

Summary

Following all the analyses reported above, we conclude that in the examined set of texts, 75 of 306 strips (24.5%) did not contain any linguistically discernible exponents of valuation (while maintaining the assumption that the objectivity of a message is not affected by the use of terms expressing commonly accepted valuations that are cannot be negated through discourse). This means that de facto only one in four strips (headers/titles) of the message presented by the public broadcaster to the viewers is a notification in the strict sense, i.e. information intentionally devoid of evaluation.⁴⁷

The ratio of 24.5% of the strips devoid of any evaluative elements should be considered very low for the main public medium in Poland in 2016–2017 (i.e. maintained from the capital of civic contributions and not from private funds). Our analyses revealed that a vast majority of the texts of the strips of *Wiadomości TVP 1* serve non-informational functions – mainly persuasive (influencing the recipient), magical (reality-creating) and expressive (articulating the sender’s emotions and evaluations). These types of texts are not created to provide the recipient with objective information about a given event, but to create their authors’ original vision of these events and to influence the recipient’s beliefs (including evaluations). The vision of the world presented in the strips of *Wiadomości*

47 We include here strips no. [2], [10], [13], [21], [22], [25], [26], [29], [30], [32], [33], [34], [42], [43], [47], [52], [60], [62], [63], [66], [68], [70], [71], [72], [73], [74], [75], [77], [79], [80], [81], [95], [96], [97], [98], [99], [100], [102], [107], [110], [115], [116], [117], [139], [140], [148], [149], [150], [151], [154], [155], [157], [161], [166], [174], [182], [233], [234], [235], [240], [242], [243], [248], [252], [253], [255], [262], [266], [269], [291], [292], [293], [294], and [306].

TVP 1 is one-sided (sometimes distorted), and its axiological axis is in most cases the opposition: “the current government” vs. “those who do not support it.” The actions of the government and the ruling party are presented in a positive light, while the actions of the opposition parties and civic movements that do not accept the decisions of the government or the activities of the EU institutions are usually assessed negatively, and sometimes these people and institutions become objects of general depreciation (irony, mockery, ridicule, etc.). Assessments are often made a priori and therefore imposed on the viewer – linguistic formulas containing the assessment element appear on the strip preceding the relevant reporter’s material, which makes it possible for the viewer to have a set view of the event before learning its details. The conclusions indicated here follow analyses. The latter show that, let us remind – 75 out of 306 strips in our corpus (24.5%) did not contain any linguistically distinguishable evaluative exponents, which means that only **one in four analyzed strips accompanying the journalistic material was a notification in the strict sense, i.e. information that is intentionally devoid of any evaluation.** This indicator should be considered low, and therefore it needs to be stated that **the authors of the strips of *Wiadomości TVP 1* often do not provide citizens with objective information, but rather with their own vision of the discussed events.**

The relatively frequent practice of imposing a priori valuations, profiling a one-sided (sometimes even distorted) vision of events that is favorable for the broadcaster, and thus failing to provide the public with a reliable and objective message in which information and commentary can be easily distinguished from each other, entails that those responsible for the content of the strips broadcast by *Wiadomości TVP 1* in the analyzed period may have failed to fulfil the obligation imposed on them by the legislator⁴⁸ as well as associations of journalists.⁴⁹ The obligation in questions is to provide citizens with reliable (i.e. true, undistorted, objective, unbiased) information, which consists in non-partisan presentation of the whole variety of events and phenomena. It is also a duty to serve

48 Articulated in the Polish Constitution of 2 April 1997, the Act of Dec. 29, 1992 on radio and television broadcasting, the “Press Law” Act of Jan. 26, 1984, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of Dec. 16, 1966, ratified on Mar. 3, 1977, the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, done at Rome on Nov. 4, 1950, ratified on Jan. 19, 1993.

49 The Media Ethics Charter signed on Mar. 29, 1995, the Journalists’ Code of Ethics of the Association of Polish Journalists.

the society, which manifests itself among other things in being guided by the general good and treating all its members with respect – this requirement also may not have been met by those responsible for broadcasting the strips of *Wiadomości TVP 1*, because, as the analyses indicated, these strips in most cases presented the arguments of one political entity (the ruling party), and social and political entities that did not share these arguments were presented in them in a derisive and depreciative way.

Under Section 3 of the Law on the Polish Language, the obligation to protect the Polish language is imposed on all public authorities, institutions, and organizations participating in public life. In particular, this protection is to consist in creating conditions conducive for the development of language as a tool of interpersonal communication. In this context, it needs to be stated that also this obligation may have been fulfilled inadequately by the persons responsible for broadcasting the strips of *Wiadomości TVP 1*. The language used in these strips was often treated not as a social resource, but as an instrument of political struggle, serving only one political actor in creating his own vision of the world and imposing it on the citizenry. In such cases, symbolic violence becomes the norm. By symbolic violence we mean imposing a vision of the world as axiologically obvious and imposing on public discourse a set of ideologically interpreted meanings corresponding to a specific vision of events, strongly polarized from the axiological perspective. The entities the broadcaster considers to be political opponents are subjected to discrediting, while criticism of their actions and of themselves is often not fact-based, but rather serves the purpose of damaging their reputation. By using language to achieve the goals of a particular political entity and at the same time discredit other entities, the authors of the strips often resort to linguistic aggression. Indeed, this is how they construct statements in such a way as to inflict harm. In the course of the analysis, we have noted numerous instances of aggressive linguistic actions against persons and institutions in axiological conflict with the ruling party and the government – embarrassment, accusations, ridicule, the use of irony, mockery, etc.

The linguistic and communicative practice in the strips of *Wiadomości TVP 1* is often manipulative in nature. Whenever this is the case, the persuasive influence of the broadcaster on the recipient is concealed, so as to pursue the particular aims of the broadcaster, without taking into account the category of the common good, understood broadly, and inclusive in its essence. Such linguistic activities can be assessed as unethical, as the

participants of the communicative act do not all enjoy full and equal participation in the communication community, because some of them are treated disparagingly, which deprives them of their dignity and excludes them from the community. Recipients of *Wiadomości TVP 1* are often provided with no conditions to freely shape their own opinions and beliefs concerning the subjects covered, which fundamentally violates ethics of the word. Many of the analyzed strips show evidence of unethical linguistic practices such as labelling, stigmatization, stereotyping, all of which operate on the meaning of words, their semantic marking, and modal forms, in ways that are beneficial for the broadcaster. The linguistic and communicational mechanisms revealed in the course of the analysis make it clear that the discursive practices used by the authors of the majority of *Wiadomości TVP 1* strips violated the rules governing successful communication (also known as Grice's Maxims): the maxim of quantity (ordering the selection of linguistic means appropriate to the current needs in terms of their quantity), the maxim of relevance (ordering the formulation of such a linguistic message that will be appropriate to the subject of the statement) and the maxim of manner (ordering such a selection of linguistic means that guarantees comprehensibility of the message). The degree of respect for the fourth principle – the maxim of quality, which prescribes telling the truth – cannot be the subject of the present considerations, as it concerns the reference of the messages examined to extralinguistic reality, which is not subject to linguistic analysis or evaluation. The maxims of quantity and relevance are violated even when certain phenomena are described hyperbolically, with their features or their evaluation being exaggerated (cf. e.g. the following strips [46] *Totalny chaos totalnej opozycji* [Total chaos of the total opposition], [208] *Radykalna opozycja znów grozi* [Radical opposition making threats again] or a sequence of strips concerning the protest of resident physicians: [295] *Młodzi lekarze żądają podwyżek* [Young doctors demand salary increases], [296] *Młodzi lekarze żądają podwyżek* [Young doctors demand salary increases], [297] *Młodzi lekarze żądają ponad 9 tys. złotych pensji* [Young doctors demand over 9,000-zloty salaries], [298] *Młodzi lekarze odrzucili kompromis* [Young doctors rejected the compromise], [299] *Rezydenci: 5 tys. zł pensji to za mało* [Residents: a salary of PLN 5,000 is not enough], [300] *Rezydenci: 3,5 tys. zł podwyżki to za mało* [Residents: pay rises of PLN 3,500 are not enough], [301] *Początkujący lekarze żądają miliardów złotych* [Beginner doctors demand billions of zlotys], and [302] *Początkujący lekarze eskalują protest* [Beginner doctors escalate the protest]).

The principle of relevance is violated, for example, when small facts or phenomena relevant to the event are exposed (as is the case in communications relating to pickets organized under the Sejm during the parliamentary crisis related to the transfer of the parliament's proceedings from the Plenary Hall to the Column Hall: [199] *Sylwester z Michnikiem* [New Year's Eve with Michnik], [215] *KOD przed Sejmem i hołd dla Baumana* [Committee for the Defense of Democracy before the Sejm and a tribute to Bauman], or in the strips accompanying reports on the protest of MPs: [202] *Jak manipuluje niemiecka telewizja* [How German TV uses manipulation], and [192] *Wigilijny pasztet* [Christmas Eve pâté]). On the other hand, failure to respect the maxim of manner is evident in those announcements in which vague, underspecified terms are used knowingly and deliberately (e.g. [147] *Po latach milczenia* [After years of silence], [143] *Prowokacja i groteska* [Provocation and grotesque], [134] *Ślad tajnych służb w aferze Amber Gold* [Traces of the secret services in the Amber Gold scandal], and [128] *ABW kontaktowała się z szefem Amber Gold?* [Did the Internal Security Agency communicate with the head of Amber Gold?]). The methods of communication with the recipient in the information strips displayed on Polish Television's flagship news program are often at odds with the principles of ethics of the word on the part of the strips' authors. They tend to present the reasons of one political actor, often using symbolic violence and linguistic aggression. These methods have their numerous negative effects on the social level, three of which we shall signal here.

First, it undermines the foundations of the citizens' trust in the state. Telewizja Polska S.A. is a public broadcaster, which is supposed to represent the social interest – the bias of the information program may make some citizens feel ignored by it and thus they do not identify themselves with the state (on whose behalf the public broadcaster communicates). Secondly, the one-sided message presenting, among other things, the actions of part of the society and its parliamentary representation in a depreciative way (including open ridicule) and the creation of a sense of danger from political entities not accepted by the broadcaster – all this causes these entities to be excluded from the community, which in turn leads to the disintegration of communal ties, weakening of the communal sense of identity and, as a consequence, may cause aggressive behavior of some of its members toward others. The use of linguistic aggression can be seen as tacit consent to the use of physical aggression, and indeed occurrence of the former often precedes occurrence of the latter. Thirdly, the communication practices described in this report on the part of the authors of the strips on *Wiadomości*

TVP 1 evoke a negative public reception – Polish Television’s information strips become the object of jokes (mainly Internet memes). An online ‘strip generator’ available free of charge allows entering any text which is then displayed as the text of a strip in a still image captured from *Wiadomości*. The strips have also been satirized in civic actions,⁵⁰ e.g. a happening called “*Zrób to sam! Przynieś pasek TVP*” [Do it yourself! Bring a strip to TV]⁵¹, in sarcastic or ironic comments, and on social networking profiles (e.g. “Paski z TVP Info”⁵² [TVP Info strips], “Głupie jak pasek z TVP Info”⁵³ [As stupid as a TVP Info strip], “Paski grozy” [Strips of horror]⁵⁴. The phenomenon of TVP strips has also lived to see its representation in the Polish colloquial language – the expressive phrase *paski grozy* [strips of horror] was coined, as well as the unofficial name of whoever creates them – *paskowy* [the strip maker] (cf. *Paskowy*” *TVP Info w szczytowej formie* [TVP Info’s strip maker in top shape], *Internauci żartują z paska o protestujących kobietach*⁵⁵ [Internet users are poking fun at the strip about protesting women], „*Paskowy*” *z TVP Info znów na ustach wszystkich internautów*⁵⁶ [The Strip Maker of TVP Info once again the talk of all Internet users] „*Paskowy*” *TVP Info wygrał ten dzień. Jego „dzieła” przyćmiły wystąpienie Beaty Szydło*⁵⁷ [The Strip Maker of TVP Info won the day. His “works” overshadowed even Beata Szydło’s speech], „*Paskowy*” *w TVP Info znowu zaszalał. W sieci zawrzało*⁵⁸ [The Strip Maker of TVP Info went crazy again. The Web boiled]).

50 See <https://pasek-tvpis.pl>.

51 See <https://www.facebook.com/oko.press/videos/1935647696696771>.

52 See <https://www.facebook.com/PaskizTVP>.

53 See <https://www.facebook.com/PasekTVPinfo>.

54 See <https://www.facebook.com/paskigrozy>.

55 See <https://wiadomosci.wp.pl/paskowy-tvp-info-w-szczytowej-formie-internauci-zartuja-z-paska-o-protestujacych-kobietach-6198979956725377a>.

56 See <https://wmeritum.pl/paskowy-tvp-info-znow-ustach-wszystkich-internautow-komentowal-wystapienia-politykow-opozycji-sejmowej-debaty-foto/213393>.

57 See <https://wiadomosci.wp.pl/paskowy-tvp-info-wygral-ten-dzien-jego-dzieła-przyćmiły-wystąpienie-beaty-szydło-6195769708234369a>.

58 See <https://www.fakt.pl/wydarzenia/polityka/paskowy-w-tvp-info-znowu-zaszalał/dw1bk2t>.