2001. *Words and Phrases*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Taylor C. 1989. *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Whorf B. L. 1976. *Language, Thought and Reality: Selected Writings*. Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press.
- Wierzbicka A. 1980. *Lingua Mentalis: The Semantics of Natural Language*. Sydney: Academic.
- Wierzbicka A. 1988. *The Semantics of Grammar*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Wierzbicka A. 1992. *Semantics, Culture, and Cognition: Universal Human Concepts in Culture-Specific Configurations*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wierzbicka A. 1997. *Understanding Cultures through their Key Words: English, Russian, Polish, German, and Japanese*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wierzbicka A. 2002a. Australian Cultural Scripts—Bloody Revisited. *Journal of Pragmatics* 34 (9), 1167–1209.
- Wierzbicka A. 2002b. Russian Cultural Scripts: The Theory of Cultural Scripts and its Applications. *Ethos* 30 (4), 401–432.
- Wierzbicka A. 2003. *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: the Semantics of Human Interaction*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Wierzbicka A. 2004. Jewish Cultural Scripts and the Interpretation of the Bible. *Journal of Pragmatics* 36, 575–599.
- Wierzbicka A. 2006. *English: Meaning and Culture*. New York: OUP.
- Wierzbicka A. 2013. Translatability and the Scripting of Other Peoples' Souls. *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 24 (1), 1–22.
- Williams R. 1976. *Keywords: a Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Williams R. 1983. *Keywords: a Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Williams R. 1985. *Keywords: a Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Willmott R. 2002. Reclaiming Metaphysical Truth for Educational Research. *British Journal of Educational Studies* 50 (3), 339–362.
- Wolf H. G., Polzenhagen F. 2009. *World Englishes: A Cognitive Sociolinguistic Approach*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

„*RIGHT*“ VERTIMAS Į LIETUVIŲ KALBĄ: KULTŪRŲ SKIRTUMAI KALBINIU POŽIŪRIU

EGLĖ MARKUCKAITĖ, JONĖ GRIGALIŪNIENĖ

Santrauka

Straipsnyje nagrinėjamas anglų kalbos raktinis žodis *right*, jo reikšmės ir vertimas į lietuvių kalbą. Anot A. Wierzbickos, esama tam tikrų kultūrinių konceptų, kaip antai *right* (ir *wrong*), kurie dėl savo specifikos yra skirtingai interpretuojami tos tautos kultūroje, kuriai jie priklauso, ir kitose kultūrose, kurioms šie konceptai svetimi. Siekiant išsiaiškinti, ar tikrai žodis *right* gali būti laikomas specifiniu, būdingu tik angliškai kultūrai žodžiu, buvo nagrinėjami angliškojo *right* vertimai į lietuvių kalbą, pateikiami Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto Kompiuterinės lingvistikos centro lygiagrečiąjame anglų-lietuvių kalbų tekстыne, ir patyrinėti, ką šis žodis reiškia ir kokių prasmų gali turėti skirtinguose kontekstuose. Buvo pastebėta, kad angliškas raktinis žodis *right* daugiausia vartojamas perteikti reikšmėms, susijusioms su mąstymu, protine veikla, dedukcija, socialiniu gyvenimu ir morale. Išsamesnė moralinių ir intelektualinių žodžio *right* prasmų analizė parodė, kad *right* yra kultūros konceptas, veikiausiai neturintis vienareikšmių analogų lietuvių kalboje. Lietuvių kultūroje *right* prasmėms perteikti dažniausiai pasitelkiami kiti leksinės raiškos būdai. Paaiškėjo, kad žodis *right* turi savo specifiką: į lietuvių kalbą jis paprastai verčiamas pasitelkiant TIESOS, teisingumo, teismo sąvoką arba grindžiamas gėrio (*geras*) ir blogio (*blogas*) dichotomija, o anglų kultūroje, kurioje ypač svarbios žinios, mąstymas, pagrįstumas tam tikrais turimais įrodymais ir logika, – priešingai – *right* susijęs ne tiek su TIESA, kiek su intelektu ir jo išdavomis.