

Young Minds and Blending Theory at Work

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The aim of my presentation is to show and analyze some of the content of a Polish web page demotywatory.pl created for and by teenagers and young adults. The page is visited by nearly 100 000 people every day, often regularly the same registered users, and its aim is to make comments on the reality of life using a combination of visual material, frequently a photograph, and language commentary. The linguistic material found there is all the more interesting in that the page is open to anyone who wishes to upload their material there and whose material gets approved by the page moderator(s). The only restrictions relate to not using vulgar or offensive language although the moderator(s) will accept an occasional swear word if they think its use has been justified. Thus the page has become a rather representative, uncensored reflection of what is on the young people's mind. It may safely be assumed that regular users of "demotywatory" have created a speech community with its own language code not always easily accessible to the outsiders.

The collected material will be analyzed with the help of Blending Theory (known also as Conceptual Integration Network) and its tools developed by Mark Turner and Gilles Fauconnier in the middle of the 1990s. The fathers of BT claim that the ability to "run the blends" i.e. integrate information packets activated in the human mind by a given stimulus (linguistic, visual, auditory etc.) quickly and effortlessly and arrive at novel meaning is this feature of the human mind which secured our evolutionary success as biological species. In my presentation I will offer an overview of integration networks taxonomy and then provide examples using selected material I have collected.

284 words