

LINGUISTIC CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SPATIAL PREPOSITIONS: ROMANIAN "ÎN" AND POLISH "W" – A COMPARATIVE APPROACH

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ABSTRACT. *Linguistic Conceptualization of Spatial Prepositions: Romanian "în" and Polish "w" – Comparative Approach.* The Romanian preposition "în" corresponds to the Polish preposition "w". Both express the spatial relationship that consists of placing an object in a limited space; they indicate the interior of the space where something is located. In addition to this general definition in both languages, the preposition acquires other semantic functions that may be convergent, rendered directly by the pair Rom. *în* = Pol. *w*. Furthermore, representation of some linguistic relations can be different: for a Romanian speaker, the space relation could be reflected by preposition representing a closed space – *în*, but for a Polish speaker, it reflects an open space or a surface correlated to the Polish preposition – *na*. The main objective of this article is to analyze the differences that, first, result from the distinctive conceptualization of space reflected in the language using prepositions and, secondly, result from heterogenous grammatical system (Roman vs. Slavic). The analysis is based, among other things, on the frequent mistakes in the use of prepositional structures that Polish speakers make when learning Romanian. The wrong structures appear especially at the level of abstract language, in phrases or verbs, when the regime imposes prepositions or cases that do not correspond functionally to the native ones; however, the linguistic image of the space is also different and difficult to identify in the metaphorical or abstract structures. The cognitive approach allows the delineation of some image schemes that represent the core meaning of the preposition. The

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comparative study of the preposition in the Romanian and Polish languages shows that the prepositional system in the Romanian language is more developed and richer than the Polish one, and the latter presents a much stronger and more direct attachment to the feature of "interiority" expressed by the preposition "w / în" than in the Romanian language.

Keywords: *prepositions, Romanian as a Foreign Language, linguistic conceptualization, prepositional structures, polish language*

REZUMAT. Conceptualizarea lingvistică a prepoziției spațiale românești „în” și a celei polone „w” – abordare comparativă. Prepoziției române „în” îi corespunde prepoziția poloneză „w”. Ambele exprimă relația spațială care constă în plasarea unui obiect într-un spațiu limitat, indicând interiorul spațiului unde se află ceva. Pe lângă această definiție generală, în ambele limbi prepoziția capătă și alte funcții semantice care pot fi convergente, redate direct de perechea rom. *în* = pol. *w*. Pe de altă parte, reprezentarea unor relații lingvistice poate fi diferită: ceea ce, pentru un vorbitor român, reprezintă spațiul închis – *în*, pentru un vorbitor polonez, reflectă spațiul deschis sau o suprafață – *na*. Obiectivul principal al acestui articol este de a analiza diferențele care rezultă, în primul rând, din diferita conceptualizare a spațiului, reflectată în limbă cu ajutorul prepozițiilor, și, în al doilea rând, din distincțiile sistemelor gramaticale (roman vs. slav). Analiza este bazată, între altele, pe greșelile frecvente în folosirea structurilor prepoziționale pe care le fac vorbitorii limbii polone învățând româna. Structurile greșite apar mai ales la nivelul limbajului abstract, în sintagme sau la verbe, când regimul acestora impune prepoziții sau cazuri gramaticale care nu corespund funcțional cu cele din limba maternă. În plus, imaginea lingvistică a spațiului este și diferită, și greu de identificat în aceste structuri metaforice (abstracte). Abordarea cognitivă permite delimitarea unor scheme imaginare, care indică sensul primordial al prepoziției. Studiul comparativ a prepoziției în limbile română și polonă arată că sistemul prepozițional în limba română este mai dezvoltat și bogat decât cel polonez, iar acesta din urmă prezintă o atașare mult mai puternică și mai textuală (ad litteram) la trăsătura de „interioritate” exprimată de prepoziția „w/în” decât limba română.

Cuvinte-cheie: *prepoziții, RLS (româna ca limba străină), conceptualizare lingvistică, imaginar lingvistic, structuri prepoziționale, limba polonă*

1. Preliminaries

The main objective of the present study is to compare the semantic concepts of prepositions in Romanian and Polish. The analysis will be limited to the functional and semantic comparison of the Romanian preposition *în*

correlated to the Polish preposition *w*, thus making Romanian the starting point of the analysis. Some graphic models, that illustrate the way this preposition is conceptualized in both languages, are the result of the comparison. In the present study, we understand the term "conceptualization" as a cognitive intuition, therefore, an apperception of the relationships and functions performed by prepositions and prepositional phrases.

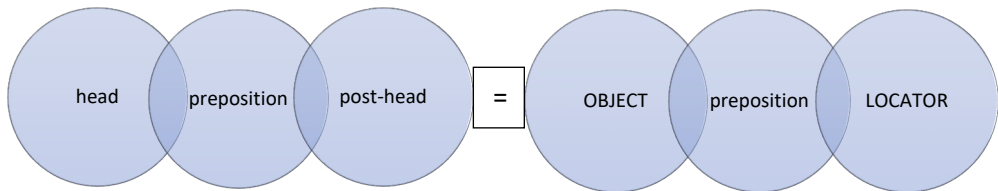
The errors that Polish students make during learning Romanian as a foreign language was the motivation for comparative research on prepositions in Romanian and Polish and, therefore, an attempt to construct imaginary models representing different functional aspects of the prepositions. The divergence of the grammatical systems in these two languages, based on either the Slavic or the Romance paradigms, determines the different functional-semantic connotations, which in turn cause linguistic errors and calques, e.g., *a adus multe împrumuturi la limba română*, cf. Polish *do języka rumuńskiego*; *după revenirea lor la patrie*, cf. Polish *po powrocie do ojczyzny*, where Polish preposition *do* is correlated to Romanian *la*, instead of *în*.

Research on the functions of prepositions appears right at the beginning of the twentieth century, with the foundation of the structuralist school and attracted the attention of linguists, developing according to linguistic conceptions and theories. Hjelmslev's approach in the study of cases was to distinguish the morphological categories of the case and the preposition as a separate morphem (1935). In the analysis of functional relationships (mostly spatial ones), the structural, syntactic-semantic approach is dominant, and, in the last period, the logical-semantic approach predominates. The latter is based on cognitive models that use imaginary models (Przybylska 2005, 158). There are multiple studies regarding the grammatical, functional, and semantic analysis of prepositions; referring to this article, it is worth mentioning the publications of Polish linguists, such as Anna Bluszcz (1987), Maciej Grochowski (1997), Renata Przybylska (2002), and Romanian ones, such as Laura Vasiliu (1961), Alexandru Mardale (2010, 2011), Dorin Cosma (2010) or Ionuț Geană (2013).

In the Romanian-Polish context, a comparative study by Adam Weinsberg *Przyimki przestrzenne w języku polskim, niemieckim i rumuńskim* (Spatial prepositions in Polish, German, and Romanian) from 1973 should be mentioned, a study based on the classical method of structuralist research. The linguist claims that the prepositional system in Romanian is more developed and richer than the Polish one. He analyzes 22 meanings of locative prepositions, including *după, în, între, la, lângă, pe, peste, printre, către, înspre, spre*. The last three he considers synonymous in Romanian and, in general, 17 meanings coincide in Polish and Romanian.

2. Teoretic approach

According to the most recent definition proposed by Romanian linguists, the preposition belongs to the class of indeclinable words that express syntactic relations of dependence between the parts of a sentence. This is the connecting element participating in organizing the utterance; it does not have its own syntactic function; however, it marks relations of subordination (GALR I 2008, 322). As a connector, the preposition is engraved on a ternary structure:

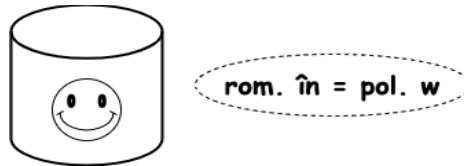


Several features can be added to this general definition, depending on the applied methodology. According to some linguists, the preposition, like the conjunction, polish particles, adverbs, and so on, is a functional phrase or expression that has a variable syntactic-semantic function depending on the context (Grochowski 1997, 5). From the lexicographic point of view, the preposition is an independent lexeme (descriptive method), while the grammatical meaning (paradigmatic) refers to the functions performed by the preposition (structural school) (Bluszcz 1987, 8). When contextually analyzed, the preposition has individual properties that are repeated in series limited to a few elements, as well as those characteristics by the significant level of contextual variety – depending on the context, various grammatical and semantic particularities appear (Grochowski 1997, 5). In the functional approach, the preposition is a symbolic unit that indicates a determined and objective type of spatial relation or other types of relationships between objects (Przybylska 2005, 151). Weinsberg proposes the most general definition, noting that prepositions are *small parts of statements that, nevertheless, possess meaning* (1973, 13).

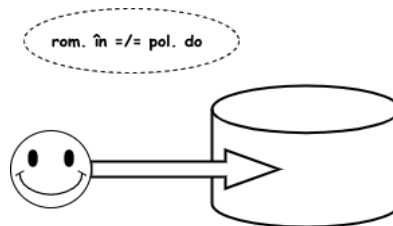
The cognitive methods which are mainly applied in studies of prepositions rely to their semantic analysis based on an image schema. These concerns the meaning of the prepositions could be presented as a schematic configuration of some elements in cognitive space (Przybylska 2002, 95).

3. Comparative analysis of prepositions: Romanian *în* and Polish *w*

The core meaning of the Romanian preposition *în* corresponds to that of the Polish preposition *w*, indicating *the interior of the space*. This concept is embedded in the mind of the Polish student due to the graphic representations used to illustrate this relation, as seen not only in RLS textbooks, but also in other foreign language textbooks, presented as follows:



Progressing in learning the Romanian language, the student gains knowledge about other uses of this Romanian preposition. Some of the concepts are convergent to those in Polish, e.g., the time in which an action takes place: *în august = w sierpniu*, *în anul 2022 = w roku 2022*. However, most of the concepts are different, and the correlation between action and space refers to another Polish preposition, e.g. the interior of space toward which the movement is directed, e.g. *intră în casă* \neq *wchodzi do domu*.



Both Romanian and Polish dictionaries use descriptive methods to explain the meaning and use of the preposition. As one can observe, the definitions are multiplied, they present different examples of preposition use, and their order is not identical. To illustrate this aspect, we analyse the definitions of the Romanian preposition *în* and those of the Polish preposition *w* as they are presented in two dictionaries similar in terms of methodological approach and number of words that present the basic use of the preposition – *Dicționarul Explicativ al Limbii Române* (DEX 2016, 587-588) and *Słownik języka polskiego* (SJP 2006, 1115). These were supplemented with definitions from (MDA 2003, 136) and *Uniwersalny Słownik Języka Polskiego* (UJSP 2003, 5-6). The Polish definitions were arranged according to the Romanian ones².

² The comparison of the definitions and the table were prepared in collaboration with Aleksander Podgorny, a student of Romanian Philology at Jagiellonian University.

1. Definitions that correspond in both languages:

	DEX	SJP
1.	Indică interiorul spațiului unde are loc o acțiune, unde se află ceva, spre care are loc o mișcare [1]: <i>Intră în casă.</i>	Intră în componența unor structuri care indică locuri unde se află ceva sau direcția unei acțiuni [1]: <i>Coś jest w pudełku</i> 'e ceva în cutie'; <i>włożyć w pudełko</i> 'a pune în cutie'; <i>Pracować w lesie</i> , 'a lucra în pădure'; <i>Iść w pole</i> 'a merge în câmpie'; <i>Krążyć w koło</i> 'a merge în cerc'; <i>Ustawić się w rzędy</i> 'a sta în rânduri'.
2.	Indică starea unui lucru, a unui fapt etc. <i>a fi în extază</i> (MDA 2003, 136).	Formează expresii care definesc stările determinate de substantiv [8]: <i>żyć w samotności</i> 'a trăi în singuritate'; <i>być w nędzy</i> 'a fi în sărăcie'.
3.	Indică scopul [4]: <i>Se duce în peșit.</i>	Indică scopul acțiunii [9]: <i>Iść w odwiedzin</i> 'a merge în vizită'.
4.	Indică o comparație – în formă de..., ca... [6]: <i>Fumul se ridică în spirală.</i>	Leagă un obiect sau un obiect deja transformat care s-a format ca rezultatul schimbării despre care este vorbă în enunț [21]: <i>Pokroiła ser w kostki a kielbasę w plasterki</i> 'A tăiat cașul în cuburi iar salamul în felii'; <i>Zła czarownica przemieniła księżniczkę w żabę</i> 'Vrăjitoarea rea l-a transformat pe prinț într-o broască'. (UJSP 2003, 6)
5.	Introduce un complement prepozițional [8]: <i>Adâncit în gânduri. Casă transformată în muzeu.</i>	Leagă determinantele cu cuvintele regente [14]: <i>Wierzyć w coś</i> 'a crede în ceva'; <i>Włączyć się w coś</i> 'a se băga în ceva'. <i>Wprawić w zdumienie*</i> 'a uimi pe cineva'.
6.	Indică ideea de măsură, cantitate [26]: <i>Volum în litri</i> (MDA 2003: 136).	Formează expresii care indică componența cantitativă, o limită cantitativă [7]: <i>Podanie w dwóch egzemplarzach</i> 'cerere în două exemplare'; <i>Powieść w trzech tomach</i> 'romanul în trei volume'; <i>Powiedzieć coś w kilku słowach</i> 'a spune ceva în câteva cuvinte'; <i>Rysunek w skali* 1:1000</i> 'desen la scară 1:1000'.
7.	Indică ideea de distribuție [28]: <i>În sferturi</i> (MDA 2003, 136).	Formează expresii care indică rezultatul [10]: <i>Obrócić w popiół</i> 'a preface în cenușă'; <i>Zetrzeć w proch</i> 'a transforma în praș'.
8.	Indică ideea de multiplicitate [29]: <i>În două rânduri, în trei rânduri</i> (MDA 2003, 136).	Formează expresii care definesc modul în care se derulează o acțiune [11]: <i>Zaśmieać się w głos</i> , 'a râde cu glasul tare'; <i>Grać w takt</i> , 'a cânta în ritm'.
9.	Indică trecerea dintr-o stare în alta [7]: <i>Se preface în cerb</i> (MDA 2003, 136).	Constituie o parte a locuțiunii adverbiale [15]: <i>w dwójnasób</i> 'în două moduri', <i>w poprzek</i> 'transversal', <i>w zamian</i> 'în schimb'.
10.	Indică o transformare [8]: <i>Se schimbă în bine</i> (MDA 2003, 136).	Formează expresii care precizează o calitate, o încadrare sau un tip de realizare [6]: <i>Płacić w gotówce</i> 'a plăti în numerar'; <i>Otrzymać coś w darze</i> 'a primi în dar'; <i>w dowód przyjazni</i> 'în semn de prietenie'; <i>Rzeka obfituje w ryby</i> 'Râul abundă în pește'.
11.	Indică modul în care se face sau se derulează o acțiune [30]: <i>în salturi</i> (MDA 2003, 136).	
12.	Indică ideea de preț sau de echivalență [23]: <i>Socotesc în lei</i> (MDA 2003, 136). Indică ideea de consecință, <i>în urma, ca, drept</i> [25] (MDA 2003, 136).	

2. *Definitions that partially correspond or are apparently identical:*

Indică timpul în care se petrece o acțiune [2]: <i>În iunie se coc cireșele.</i>	Formează expresii care indică timpul în care se petrece o acțiune [12]: <i>W niedzielę</i> 'duminică, duminică'; <i>w czerwcu</i> 'în iunie'; <i>w dzieciństwie</i> 'în copilărie'; <i>w samą porę</i> 'la timp'.
Indică forma unui obiect [31]: <i>În trei muchii</i> (MDA 2003, 136), delimitat de trei muchii.	Formează expresii care indică forma, aspectul fizic sau trăsătura exterioare caracteristică unui obiect [5]: <i>Materiał w paski*</i> 'materialul cu dungii'; <i>Cukier w kostkach*</i> 'zahăr cubic'; <i>Włosy w lokach*</i> 'părul cu bucle'.

3. *Romanian definitions without a Polish equivalent (DEX 2016, 587-588; MDA 2003, 136):*

a) Indică suprafața pe care are loc o acțiune sau spațiul dintre obiecte unde se află ceva, unde se produce o mișcare [1b]: *Se suie în pom*, cf. pol. *Wspina się na drzewo*.

b) Indică obiectul de care atârnă ceva [1c]: *Pune-ți haina în cuier*, cf. pol. *Wiesza ubranie na wieszaku*.

c) Indică o parte a corpului care este acoperită, îmbrăcată etc. [1d]: *Și-a tras ghetele în picioare. Nu sta cu căciula în cap*, cf. pol. *Włożył buty na nogi. Nie siedź w czapce na głowie*.

d) La, în dreptul [1e]: *Haină roasă în coate*, cf. pol. *Ubranie przetarte na łokciach*.

e) Indică intervalul de timp care se scurge de la un anumit moment; după, peste [2b]: *Pleci de mâine în două zile*, cf. pol. *Wyjeżdżasz za dwa dni (po dwóch dniach)*.

f) Indică o cauză – *din pricina...; în urma...* [3]: *Pomul se clătina în vânt. Ochii-i ard în friguri*, cf. pol. *Drzewo chyli się na wietrze. Oczy go pieką od gorączki*.

g) Indică instrumentul, relația [5]: *S-au înțeles în scris*, cf. Pol. *Porozumieli się na piśmie*.

h) *Conform cu..., potrivit cu...* [7]: *Fiecare în legea lui*, cf. Pol. *Każdy wedle (podług) swego prawa*.

4. *Polish definitions without a Romanian equivalent (SJP 2006, 1115):*

a) Formează expresii care indică obiectul unei acțiuni [2]: *trafić w cel*, a nimeri ținta (a trage la țintă); *skaleczyć się w palec*, a se răni la deget'.

b) Formează expresii care indică o instituție sau un grup social etc. [3]: *Grać w orkiestrze* cf. Rom. *a cânta în orchestră; Pracować w biurze* cf. Rom. *a lucra la birou*.

c) Formează expresii care indică vestimentația sau trăsătura caracteristică a aspectului fizic [4]: *Chodzić w dzinsach*, cf. Rom. *a purta blugi / a se îmbrăca în blugi*; *w okularach*, cf. Rom. *a purta ochelari*; *ktoś w rumieńcach*, cf. rom. *cineva este îmbujorat*, rom. *a aduce rumeneala în față, a fi rumen în obraji*; *koń cały w pianie*, cf. rom. *La castel în poartă calul Stă a doua zi în spume*. EMINESCU, O. I 68.

d) Formează expresii (frazelogisme) nepredicative [13]: *W nogi!* 'Fugiți (hai repede!) *W górę go!* 'Haide sus!' (haideți să-l luăm pe sus!)

Some of functions of the preposition *w* presented in Polish language dictionaries do not have a corresponding definition in Romanian dictionaries. Nevertheless, the examples prove that the Romanian preposition *în* can function in a similar context, cf. (b) and (c). Expressions (d), which cannot be translated as such, cannot be the object of direct comparison, even though the locator that is part of an expression refers to an image of space (*w górę*) or to the regimen of the omitted/implicit verb (*w nogi*). The only example of functional discordance is (a). The "target" object is imagined as a delimited space in which an action ends.



The comprehensive analysis of the examples above, selected from dictionaries, clearly indicates the fact that most of the differences emerge from the different conceptualization of the relations, primarily the spatial ones, expressed by the Romanian preposition *în* and the Polish preposition *w*. Noticeably, the Romanian preposition *în* is mainly translated into Polish by two prepositions, **w** and **na**, with a few exceptions (*wedle prawa, od gorączki*). Considering the functions performed by the preposition *în* in the ternary structure (followed by a locator), these functions, according to the study by L. Vasiliu (apud Geană 2013: 19), can be included in seven major fields:

- 1) the interior of an object or a continuous space, of a period or a process, of a state/mood;
- 2) insertion inside an object, a continuous space, or a period;
- 3) creating order within a process;
- 4) formation within a substance;
- 5) shape transfer within another shape;
- 6) relationship;
- 7) abstract direction towards a person or an object.

In our opinion, in ternary structures, the locator is the one determining the choice of the appropriate preposition. We emphasize the fact that the present

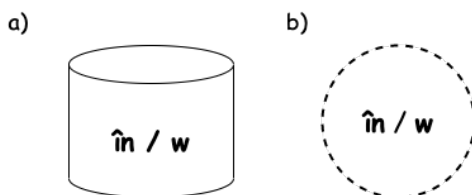
analysis does not focus on the structures in which the verb fulfills the head function, and the preposition choice depends on its regimen, e.g. *a transforma în ceva = zmieniać w coś*. The ternary structures that coincide in Romanian and Polish do not cause confusion because their conceptualization does not differ. In general, we are considering cases in which the locator is associated with the interior of (a) closed, delimited, or (b) well-defined, determined (a state, mood) space, e.g.:

a) *Studentii au cursul de limba română în sala 307 = Studenci mają zajęcia z języka rumuńskiego w sali 307.*

În oraș sunt multe cluburi și restaurante. = W mieście jest dużo klubów i restauracji.

b) *N-am fost în stare să înțeleg. = Nie byłem w stanie zrozumieć.*

Cum se comportă cei care sunt în depresie? = Jak zachowują się osoby w depresji?



From the point of view of the verbal conceptualization of the preposition, the most interesting situations are those where prepositional structures partially coincide or do not coincide at all in both languages.

a) When indicating the thermal and light environment, e.g.:

b) *Nu-mi place să stau în frig. = Nie lubię siedzieć w zimnie (alternative: **na** zimnie).*

c) *Produsele lactate trebuie păstrate la rece. = Należy przechowywać w zimnie.*

But:

d) *Nu-mi place să stau la căldură. =/= Nie lubię siedzieć w ciepłe.*

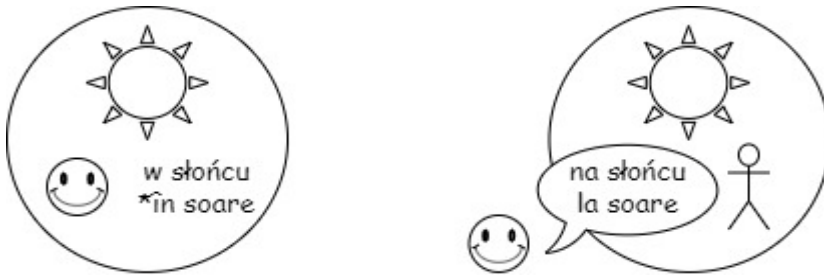
e) *Îmi place să stau la umbră. =/= Lubię siedzieć w cieniu.*

f) *El întotdeauna stă în umbră (despre cineva modest sau a pândi dintr-un loc ascuns) = On zawsze stoi w cieniu / Ukrywa się w cieniu.*

g) *Nu poți sta atâta timp la soare. =/= Nie możesz siedzieć tak długo w słońcu.
= Nie możesz siedzieć tak długo **na** słońcu.*

These apparently functionally identical statements have a semantic difference in Polish. They generally describe an objectively identical spatial relation, yet this relation has a different conceptual interpretation (Przybylska 2005, 156).

The preposition *w* (in) locates the object within the locator's inner field, whereas the use of the preposition *na* presents the perspective of a virtual observer, located outside this field, observing the object. It seems that the spatial conception in Romanian presents the same type of perception of the placement of the object in relation to the locator, cf. *la umbră* and *în umbră*.



In general, when indicating the interior towards which a movement takes place, the Polish language uses the preposition expressing movement toward a direction: pol. **do**, e.g.

- a) *Merg în oraş.* = / = *Idę do miasta.*
- b) *Urc în tramvai.* = / = *Wchodzę do tramwaju.*
- c) *Cobor în vale.* = / = *Schodzę do doliny.*

However, in Polish, there are prepositional structures that, at first glance, seem to be identical to the Romanian ones. They possess the value of movement but semantically place the object inside the locator, which structurally has an imaginary limit, but metaphorically represents an unlimited and abstract space. The locator in Polish becomes an abstract, physically indefinite notion, e.g.

Merg în pădure:

a) *Idę w las* – it is impossible to say with certainty which forest I am going to, its location, or its borders. At the phraseological level, this expression can be interpreted as a loss: *nauka poszła w las* ‘învăţătura n-a adus niciun efect’.

b) *Idę do lasu* – *las* ‘pădure’ (forest) is a concret and delimited space.

There are also some situations where the perception of the locator is very different in Romanian and Polish languages. The first is when the locator indicates the limit point of an elongated object. These objects can vary; however, the idea of the limit point of the elongated shape remains the same, e.g.:

a) elongated shape:

Locuiesc în capătul străzii. = / = *Mieszkam na końcu ulicy.*

În vârful turnului este cuibul de barză. = / = *Na szczycie wieży jest bocianie gniazdo.*

Bătrânul se sprijină în baston. = / = *Staruszek wspiera się na lasce.*

b) When indicating the object from which something hangs or is tied to:
Pune-ți haina în cuier. = / = *Powieś ubranie na wieszaku.*

La țară mulți câini sunt ținuți în lanț. = / = *Na wsi wiele psów trzyma się na łańcuchu.*

c) When indicating a body part that is covered:

E frig afară, pune mănuși în mâini și căciula în cap. = / = *Jest zimno na polu, włóż rękawiczki na ręce i czapkę na głowę.*

In Polish, this concept is reflected by the preposition **na** which, in general, is associated with locating an object on a surface. The Polish speaker interprets the statement *Pune cizme în picioare* as depicted:



Any surface, as well as an insignificant depth, is correlated in Polish with the preposition **na**, both semantically and functionally. Poles and Romanians have a different perception of the depth of the locator, thus *o farfurie* in Romanian is perceived only as a delimited object with some degree of depth, e.g. *supa se servește în farfurie*, while in Polish the surface is the decisive aspect: *zupę serwuje się na talerzu*. However, if *o farfurie* (a plate) appears to be deep enough and contains soup that can also be served *în castron – w misce*, then the preposition *w = în* can also be used in Polish. When the verb expresses a movement, the locator – *farfurie* – is preceded by the preposition pol. *do*, with a primary function expressing movement towards a direction, e.g. *Nalewa zupę do talerza*, *Varsă supa în farfurie*'.

Another aspect of the surface that accompanies the Romanian preposition *în* is that on which a movement takes place, e.g. *Se suie în pom*. In Polish, the appearance of the tree surface seems to be more important than the action that takes place, so the Polish speaker will say *Wspina się na drzewo*, 'se suie *în pom' *siedzi na drzewie*, stă *în pom'. Another interpretation of the Romanian structure with the preposition *în* might be related to the idea of the elongated object.

The comparative study of these two prepositions cannot overlook some exemplary situations in which the use of an improper preposition radically changes the meaning of the statement. Moreover, the prepositions cross Polish and Romanian meanings.

Romanian		Polish	
la oraș =/= în oraș		w mieście	
în mediul urban 'in the urban environment'	nu acasă 'not at home'	without any semantic difference 'in the urban environment' or 'not at home'	
la munte =/= în munte		w górach (pl.) =/= na górze (sg.)	
în mediul montan 'in mountains environment' Polish calques: <i>*în munți</i>	în vârful muntelui 'on the mountain top' Polish calques: <i>*la munte</i>	în mediul montan 'in the mountain environment'	în vârful muntelui 'on the mountain top'
la țară =/= în țară		na wsi / we wsi = / = w kraju	
în mediul rural 'in the countryside' Polish calques: <i>*în țară</i> cf. <i>we wsi</i>	în stat (în Polonia) 'in the country, in Poland'	în mediul rural 'in the countryside'	în țară (în Polonia) 'in the country, in Poland'
la vârf =/= în vârf		na końcu =/= na szczycie	
'end, extremity of a thing', <i>la vârf</i> 'on the toe of the shoe' <i>la vârf</i> (colloquial expression) 'in power'	piscul muntelui 'on the top of the mountain, summit'	na czubku (buta) 'on the toe of the shoe' na szczycie władzy 'in power'	na szczycie góry 'on the top of the mountain, summit'

The above pair of prepositions also occurs when the locator is equivalent to the name, usually of a big city. The perception of the Polish speaker associates movement with the preposition *la* (*spre*) corresponding to the Polish preposition *do* (with dynamic value), while the preposition *în* has a more static aspect. Within this frame of reference, it is difficult to understand Romanian structures in which both *la Cluj* and *în Cluj* have, at the same time, the static aspect (to stay) and the dynamic one (to go). In this context, the Polish language presents a strict delimitation between the dynamic aspect (*Jadę do Klużu*) and the static one (*Jestem w Klużu*).

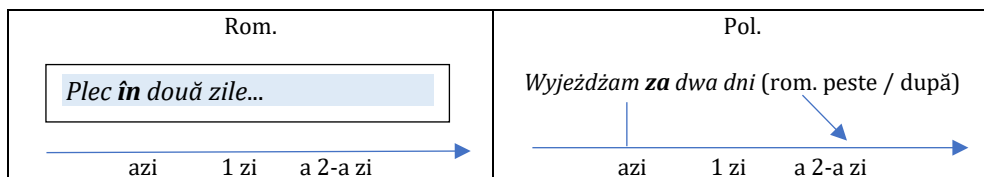
In addition to the spatial aspect of prepositions *în* and *w*, their temporal function is also noteworthy, as some interesting differences are also observable in this regard. As cited in the table of definitions from dictionaries, both indicate the time when an action takes place:

=	without a determiner	
	în iunie	w czerwcu
	with determiner	
	în anul 2022 În luna aceea fusesem la teatru	w roku 2022 w tamten poniedziałek byliśmy w teatrze,
=/=	without a determiner	
	(0) luni / luna (0) iarna	w poniedziałek / w poniedziałki w zimie, zimą (cazul instrumental)
	with determiner	
	(0) luna viitoare: (0) săptămâna viitoare (0) anul viitor	w przyszłym miesiącu w przyszłym tygodniu w przyszłym roku

The verb's regimen can also condition the use of the temporal preposition, e.g. rom. *a se naște în: M-am născut în 15 ianuarie*, while in Polish the date is used in the genitive case, e.g. *Urodziłam się 15-go stycznia*. The structure is generated by the genitive case regimen of the verb, which is non-existent in Romanian. Moreover, statements indicating exact dates are formed in Romanian with the preposition **în**: *În ce zi suntem azi? Suntem în 15 ianuarie*. Polish speakers use impersonal forms of the verb: **Jest 15 stycznia** (= genitiv). Some prepositional structures in Romanian, especially those with an indefinite article, e.g., *într-o seară, într-o zi, într-o săptămână*, expressing a temporal estimation, are replaced in Polish with adverbs, e.g., *wieczorem* (cf. rom. *seară*), or with adverbial phrases, e.g., *w ciągu dnia, w ciągu tygodnia* (cf. rom. *pe parcursul zilei*).

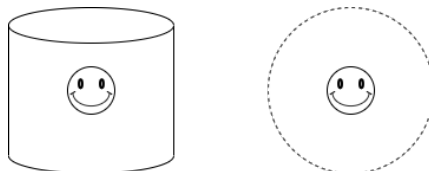
One of the functions of the preposition is to indicate the time interval that elapses from a certain moment, which is synonymous with the prepositions *după* and *peste*. In Polish, this idea can only be expressed with the Polish equivalents of the latter, e.g.

Pleci în două zile =/= *Wyjeżdżasz za dwa dni* = *Plec peste / după două zile*. This relation can be illustrated as follows:

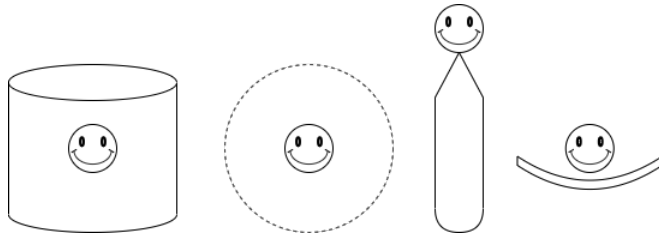


Each preposition associates a conceptual structure based on an imaginary model that reflects a spatial relation (Przybylska 2005, 158). The cognitive approach allows the creation of imaginary models that illustrate the meaning of the preposition in ternary structures. This model is, in fact, a conceptual image of the space projected onto aspects of reality. Metaphorically, these relations can be transposed to other abstract notions, e.g., *în vârf* > *în bază, în funcție de*, or even transposed to other functions, such as purpose, e.g., *în sănătatea lui*, method *s-au înțeleș în scris*, or time, e.g., *în ce zi suntem azi?*

Conceptual image of the locative preposition **w** – Polish language:



Conceptual image of the locative preposition **în** – Romanian language:



4. Conclusions

The analysis shows that the form the locator presents in ternary structures conditions the choice of the preposition. The imagined locator introduced by the Romanian preposition **în** generates more conceptual images (four) than the Polish preposition **w** (two). From the Polish speaker's point of view, the most surprising conceptual image of the preposition **în** is the placement of an object in an elongated locator, e.g. *în vârful (degetelor)*, *în baston*, etc. In Polish, such a situation is represented through the preposition **na** which corresponds to the idea of a surface. Obviously, in Polish, the locator must have at least an edge, a limit, corresponding to the idea of the interior, even if it is an imaginary, conventional limit. Another important distinction is the "dynamics" of the Romanian preposition **în**. This feature allows its correlation with verbs of movement, and the preposition expresses "movement towards, in the direction of". In Polish, **w** is only static. Even when used with verbs of movement, e.g. *jechać w góry (a merge la munte)*, it is combined with the locator (*w góry*) and does not result from the prepositional regimen of the verb. The conceptual image of the locators accompanied by the locative prepositions **în** and **w** largely coincides with the idea of the interior; thus most of the particular functions described in dictionaries can be similarly expressed in Polish and Romanian. This is the case for approximately 12 out of the 23 functions cited for Romanian, to which 10 functions (out of the 16 cited) correspond. The difference in numbers is due to different ways of defining notions and functions. Eight Romanian definitions have no correspondence in Polish, and it is generally the case in situations in which the locator has an elongated shape, whereas in Polish there is only one definition. The other six present particular situations, which can be expressed in the same way or, due to their different lexical structures, represent a different type of regimen.

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