Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz’s Views on Ontology

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Abstract
This article will address the views of Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz - the leading representative of the Lvov-Warsaw School. I will present arguments proving that the Polish philosopher could have anticipated contemporary metaontological discussions.

In the first part, I will provide a profile of Ajdukiewicz as a representative of the Lvov-Warsaw School. I will outline the assumptions of his metaepistemological projects: radical conventionalism and semantic epistemology. In the second part, I will argue that the former project resulted in views on existence similar to Hilary Putnam’s and Eli Hirsch’s, whereas the outcomes of the other project are views similar to those of Amie Thomasson and her easy ontology project.

Keywords: deflationism, Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz, Lvov-Warsaw School, metaontology, ontology

1 The Lvov-Warsaw School

Jan Woleński – an outstanding expert on the Lvov Warsaw School – noticed that its intellectual background is characterized by the following factors: genetic – the teaching activity of Kazimierz Twardowski (1866-1938) and his students,1 geographical – the School’s location in Lvov and Warsaw, temporal – the School’s establishment at the end the 19th century and its continued work until the Second World War, and factual – common philosophical ideas [25, p. 1].

Woleński assumes that the Lvov-Warsaw School was founded on the 15th of November 1895, when Kazimierz Twardowski came to Lvov and was appointed the chair of the philosophy department at the local university [25, p. 2]. He listed the metaphysical ideas [25, p. 72]
that were shared by Twardowski and his students, among others, Jan Łukasiewicz (1878-1956),\(^2\) Tadeusz Kotarbiński (1886-1981),\(^3\) Tadeusz Czeżowski (1891-1981)\(^4\) and Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz (1890-1963):

(i) The starting point of a philosophical analysis is its collective understanding;

(ii) The critic of the philosophy for its way of solving problems;

(iii) An emphasis on the formal correctness of reasoning;

(iv) That there is a direct connection between logic, philosophy and language;

(v) A distinction between philosophy and world view.

According to Woleński, point (i) should be understood to mean that Twardowski and the aforementioned representatives of the school raised specific philosophical problems rather than constructing philosophical systems, therefore their approach to philosophical practice can be described as a problem oriented one. Hence, they avoided so-called speculative philosophy (ii). They put great emphasis on the correctness of formulated thoughts; they called for using the methods of formal logic in philosophical analysis on a larger scale (iii). Therefore, they focused mainly on language and logic in their deliberations (iv). Such philosophy, which is reliably produced through the use of formal methods, should be distinguished from the world view each of us has (v). The aforementioned metaphysical ideas (i)-(v) are claimed by Woleński to be typical of the analytic current [25, p. 76].

1.1 Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz as a Representative of the Lvov-Warsaw School

The thread mentioned in (iv) was emphasized most in the philosophy of Ajdukiewicz, as he believed that most philosophical problems stem from language [25, p. 77]. Ajdukiewicz was born in Tarnopol in 1890 and died in Warsaw in 1963. In 1913 and 1914, he attended lectures by David Hilbert, Leonard Nelson and Edmund Husserl.

During the First World War, he served in the Austrian artillery, first in Vienna and Kraków and then at fort Verle, which at that time was located on the Austro-Hungarian border. In 1919, he joined the Polish army and managed the armored train during the Polish-Ukrainian War,
he was also a volunteer in the Polish-Bolshevik War in 1920, during which he served in the mountain artillery.

He spent the inter-war years on intense and creative work at the University of Lvov and at the University of Warsaw, he published in the journal *Erkenntnis* and took part in international philosophical conferences: the Seventh International Congress of Philosophy held in Oxford in 1930, the Eighth International Congress of Philosophy in Prague in 1934, the Paris Congress in 1935, and he participated in the Third International Congress for the Unity of Science in Paris in 1938. His most significant concepts, such as radical conventionalism, a theory of meaning using the concept of a directive theory of meaning and the program of semantic epistemology, all come from this period.

During the Second World War, he was employed at the Ivan Franko National University of Lvov and as an associate professor at the Lvov National Medical University. He also took part in clandestine teaching and worked as an accountant at a slaughterhouse. After the Second World War, he was subsequently the professor of two universities: in Poznań and in Warsaw. It is noteworthy that in the first half year he stayed in the United States and in Great Britain, where he gave a series of lectures. This is what he said about those stays:

> Altogether I gave 14 lectures abroad on logical semantics and the methodology of science and carried out discussions and scientific conversations with professors from 11 universities and research institutes. I wrote some preparatory studies for a selection of my texts entitled *Language and Knowledge*, which was to be published in America.

In the last years of his life, he was working on the book *Pragmatic Logic*, but he did not finish it. The book was ultimately published in 1974, edited by Halina Mortimer and Klemens Szaniawski.

Assessing the philosophical heritage of Ajdukiewicz, it must be underlined that his works are at the crossroads of philosophy of language, epistemology and methodology of science. However, his main philosophical interests centered on the influence of language on cognition. That interest is evidenced by his concept of language – the directive theory of meaning.
2 The Directive Theory of Meaning

Ajdukiewicz put forward a theory of meaning which was to be based on syntactical pragmatic assumptions. At that time, paradoxes connected with the use of the notion of “truth” were proving troublesome for systematic reflection in the semantic field. On that account, he suggested providing a definition of the notion of “meaning” that does not make reference to semantic terminology i.e. notions like “reference” and “truth”. In other words, Ajdukiewicz made an attempt to give a definition of meaning which could be characterized by accuracy and precision, without involving semantic considerations.

This concept first appeared in the article On the Meaning of Expressions [1], in which he chose a connotation theory of meaning as the starting point for his investigations on linguistic issues. According to his theory, the notion of “a square” not only refers to geometric figures but also connotates two properties connected with these figures: rectangularness and equilateralness. Based on an analysis of Mill’s theory, Ajdukiewicz pointed out that someone who accepts the statement “This is a square!” cannot refute the statements “This is rectangular” or “This is equilateral”. For that reason, he was able to indicate “inferential” rules which govern the language.

The aforementioned rules specify relations between certain expressions in a language. If the statement Z1 and the adopted rules indicate that Z1 implies Z2, it means that on accepting statement Z1 statement Z2 should also be accepted. If on accepting statement Z1, Z2 is refuted, it means that the rules concerning the proper use of the language have been violated.

In Ajdukiewicz’s view, the correct use of a language means following three types of rules: (1) axiomatic, (2) empirical and (3) deductive.

Ad. 1) Axiomatic rules: There are such expressions in a language which must be categorically accepted, e.g. “Every square is a rectangle”. The sentence “A is A” must be accepted unconditionally. If someone does not do so, it means that they do not use that language correctly and break its rules.

Ad. 2) Empirical rules: Statements which express a reaction to an experience must be accepted, e.g. an appropriate reaction to the irritation of a nerve is a shout: “that hurts”. Empirical rules were to ensure the empirical character of the language

Ad. 3) Deductive rules: They specify the relations between statements in a language, e.g. on accepting the truth of the statement “Stanisław is older than Jan”, we must accept the truth of the sentence “Jan
is younger than Stanislaw”. It means that deductive rules specify the implication relation between individual statements in a language. These are directives which make us accept a given sentence when other sentences have already been accepted.

2.1 The Definition of “Meaning”

The aforementioned rules enabled Ajdukiewicz to formulate a precise and accurate definition of meaning. In his opinion, such a definition can only be given for languages in which scientific knowledge is formulatable, because scientific knowledge can be subjected to the process of idealization.

The process of language idealization involves specifying direct and indirect meaning relations. Ajdukiewicz introduced the concept of coherent and closed languages. He wrote about this concept of language in the articles On the Meaning of Expressions [1], Language and Meaning [2] and in The World-Picture and the Conceptual Apparatus [3]. According to Ajdukiewicz, a coherent language is a language in which all meaning relations are determined in a direct and indirect way.

The expressions of a given language are connected in an indirect way when they can be found within one directive. As an example, we can take words like “a square” and “a rectangle”, which may appear in indirect meaning relations because of the axiomatic rule that affords the statement “Every square is a rectangle”. On the other hand, expressions which are related to each other by means of a chain of other expressions are related indirectly.

In a closed language, every expression has its place in the structure, that is why a coherent and closed language is one which has such a structure. In accordance with this view, a properly formulated scientific theory means a coherent and closed language.

The opposite of these languages are incoherent and open languages, which are composed of isolated fragments, where we can find expressions which do not connect to with other expressions; by adding further expressions, new meaning relations are created.

According to Ajdukiewicz a precise definition of meaning mainly concerns coherent and closed languages, so basically the languages of scientific theories. Next, he introduced the notion of “matrix”, which was supposed to emphasize that a language has a specified and coherent structure. The aforementioned rules prove that a language has a coherent structure, as they specify the direct and indirect meaning relations
between the expressions of the language. Therefore, they specify the matrix of the language, and so its strict structure.

These conclusions enabled Ajdukiewicz to define meaning as the common feature of all synonymous expressions. As an example of synonymous expressions, we can consider two words: “a whip” and “a lash”. This is the case because their use is governed by the same meaning directives. That means that every sentence where the word “a whip” is used should be accepted in the same circumstances as with the word “a lash”. As an example, I can quote the sentences “The coachman is holding a whip” and “The coachman is holding a lash”. Both sentences are to be accepted in the same circumstances. The mentioned expressions are synonymous in a given language; they have a similar function, so they have the same position in the matrix of a given language. That means that a strict definition of meaning is as follows: it is the common feature of synonymous expressions, in other words, expressions which have an identical position in the matrix of a language.

3 Metaepistemology

3.1 Radical Conventionalism

According to Woleński, radical conventionalism\(^\text{11}\) is a result of using the directive theory of meaning for epistemological investigations [25, p. 206].\(^\text{12}\) Ajdukiewicz demonstrated the main idea of radical conventionalism in the article The World-Picture and Conceptual Apparatus [3], it is expressed in the following thesis:

Of all the judgments which we accept and which accordingly constitute our entire world-picture, none is unambiguously determined by experiential data; every one of them depends on the conceptual apparatus we choose to use in representing experiential data. [3, p. 67]

By the term conceptual apparatus, we shall understand the above-described theory of complete and coherent languages. The set of sentences which is accepted on the ground of a complete and coherent language is dependent on the rules of that language. In other words, all the rules of a given language determine the conceptual apparatus; in Ajdukiewicz’s view, it is a so-called “world-picture”. One may use many languages for describing reality, and so, many in consequence “world-pictures”. It is worth noting that this concept rules out metaphysical
deliberations on what the actual structure of reality is, because it is hard to favor one of those pictures.

Therefore, on the ground of radical conventionalism, existential statements cannot be derived, because this conception is a result of resting on the assumptions of the directive theory of meaning, which is based on syntactic-pragmatic rather than semantic terminology.

After formulating the thesis of radical conventionalism, Ajdukiewicz abandoned the conception of complete and coherent languages, as he stated they are just a “theoretical fiction”. In actuality, nobody had managed to formulate such a language. However, the influence of Alfred Tarski should also be highlighted; he rehabilitated semantics, which at that time was riddled with numerous antinomies (e.g. liar’s paradox).

The Polish logician formulated a correct and accurate definition of a true sentence. Therefore, Ajdukiewicz, inspired by Tarski’s investigations, could abandon his projects based on syntactic and pragmatic assumptions (radical conventionalism and directive theory of meaning) in favor of investigations concerning semantics. Nonetheless, he would go on using rules (1)-(3) in the philosophical problems he raised.

3.2 Semantic Epistemology

In the metaepistemological program he proposed – semantic epistemology – a relevant issue is that language is governed by “inferential” rules. The name of the project appeared for the first time in the article A Semantical Version of the Problem of Transcendental Idealism [4], in which he indicated that philosophical problems should be approached from the linguistic and semantic side

[...] in which epistemological problems are programmatically studied from the perspective of language as a system of expressions endowed with meaning. Its theses are formulated in such a way that they concern expressions, i.e. sentences and terms, but sentences and terms of a definite language which endows them with meaning. [4, p. 142]

In the article Epistemology and Semiotics [5] he emphasizes that an epistemologist who studies cognition from the linguistic side should do the following:

In epistemological inquiries one may, however apart from the language of syntax - also use the object-language. In this case one has to obey the rules of that language; problems
formulated in the object-language have then to be solved in accordance with the same rules (criteria) which are obeyed in purely substantive (e.g. scientific) inquiries in which no epistemological analysis is made. A philosopher [...] must be a realist and join scientists in claiming that houses, trees, mountains, etc. exist, understanding this claim literally, as it is understood by scientists who use the object-language. [5, p. 184]

By the term semantics, Ajdukiewicz means a branch of logic in which we use a metalanguage circumscribing its object-language [5, p. 184]. He reckons that only in such a rich language, in which we use language the expressions of that language apart from the names of expressions of that, can we construct an adequate definition of truth and an adequate definition of denotation. Constructing adequate definitions will allow us to move on from statements about expressions to statements about objects referred to. If an epistemologist has such a rich language at his disposal, he can make existential statements:

        [...] when using object-language sentences he has to obey the rules of that language; if those rules demand the acceptance of the sentence ‘horses exist’, then he must accept it. [5, p. 191]

In other words, semantics is a key discipline, whose subject is determining references between linguistic expressions in order to make ontological deliberations, as it enables formulating existential statements, i.e. ones which concern existence.

3.2.1 The Article On the Notion of Existence

Ajdukiewicz raised questions concerning existence in the article On the Notion of Existence [6], entering into the discussion with the stance of classic transcendental idealism.13

In his critique, the important thing is the deductive directive (3), which he presented in the form of the so-called existential generalization, which means that if we accept the truth of the statement “x is F”, we must accept the truth of a statement in the form “There is something which is F”. As an example, we can consider a statement like, “This table is round”. If we take this statement to be true, we must accept another statement, “Tables exist”. Accepting the truth of the latter is a result of following empirical norms:
In uttering his object-language statements the author observes, among other things, empirical rules; he is prepared, for example, to assert the sentence ‘this table is round’ on the basis of what he perceives right now. He also accepts the basic postulates of ontology and consequently from the above sentence he is prepared to deduce the sentence ‘tables exist’. The author accepts Lesniewski’s definition ‘a exists means the same as: for some x, x is a’. He also accepts Lesniewski’s definition of an object, namely the definition ‘a is an object means the same as for some x, a is x’. [6, p. 216]

Thereby, any competent language user can solve questions of existence, in this case of specific objects, on the basis of empirical experience and following the rules of proper use of a language, in this case concerning concrete objects like tables.

The arguments presented serve Ajdukiewicz to prove the incoherence of classic objective idealism. In his view, the adherents of this position claim:

[…] that bodies exist means only that this sentence fulfils the empirical criteria. Consequently every object-language sentence about the world, it its meaning is specified in accordance with the definition which obtains in a language so constructed appears to be a expression referring to cognitive criteria […]. Idealist have this characteristic feature of their language in mind when they assert their fundamental thesis: the word is only correlate of cognitive criteria […]. [6, p. 215-216]

Ajdukiewicz notes that idealists bring down the existence question to being a correlate of cognitive criteria. As a consequence, they claim that the objects of experience do not exist in reality.

It consists of a part expressed in the empirical language which claims that the objects of experience do not exist in reality; and of a part expressed in the intentional language which claims that the objects of experience exist intentionally with respect to criteria. [6, p. 219]

According to idealists, the objects of experience exist intentionally with respect to cognitive criteria. Ajdukiewicz maintains that such a view requires accepting two theses, namely, (T1) “the objects of experience
do not exist in reality” and (T2) “the objects of experience exist intentionally”.

Ajdukiewicz points out that accepting thesis (T1) requires the idealist to adopt empirical language. Therefore, if an idealist proves the truth of thesis (1), he questions the rules accepted in the object-language. The Polish philosophers claim that it is contradictory to use a language of empirical use and to simultaneously deny that the objects of experience do exist in reality. In other words, the representatives of objective idealism cannot maintain both theses (T1) and (T2) simultaneously. Based on these arguments, Ajdukiewicz proved that idealists do not use the object language in conformity with its rules.

The arguments presented above bear the conclusion that competent users of the object-language, that is, ones who follow its rules, cannot articulate thesis (1), stating that the objects of experience do not exist in reality. In other words, someone who uses the object-language properly must admit the absurdity of idealism, as it leads to refuting existential statements formulated in this language.

4 Ontological Deflationism

Contemporary metaontological debates refer to the discussion between Rudolf Carnap and Willard Van Orman Quine\(^1\) which was held at the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s. The representatives of metaontological realism are adherents of the view that ontological questions ("Do numbers exist?", "Do values exist?") have a basic character and refer to the philosophical assumptions of Quine [10, p. 318].

In the article *On What There Is* [22], the American philosopher presented the criterion of ontological commitment, according to which “to exist” is a semantical correlate of a variable – “To be is to be the value of a variable” [22, p. 189]. In his opinion, the extensional language of first-order predicate logic should deal with a canonical form of knowledge. If the notion “exist” is interpreted as an existential quantifier, we avoid the distinction between “existence” and “being”. Therefore, in this view, the notion “exist” is univocal [13].

The adherents of ontological deflationism refer to the philosophical assumptions of Carnap. They emphasize that the notion “exist” is ambiguous, and its meanings in specific cases is determined by the adopted conceptual apparatus. That means that with regard to the language and conceptual apparatus, the notion “exist” is attributed different meanings. Consequently, existence questions have a purely linguistic nature.
since they are dependent on the adopted conceptual apparatus [10, p. 320]. Therefore, there is no one favored conceptual apparatus for the description of reality. Philosophers pursuing the aforementioned strategy in ontological deliberations include Hilary Putnam [20], [21] and Eli Hirsch [11].

Amie Thomasson describes those investigations into the multitude of conceptual apparatuses and diversification of ontological notions as an “unfortunate turn” [24, p. 56-63]. She sees its roots in Carnap’s tolerance rule presented in Logical Syntax of Language [8], according to which the choice of logic is not restrained, and all attempts to find the “true logic” should be abandoned. Thomasson referred to the article Empiricism, Semantics, Ontology [9], where Carnap distinguishes between external and internal questions about existence. She claims that in the article he did not mean that “exist” should be treated as ambiguous and dependent on the adopted conceptual apparatus.

In her interpretation of Carnap’s view, she refers to Huw Price’s distinction between use and mention:

In my view, it is helpful to frame Carnap’s point it terms of the use-mention distinction. Legitimate uses of the terms such as ‘number’ and ‘material object’ are necessarily internal, for it is conformity (more or less) to the rules of framework in question that constitutes use. But as internal questions, as Carnap notes, these questions could not have the significance that traditional metaphysics takes them to have. Metaphysics tries to locate them somewhere else, but thereby commits a use-mention fallacy. The only legitimate external questions simple mention the terms in question. [19, p. 324]

According to Thomasson, the correct interpretation of Carnap’s views on ontology should take into account that, in his opinion, we can correctly use the expressions in line with the rules within a specific conceptual scheme. Existence questions should be formulated in the context of a given conceptual apparatus. Then they have an adequate meaning. Thomasson believes that so-posed questions should be answered in reference to our conceptual competence and empirical methods [24, p. 20]. She calls ontology so-understood “easy ontology”.

I call this the ‘easy’ approach to existence questions, since it entails that those existence questions that are meaningful are not deep and difficult subjects for metaphysical dispute, but rather questions to be resolved straightforwardly by employ-
ing our conceptual competence, often combining this with empirical investigations. [24, p. 20]

In her philosophy, she emphasizes a close connection between the notion of “existence” and “reference” – her approach to ontology is semantic. When she formulates existential judgements, she makes statements about reality, hence the talk here is about the truth of this type of statement. According to her, one of the first assumptions of “easy ontology” is that the term “existence” must be the subject of an invariant core formal rule of use [24, p. 86]:

\[ E: \text{Ks exist if the application conditions actually associated with 'K' are fulfilled.} \]

Application conditions shall be understood as the rule of use of a given expression. If we ask the question, “Do kangaroos exist?”, the answer is easy as we refer to the application conditions of the term “kangaroo”: it is a mammal of the marsupial species which lives in Australia. If this condition has been fulfilled, we may assume that kangaroos exist.

The consequence of rule “E” is trivial inference, under which the proper use of “K” justifies the thesis that K exists. She maintains that ontological debates have a relatively easy solution with regard to the fact that we accept this uncontroversial truth on the ground of language. Then, they form the basis of the trivial inference from which existence statements are derived. In Thomasson’s view such an approach to ontological problems is nothing new. In the literature, there is a similar approach to ontological issues. She gives the following examples [24, p. 134-135]:

- Uncontroversial truth: The cups and the saucers are equinumerous.
- Conceptual truth (Hume’s principle): The number of \( ns \) = the number of \( ms \) if the \( ns \) and the \( ms \) are equinumerous.
- Derived claim: The number of cups = the number of saucers.

The above example is used by neo-Fregean philosophers Bob Hale and Crispin Wright [12], who maintain that mathematical entities such as numbers exist on the basis of the above inference. Thomasson used Stephen Schiffer’s inference [23] as another example, which he described as something from nothing: ontological commitments towards abstract beings are included in the undisputed claims [24, p. 135].
Undisputed claim: Snow is white.
Conceptual truth: If P, then that P is true.
Derived claim: That snow is white is true.
Ontological claim: There is a proposition (namely that snow is white).

And:

Undisputed claim: May was born on a Monday.
Conceptual truth: If P was born on D, then P’s birth occurred on D.
Derived claim: May’s birth occurred on a Monday.
Ontological claim: There is an event (namely of May’s birth).

Thomasson takes this approach to the issues connected with the existence of ordinary objects, making the assumption that they have relatively “easy” solutions due to our linguistic competence and empirical experience. If we ask the question “Do tables exist?”, applying rule “E” and trivial inference [24, p. 142]:

Uncontroversial claim: There are particles arranged tablewise.
Conceptual truth: If there are particles arranged tablewise, then there is table.
Derived/ontological claim: There is table.

In her view, Thomasson indicates that any competent language user can decide on the existence of an object on the basis of a given empirical experience and according to the rules determining the correct use of the language [24, p. 140]. If the solutions in ontology follow from this uncontroversial truth, they should not be the subject of genuine philosophical dispute like it is in the case of tables [24, p. 145-160].

5 Summary: Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz as a Representative of Ontological Deflationism

The development of Ajdukiewicz’s view on the existence issue can be divided into two periods: one is connected with radical conventionalism, when he pointed out that we have a multitude of conceptual apparatuses,
and so there is no one favored language for the description of reality. Consequently, he could not draw metaphysical consequences from his project of making epistemology. This period can be dated to the early 1930s; at that time his views were similar to those of Hilary Putnam and Eli Hirsch.

The second period is connected with the semantic theory of cognition, when he carried out research on the notion of “existence”. This period encompasses the 1940s and 1950s. Making use of the deductive rule in the form of the existential generalization and empirical information, he observed that any competent language user who bases on his knowledge about language rules and on his experience is able to answer the question of what exists. These views align with contemporary “easy ontology”. Therefore, referring to Ajdukiewicz’s presented views on ontology, we can draw the conclusion that his stance on the notion of existence was deflationary, and he could have anticipated contemporary metaontological discussions.

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Notes

1 A study of the philosophy of Kazimierz Twardowski can be found in an article by Anna Brożek: Kazimierz Twardowski: A Great Teacher of Great Philosophers [7, p. 15-32].

2 The philosophy of Jan Łukasiewicz can be read about in an article by Jacek Jadacki: Jan Łukasiewicz: A Creator of New Ideals in Logic and a Reinterpreter [14, p. 33-45].

3 Tadeusz Kotarbiński’s philosophy is also presented in an article by Jacek Jadacki: Tadeusz Kotarbiński: Socrates of Warsaw [15, p. 165-173].

4 The philosophy of Tadeusz Czeżowski is described by Dariusz Łukasiewicz: Tadeusz Czeżowski [18, p. 133-136].

5 E.g. Sprache und Sinn (Language and Meaning) and Das Weltbild und die Bergriffsapparatur (The World-Picture and the Conceptual Apparatus) in the 4th issue of Erkenntnis, 1934.

6 He gave lectures at Harvard University, the University of Chicago, Wayne State University, the University of California – Berkeley, the University of California – Los Angeles, the University of California – Santa Barbara, Stanford University, Columbia University and University College in London.
7 The Archives of the Polish Academy of Science, Materials of Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz, III-141.

8 Eventually, the selection of texts was published in 1978 as The Scientific World-Perspective and Other Essays, 1931-1963, edited by Jerzy Giedymin.


10 In the aforementioned article, Ajdukiewicz analyzed and yielded to criticism of two theories: the association and connotation theories.

11 Radical conventionalism is more broadly presented by Anna Jedynak in Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz: The Cognitive Role of Language [17, p. 48-50].

12 The conventionalism of Ajdukiewicz was characterized by radicalness. As opposed to the forerunners of conventionalism, Henry Poincaré and Édouard Le Roy, he claimed that all, not only some, judgements are determined by the rules of a given conceptual apparatus. While Ajdukiewicz considered the views of the first former conventionalist to be partial, he agreed with Le Roy that language has a great impact on the results of cognitive actions and that the same reality can be described and explained by many conceptual apparatuses. However, Le Roy investigated the impact of language on cognition for some deeply metaphysical reasons; he wanted to reject all conceptual schemes used for explaining phenomena in the world in order to get into direct contact with metaphysical reality. On the other hand, the Polish philosopher claimed that language has not only a communicative function but foremost a cognitive one, because without it we cannot obtain knowledge about reality or pass it along.

13 Ajdukiewicz also brings up the question of subjective idealism; however, for the purposes of this article the criticism of transcendental idealism is more important. In the article, he uses both terms: transcendental idealism and objective idealism interchangeably.

14 It is noteworthy that in the literature there can also be found such comparative articles of Ajdukiewicz’s and Quine’s views as the article by Halina Jakubiec and Jan Wołęński, entitled Ajdukiewicz and Quine [16, p. 85-94].

15 The difference between Hirsch’s and Putnam’s views is a conviction that although most ontological discussions have a linguistic nature, in philosophy we can find subject disputes about existence. As an example, he mentioned the dispute between Platonists and nominalists concerning the existence of mathematical entities.

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