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Language, identity and discourse — between theory and methodology: The idea of empirical research

Main goals and assumptions

The main goal of the text is to present some ideas about theoretical/methodological possibilities of communication research and to propose two ways of their implementation — for the Polish third sector (foundations, associations) and for the creative sector (mainly branding agencies) — which are self-description and identity analysis.[1] In a broad sense it is also an attempt to answer the question about the correlation of the reconstructed linguistic and discourse facts (ways to talk about things) with the kind and intensity of emotions arising in the process of decoding their messages, and subsequently, with their efficiency in social practice (brand communication or fundraising).

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[1] The presented ideas are part of an NCN grant proposal put forward by Karina Stasiuk-Krajewska and Michał Ulidis. The authors will continue their research using the theoretical and methodological assumptions outlined here.

We assume the existence of a relatively uniform, distinguishable image of the studied subject deposited in the language it uses, its communication strategies and discourse symbols/semantic formations. The analysis must also be supplemented by an examination of the graphic design of communication (here: websites), using tools of multimodal discourse analysis, as well its interaction with the textual content.[2] At the same time, we assume that what constitutes important elements of the media-based communication and its effectiveness are not only the textual determinants (reconstructed in a discourse and semiotic analysis), but the interaction between the text and the recipient. In this context we also recognize that emotions (the expressive and impressive function of language[3]) are an especially important and interesting aspect of this interaction.

Thus, we analyze the elements of media-based communication associated with the text as such (in its broadest sense, including also the visual text). Further analysis of the data should be complemented by an examination of the relationship between the text and the viewer by means of investigating the viewer's emotions elicited by given messages. In this way, as we assume, it is possible to avoid the main weakness of the semiological and discourse analyses,[4] associated with their peculiar separation from the pragmatic aspects of the actual relationships with the recipients, and, therefore, with the pragmatics of the text's functioning within the social context. Thus, the two main and recommended elements of the media analysis — the textual and the reception-related[5] — are addressed here.

In the first stage of analysis we would like to focus on websites of organisations (third sector entities or branding agencies). However, it is beyond doubt that communicating one's identity in the case of any organization is not done solely through websites, but often includes other media. Nevertheless, we believe that, because of the growing role of the internet in the so-called mass media, this communication channel can be considered particularly important. This is also indirectly indicated by the fact that the analyzed entities prefer using this channel as a main reference when communicating via other media channels (by specifying their website address). At the same time, however, we think that it will be possible to extend the proposed research towards an analysis of other communication channels, especially in comparison to the results obtained in relation to websites.

The research approach adopted by us is, in short, based on the triangulation of the methods applied, theories and data sources considered, in which linguistic analyses of text corpora supplement the study of the emotional dimension of web layouts and

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[2] See: R. Barthes, "Retoryka obrazu", *Pamiętnik Literacki* 1985, no. 3, pp. 289–302; R. Barthes, *Mitologie*, transl. A. Dziadek, Warszawa 2008.

[3] See: R. Jacobson, "Poetyka w świetle językoznawstwa", transl. K. Pomorska, *Pamiętnik Literacki* 1960, no. 2, pp. 431–473.

[4] See for example: J. Fiske, Reading the Popular, London-New York 1989.

[5] See: M. Mrozowski, *Media masowe. Władza-rozrywka-biznes*, Warszawa 2001.

aim to reconstruct the identity and self-report strategies of specific dynamics of the sectors, which can also be understood as an attempt to test and scale a new tool for the media analysis.

Theory: Organization self-image and communication

The problem of the (self-)image of organizations is taken from the assumptions of social constructionism[6] and cognitive constructivism.[7] Therefore, the image is constructive for us. This means that, as with regard to reality, it does not exist objectively, in isolation from what is social. It cannot be observed otherwise than through the prism of culture, experience, attributed meanings and contexts.

The image understood in this way is a semantic element of the cultural system and as such it is subjected to constant negotiations and processes of (re)interpretation. As a social construct, it is possible/accessible only through communication. It does not exist objectively, but depends on the culture, history and tradition of a given community, from which it originates. Communication should be then understood as necessarily related to cultural activities, which have a symbolic character.[8] This is because human beings are inevitably and permanently entangled in a culture that is the only reality (in fact its model, or a precise model "for it", because we cannot say whether and to what extent it actually reflects it[9]), which is cognitively available for it. By examining the image, we analyze the semantic constructions produced by the participants of communication, within the framework of the (Polish) culture. The analysis of semantics, the manner and content of semantic profile means the separation of cognitive-emotional elements of the semantic constructs which are possessed by a particular sector specific to the analyzed object, or individual entities that create it. In our case, we will analyze the image texts deposited on the websites of representatives of the third sector (foundations, associations) and the creative sector (branding agencies), assuming that they are (for this purpose) carriers of the identity, image, value, mission and vision of the organization/brand, which is constructed through them, both against the competition as well as against itself, againsts its internal stakeholders.

Research on identity related to (social) activity is rooted in the social sciences and humanities, with particular emphasis on psychological studies.[10] However, we would

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6   See: P. Berger, T. Luckmann, *Społeczne tworzenie rzeczywistości*, transl. J. Niżnik, Warszawa 1983.
7   See: E. von Glasersfeld, "Piaget and the radical constructivist epistemology", [in:] *Epistemology and Education*, eds. C.D. Smock, E. von Glasersfeld, Athens 1974, pp. 1–24.
8   See: M. Wendland, *Konstruktywizm komunikacyjny*, Poznań 2011.
9   See: M. Fleischer, *Koncepty — elementy sterujące komunikacji*, Wrocław 2008.
10   See for example: C. Dubar, *La socialisation, construction des identités sociales et professionnelles*, Paris 1997; S. Sveningsson, M. Alvesson, "Managing managerial identities: Organizational fragmenta-

like to draw the attention to the specificity and complexity of the object we study. For constructivists, identity is a category created by a person to coordinate their interaction with the environment. In essence, it does not fall into the neurobiological order, as it is emphasized by Siegfried J. Schmidt, it belongs to the order of a language.[11] This, on the other hand, serves the purpose of consensual coordination of behavior, not the simple transmission of information.[12] Perception is not a process of reception of external reality, but consists of assigning meanings to neural processes, which are, by their essence, asemantic. It is a process of constructing, interpreting data that does not mean anything in itself. It is a condition, and at the same time an instrument, of our orientation and functioning in the world — and coordination with the environment. Active production of reality in the mind of an observer is a social and historical process which always takes place in a certain community and in a specific culture. Although the constructs do not have an objective character, they are not fully subjective and arbitrary but intersubjectively verifiable. The identity, as Peter Berger puts it, is attributed, confirmed and transformed socially[13] and as such it always evolves in a certain context (social, cultural), in relation to (our image of) someone, something. This means opinion we "assemble", our own self-image in the imagination, and consequently in the behavior.

Identity understood as a kind of belonging to a certain community, views, behaviors, ways of thinking or norms is socially and culturally determined, but not inherited and given once and for all, in this sense may be subject to change (e.g. when it turns out to be ineffective for our functioning in a given environment), it is also possible to participate in several identities at the same time. "Identity is neither a gift nor an absolute decision; it is something that is constructed and what can (at least in principle) be constructed in various ways".[14] However, it should be remembered that even when, according to the concept of s u p e r m a r k e t   c u l t u r e,[15] we make a self-identification, i.e. identity construction, this is not a fact of free, unrestricted selection, because identity is a phenomenon "rooted in culture" more than in politics or social structure — as mediated by a system of meanings, values and symbols.

We define identity as a set of properties related to both social structure and anthropologically understood culture, shaped and shared by members of the given col-

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tion, discourse and identity struggle", *Human Relations* 56, 2003, no. 10, pp. 1163–1193; M.E. Duarte, "The psychology of life construction", *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 75, 2009, no. 3, pp. 259–266.

[11] See: S.J. Schmidt, ed., *Der Diskurs des Konstruktivismus*, Frankfurt 1987.

[12] See: H.R. Maturana, F.J. Varela, *Autopoiesis and Cognition*, London 1980.

[13] See: P. Berger, *Zaproszenie do socjologii*, transl. J. Stawiński, Warszawa 2002, p. 96.

[14] See: Z. Bauman, "Ponowoczesne wzory osobowe", *Studia Socjologiczne* 1993, no. 2, p. 8.

[15] See: G. Mathews, *Supermarket kultury. Kultura globalna a tożsamość jednostki*, transl. E. Klekot, Warszawa 2005.

lectivities, significant from the perspective of the self-definition of an individual.[16] Therefore, we are primarily interested in the cultural dimension of the creation of the identity environment, which includes the systems of values and beliefs present in images (about themselves and others), and norms concerning both the content and value of the identities of individuals that are characteristic of the analyzed group and constitute the essence, if not the fundamental aspect, of the self-construction of its image.

At the same time, one should distinguish the understanding of identity that is the subject of anthropologists' and sociologists' research from the identity of the brand which belongs to the field of economics, whose designation is a desirable, deliberately created and implemented leading, target image. This image does not have to be identical to its reception or actual perception by the reference groups.[17] The identity of the sector must necessarily have a spontaneous, uncontrolled character. If it is actually separable and relatively coherent, then its development is not the result of centralized, controlled and intended actions. It would then have to arise as a result of a current, internal and uncoordinated action and as such is secondary and dependent on the identity of the creative economy in general.

In order to reconstruct the brand's identity, we refer to categories such as personality, mission, vision and brand awareness, treating them as distinguishing factors that enable its positioning in relation to the "competitive" environment. By brand positioning, we mean occupying a specific place in the recipients' consciousness through a created leading image. The target, in this case, is to effectively distinguish the brand from the competitive environment. This term comes from the classic marketing discourse publication *Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind* by Al Ries and Jacek Trout.[18] The positioning process described there takes place in the client's mind and is called the "battlefield" for products, services, brands or companies/organizations.

We assume that the concept of brand and its identity, originating in commerce, can be successfully implemented for the analysis of communication of not only market (commercial) organizations (which is obvious), but also of the third-sector organizations. Firstly, these organizations naturally operate within the market environment and, therefore, tend to function as brands themselves (which enjoy more or less credibility, recognition, etc.). Secondly, and more importantly, there is, as we believe, a common world of experiences, a set of values that constitute the third-sector brand as such; these (semantic and discursive) elements are used in the construction of identity of the third-sector organizations and communicated by these entities in the process of their self-image formation.

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[16] See: R.H. Robbins, "Identity, culture, and behavior", [in:] *Handbook of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, ed. J.J. Honigmann, Chicago 1973, pp. 1199–1222.

[17] See: D.A. Aaker, D. McLoughlin, *Strategic Market Management*, European ed., Hoboken 2007; J. Altkorn, ed. *Podstawy marketingu*, Warszawa 2004.

[18] See: A. Ries, J. Trout, *Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind*, New York 2001.

Theory: Language, identity, reality

Adopting the methodology of quantitative-corpus linguistics and assumptions of the theory of the linguistic image of the world (In Polish *językowy obraz świata* [JOS]), we want to examine how the research groups talk about themselves — about the ways and strategies that they use to describe self-activity and self-identification in social reality, understood as the construction of its own identity (the media) to the external environment. We assume, therefore, that its language is a specific way of ordering reality, reflecting a certain attitude, experience, a set of valuations and norms, a worldview of a given subject, a social group or even a nation.[19] In this way, we expand the spectrum of research on sector identity into the domain of language and culture. According to Jerzy Bartmiński, the term JOS means: included in the language, a differently verbal interpretation of reality, which can be summarized in the form of a set of judgments about the world. They may be "fixed" judgments, that is, based on the very matter of the language, but also presupposed ones, i.e. implied by linguistic forms, fixed at the level of social knowledge.[20] At the same time, we understand language itself in the same way as Jerzy Kmita — as a field of the normative-directive (defined by semantic, syntactic and phonetic rules).

> The language of a given community, assuming that this community already has it on a universal scale, is one of the cultural and key areas — both for a given culture and for research on it. […] Thus, formulating hypotheses regarding the language of a given community is closely related to the humanistic interpretation reconstructing linguistic norms and cultural directives of a given community.[21]

In this sense, language as an expression is at the same time a limitation, it defines the way of presenting, as well as the way of interpreting reality.

We should analyze the dedicated corpus of expressions (for branding agencies and third-sector entities) mainly in terms of discursive symbols, i.e. the elements of discourse which function in a given communication group (subculture) in its specific semantization (in contrast to the collective symbolism characteristic for national culture). As for the types and constitution of the meanings of discursive symbols, they correspond to the collective symbols. The difference lies in the scope of validity and function. The concept of discursive semantization should be understood as a process and result of generating meanings that go beyond the lexical meaning, and as such constitute the research area of cultural linguistics.[22] We intend to distill discursive

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[19] See: A. Mańczyk, *Wspólnota językowa i jej obraz świata. Krytyczne uwagi do teorii językowej Leo Weisgerbera*, Zielona Góra 1982.

[20] J. Bartmiński, *Językowe podstawy obrazu świata*, Lublin 2006, p. 12.

[21] J. Kmita, *Kultura jako przedmiot współczesnej refleksji filozoficznej*, Warszawa 1987, pp. 83–84, transl. by K.S-K, M.U.

[22] See: J. Anusiewicz, A. Dąbrowska, M. Fleischer, "Językowy obraz świata i kultura: projekt koncepcji badawczej", [in:] *Językowy obraz świata i kultura*, eds. A. Dąbrowska, J. Anusiewicz, [special issue of] *Język a Kultura* 13, Wrocław 2000, pp. 11–44.

symbols, as shown in the rest of the study system, based on a questionnaire survey and the analysis of the corpus of the statements.

Methodology: Corpus linguistics

The methodological achievements of corpus linguistics and the lexicometric approach to language analysis form the basis of our research instruments and set the criterion for the selection of research material. We use them as a quantitative tool for reconstructing the linguistic image of the world of the studied objects, whose carrier and manifestation form the dedicated corpus of verbal expressions. An attempt to unambiguously define corpus linguistics is problematic, because it is not the same branch of linguistics as syntax, semantics or sociolinguistics. It deals with the principles and practice of using corpora in the study of a language[23] with the use of the tools of computer science.[24] Despite the lack of terminological transparency, a kind of binder linking various areas of corpus linguistics seems to be descriptivism and empiricism, combined with the application of programming technology. Corpus linguistics uses extensive collections of texts that are selected according to the adopted principles and analytical categories. At the same time, one should first draw from naturally occurring texts so that real linguistic patterns are analyzed. Worth noting are the presuppositions of a radically empirical or naturalistic understanding of language. On the basis of the corpus method, language is what we perceive as the language, i.e., the corpus of verbal expression, and the subject of analysis can only be phenomena observed in the corpora.

Quantum linguistics (QL) draws from the mathematical and statistical research apparatus, the so-called mathematical natural sciences. The assignment of statistical analysis and the use of quantitative methods to study linguistic phenomena, allows us to distinguish statistical groups in the matter, which can be subjected to further analysis. Quantitative linguistics defines a language as a multi-layered and multi-dimensional structure composed of discrete units connected together by a network of relations. The goal of QL is to present a formalized description of the relationship, taking into account their dynamic and quantitative aspect. According to Adam Pawłowski, the empirical and quantitative character of the examined regularities implies the measurability and/or quantification of certain features of the language.[25]

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[23] See: A. Pawłowski, "Lingwistyka korpusowa — perspektywy i zagrożenia", *Polonica* 22–23, 2003, pp. 19–32.
[24] See: J. Sinclair, *Corpus, Concordance, Collocation*, Oxford 1991.
[25] See: A. Pawłowski, *Metody kwantytatywne w sekwencyjnej analizie tekstu*, Warszawa 2001.

This method met with rather considerable interest on the part of Polish researchers, as evidenced by studies dedicated to it.[26]

The collected research material (text corpora) should be subject to lemmatization using TaKIPI web service,[27] a morpho-syntactic tagger (disambiguator) prepared for the Polish language, which is part of the CLARIN (Common Language Resources and Technology Infrastructure) project. TaKIPI is a Polish language tagger, which is a program that for individual words in a given text or a text corpus defines their morpho-syntactic description and then determines the correct interpretation of particular words depending on the context of their occurrence. We intend to analyze the collected corpus of speech according to the following main research schemes:

— analysis of the full thematic field: attendance and hierarchy of the most common expressions, operations on frequencies;

— analysis of the keywords and concordances and collocations of selected tokens;

— categorization of key lexemes in the collective corpus in reference to the Frequency Dictionary of Contemporary Polish.[28]

We treat the analyzed texts, which are mediated in the mass media, as a carrier of an image and the means of self-presentation, and at the same time a cognitive landscape of the studied communication group — its linguistic image of the world, or to put it more precisely — themselves as sector/social subjects. These texts will be first collected and formatted by us and then subjected to statistical processing. For individual words in a given text, or a textual corpus, their morpho-syntactic description should be determined, and then they should be subjected to lemmatization and in this form become the subject of further research. The size of the corpus is conditioned by the finite character of the set of entities included in databases of organizations, so the matter of our considerations is the "closed" corpus in this specific understanding that it could not be more numerous due to the exhaustion of available sources.

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[26] See: J. Bartmiński, "Kryteria ilościowe w badaniu stereotypów językowych", *Biuletyn Polskiego Towarzystwa Językoznawczego* 41, 1998, pp. 91–104; R. Hammerl, J. Sambor, *Statystyka dla językoznawców*, Warszawa 1990; M.R. Mayenowa, "O matematyzacji lingwistyki", *Podstawowe problemy współczesnej techniki* 12, 1968, pp. 135–162; W. Pisarek, *Frekwencja wyrazów w prasie. Wiadomości, komentarze, reportaże*, Kraków 1972; J. Sambor, „Lingwistyka kwantytatywna — stan badań i perspektywy rozwoju", *Biuletyn Polskiego Towarzystwa Językoznawczego*, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, z. 41, Wrocław-Kraków 1988.

[27] M. Piasecki, "Polish Tagger TaKIPI: Rule based construction and optimisation", *Task Quarterly* 11, 2007, no. 1–2, pp. 151–167.

[28] M. Ogrodniczuk, "Nowa edycja wzbogaconego korpusu słownika frekwencyjnego", [in:] *Językoznawstwo w Polsce. Stan i perspektywy*, ed. S. Gajda, Opole 2003. The corpus of the frequency dictionary is five sets of samples of 100,000 words drawn from authentic texts from 1963–1967 belonging to five styles: popular science texts, small press releases, journalism, artistic prose and artistic drama — for the study of the frequency of Polish words.

Methodology: Questionnaires and micro-expression analysis

Parallel to the analysis of the linguistic image of the world of the Polish third/creative sector institutions, we are planning a perceptual experiment, which will analyze the perception of the website layout among the respondents with an additional consideration of the emotional reception of the presented messages. In order to do that, we would like to conduct a survey focused on mining basic and deep associations and analyzing the brand's/institution's image, aimed at distilling the leading semantics. The context for the formulation of questions will be the issues which are typical for the questionnaires that test and explore the organization's brand identity and awareness. The qualitative module that will be used to analyze the self-image should contain only open questions and filtering questions. In addition, as part of the qualitative section of the questionnaire, we will explore the issue of cohesion and identity of individual brands. The whole questionnaire will be supplemented with a quantitative module in the form of a semantic differential — methods for measuring attitudes, developed by Charles E. Osgood,[29] and mainly used in psychology. The differential is itself defined in the methodology of social research as a question format in which we ask respondents to make an assessment between two extremes, such as "very negative" and "very positive". In this case, a unipolar differential should be used, i.e. each property will be described using one adjective, and the respondents mark on a 7-point scale how much in their opinion the property matches the object being examined.

In order to analyze emotions, we refer to the heuristic potential of the concept of micro-expression, which, being extremely short-term phenomena, will be registered using specialized research equipment. In addition to analyzing the semiotic and discourses of the websites of third-sector and creative sector institutions on the visual and textual level and a questionnaire maintained in the spirit of constructivism, in the course of the perceptual experiment designed by us the respondents will be subjected to micro-expression analysis during their interaction with the websites of selected agencies. The works of Silvan Tomkins and Paul Ekman[30] are constitutive for the development of research into the phenomenon and the role of micro-expression. The theoretical basis that constitutes the starting point for this research methodology, which in this case has been technologically implemented in the form of a licensed interface (research apparatus), is the assumption that emotions are coupled with a specific and observable mimicry. Mimic reactions, therefore, appear automatically when one experiences a specific emotion and this happens subconsciously, in the sense that we are not able to consciously control them before a certain time passes.

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[29] See: C.E. Osgood, G.J. Suci, P.H. Tannenbaum, *The measurement of meaning*, Urbana 1957.

[30] See: P. Ekman, W.F. Friesen, *Unmasking the Face: A Guide to Recognizing Emotions from Facial Expressions*, Cambridge 2003; E.V. Demos, ed., *Exploring Affect: The Selected Writings of Silvan S. Tomkins*, Studies in Emotion and Social Interaction, Cambridge 1995.

During this delay, which usually takes milliseconds, our facial expressions appear in the form of the so-called micro-expressions. They are related to the emotions that are being experienced at that very moment, which may contradict the verbal signals being sent. However, micro-expressions understood in such a way are an important element of interaction, both face-to-face and mediated through the media.

Methodology: Discourse analysis

Another important theoretical and methodological category is discourse. Undoubtedly, the category of discourse is not clear. Michel Foucault defines the key idea for this concept in a short, but not so clear way as: "the representation itself, represented by verbal signs".[31] Richard A. Lynch makes the area more tangible with the following explanation:

> In sum, discourses are the complex networks of statements that make knowledge possible; that delimit what can be said, or understood, within a particular discourse; and that determine who can speak (or at least speak with authority or be heard). […] They are, in this sense, a priori — they establish the conditions of existence for any given statement. But discourses are themselves transient, discontinuous, and situated within a history that makes their alteration and disappearance possible.[32]

So, discourse consists of semantic conditions (fields of meaning) preferring or enabling a certain way of talking about the world (obviously, the foundation here is the abovementioned social constructivism and the constructivist approach to language with its basic premise that language constitutes a social reality). To put it briefly, discourse includes all the terms of talking about the bounds of reasonableness, along with the semantic exclusion outside those borders.

> Discourse is what allows the construction of coherent (or not) sentences, appearance of more or less precise descriptions, arrangement of verifications, development of theories. It is prior to what will appear and function as insight or illusion, as debunked truth or recognised error. Knowledge (common and scientific) is therefore in this context a collection of elements formed in a regular way by discourse practice.[33]

Eventually, one of the main questions in this context would consider the existence of a world beyond discourse. Perhaps, as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe[34] suggest, objects may exist outside discourse, but then they have no meaning.

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[31] See: M. Foucault, *Słowa i rzeczy. Archeologia nauk humanistycznych*, transl. T. Komendant, słowo/obraz terytoria, Gdańsk 2006, transl. by K.S-K, M.U.

[32] See: R.A. Lynch, "Discourse", [in:] *Cambridge Foucault Lexicon*, ed. L. Lawlor, Cambridge 2015.

[33] L. Rasiński, "Pojęcie dyskursu w poststrukturalizmie. Derrida, Lacan, Foucault", *Teraźniejszość — człowiek — edukacja* 2009, no. 3, pp. 7–23, transl. by K.S-K, M.U.

[34] E. Laclau, Ch. Mouffe, Hegemonia i socjalistyczna strategia, transl. S. Królak, Wrocław 2007.

Within the context of discourse, the category of articulation, precisely character-ized by Laclau and Mouffe,[35] is also worth recalling. Articulations are understood by the authors as nodal points of discourse, partly stabilizing the meaning. Articulation practices consist in, broadly speaking, the formation of nodal points that stabilize the meaning to a certain extent. The partial, dynamic nature of this stabilization is a ramification of the openness of what is social, which is the result of a constant breach of each discourse boundary by the infinite nature of the field of discursiveness. "Nodal points are not fixed centers and points of reference around which the discourse may be organized, but rather, just as other specific positions or discourse elements, may in a second lose their privileged position in relation to articulations taking place in the vicinity"[36] — concludes Lotar Rasiński.

Multimodal discourse analysis (MDA), being one of the most recent trends in discourse analysis (in the socio-semiotic approach proposed by Theo van Leeuwen and Gunther Kress[37]), takes into account all the levels of communication of meanings and constitution of discourses. It implies that each modality (i.e. seman-tization method — colour, music, text) is an important semiotic layer and, as such, should be taken into account in discourse analysis. Moreover, this method of analysis involves the reciprocal relationships between modalities and their social contexts.

It is assumed that communication acts are formed by means of cooperation of signs with different signified (significants): "Speech acts should be renamed communicative acts and understood as multimodal microevents".[38] Within this approach, discourse is understood, similarly to Foucault's concept, as a kind of reservoir for cultural (com-munication) knowledge that makes certain semiotizations possible to be disclosed in certain social contexts (in this case, e.g., helping, compassion), thus excluding the others (e.g., social relations understood as competition between subjects with equal opportunities). This implies that modern communication involves a shift in the field of the dominant modality which is becoming increasingly graphical/visual, rather than textual. Therefore, the application of the multimodal perspectives to research seems essential.

Multimodality involves a multidimensionality of the process of meaning creation (semiosis) which takes place not only within the language system, but also in other sign systems. Thus understood, multimodal discourse analysis is based, obviously, on the work of Roland Barthes, with particular focus on the analysis of myths of popular culture and his groundbreaking work, "Rhetoric of the Image".[39] In this essay, while

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[35] Ibid.

[36] L. Rasiński, "Polityka i dyskurs. Teoria hegemonii Ernesto Laclau", [in:] *Indywidualizm, wspól-notowość, polityka*, eds. M. Jakubowski, A. Szahaj, K. Abriszewski, Toruń 2002, p. 220.

[37] See: T. van Leeuwen, G.R. Kress, *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication*, London 2001.

[38] Ibid, p. 221.

[39] See: R. Barthes, "Retoryka obrazu".

referring to structuralist thinking, Barthes applies the rules governing the language to analyze other semiotic systems and their relationship with the semantization of language. As for other sources of inspiration, we should also mention the iconology of Ervin Panofsky,[40] who devoted a number of studies to the analysis of the content of paintings and their symbolism. Panofsky is also the author of works that analyze different levels of meaning: (i) the primary, or natural meaning, (ii) the secondary, or conventional meaning, (iii) the intrinsic meaning, or content. What is especially important in the context of the proposed studies is the attention Panofsky pays to the cultural determinants of meanings. Another essential landmark for the study is also the concept of visual culture developed by Nicholas Mirzoeff.[41] It involves primarily the dominance of images in contemporary communication, while also forming a specific field of study that focuses on "visual events". The approach to visual culture as a field of study includes not only paintings, but all the media that have dominated late modernity while simultaneously perpetuating its dominant feature which is visuality. Among these media the internet undoubtedly occupies a privileged position.

Methodology: Plan of the research

Taking into account all the theory and methodology mentioned above, the overall plan of the research, including the division into four main research modules, should be as follows:

1. Quantitative and corpus analysis. A linguistic image of the world of the third sector/creative sector in Poland, based on text images deposited on websites. This module includes:

— defining the population of the researched texts;
— collection and lemmatization of text corpora;
— attendance, concordance and collocation of selected tokens, frequencies;
— keyword analysis in the context of the reference corpus;
— analysis including elements of corpus-assisted discourse studies (axis in terms of evaluations, functions and usage of numbers, construction of people and events, metaphors and metonymies, modality: the role, frequency of modal verbs and modal adverbial constructions, description and analysis of used tools and argumentative strategies);
— data categorization;
— analysis and interpretation of the results.

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[40] See: E. Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance*, New York 1972.

[41] See: N. Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture*, London-New York 1999.

2. Multimodal Discourse Analysis
— collection of visual data;
— data categorisation;
— analysis and interpretation of results.

3. Emotional dimension of the third-/creative-sector communication in Poland. Examination of micro-expression in the context of the third-/creative-sector institutions websites perception:
— perceptual experiment and PAPI interview scenario;
— selection of the research samples;
— the recruitment of respondents;
— pretest of the research tool;
— audit type of research;
— data coding and categorisation;
— analysis and interpretation of results.

4. Correlation and comparative analysis of the empirical data using the theory of discourse.

Theory and methodology: Summary

We believe that the essential element for our research is the act of stepping beyond the text, beyond the analysis of semantics, the language-based vision of the world and the discourses generated within the text. As we have mentioned above, in formulating the principles of our research, we will try to avoid the main research problem which, in our opinion, concerns (critical) discourse analysis. The problem consists in the exclusion of the real acts of text interpretation in the context of its social functioning. What we mean by this is the question of how the reconstructed semantics and discourses f u n c t i o n in real social interactions and how processes of text decoding occur. Here, media studies face a major challenge. If we look at things from this perspective, we will see that even now media anthropology in the UK, as well as studies based on the uses and gratifications theory are unable to give an answer to the above question. Using different survey methods or in-depth interviews, we will be capable of answering the question of how those concerned (the recipients) construct their relations with the media and how they interpret it. In turn, participant observation methods (based on observation of the interaction between media and the recipient) are necessarily subject to observational and interpretive bias related to the researcher. Based on these assumptions, we decided to analyze the interaction between the text and the recipient using the method of facial micro-expression tracking, which is widely applied in psychology. To date, the method has not been used in Poland for the purpose of studies of media-based interaction. We assume that the recording

and analysis of facial micro-expressions will help us to reconstruct the emotional interaction between the text and the recipient, an aspect which seems particularly important in the context of the communication processes.

The research idea: The third sector

The research of the perception of the websites of the third-sector institutions should be exploratory in nature. Deliberate selection of the sample will be used, and the size of the sample is assumed to be $n = 100$. It is mainly due to the relatively long duration of the study and the complex nature of the required observation.

The aim of the study is a survey of the basic elements of the identity communicated by the third-sector entities (foundations and associations). As public-benefit organizations, they are actively engaged in activities related to the attraction of funds for the support of socially excluded/disadvantaged/discriminated groups, as well as in solving social problems. The empirical approach to the identity of the mentioned entities will be based on the analysis of linguistic and visual representations of third-sector actors which construct themselves as foundations/associations and have the formal status of public-benefit organizations which allows them to collect funds through 1% personal income tax donations. The main goal of such research is a reconstruction of the linguistic/discourse determinants of communication and identity of the third sector in Poland. Therefore, we will also analyze the emotional aspect of the image and communication presented on the websites of Polish non-governmental organisations which we perceive as means of their linguistic and visual self-presentation. The corpus analysis would involve texts posted on the websites of 30 subjects which managed to attract the largest funds according to the report prepared by the Department of Income Tax, entitled *Official data regarding the amount of 1% of personal income tax granted to public-benefit organizations, based on tax settlements for the year 2016*.[42] The texts that are of special interest to us usually appear in the "About us" and "Why we should help" tabs (the majority of websites of foundations and associations feature such content, although the actual wording may differ from one website to another). Essentially, most attention should be paid to statements that form the identity of given subjects, as well as justify the importance of their activities.

The issue of an empirical, experimental analysis-based reconstruction of semantics and discourses that constitute the Polish third-sector organizations' self-image

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[42] *Informacja dotycząca kwot 1% należnego podatku dochodowego od osób fizycznych przekazanych organizacjom pożytku publicznego z rozliczenia za 2016 rok*, http://www.liver.pl/w/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Wykaz-organizacji-po%C5%BCytku-publicznego-kt%C3%B3re-w-2017-otrzyma%C5%82y-kwoty-1-proc..pdf (accessed: 5.06.2018).

and the role of emotions in the decoding of texts that form this self-image has not yet been addressed. Moreover, Polish literature on the subject does not offer any studies on the communication characteristics of this type of entities. While there is rich scientific literature dealing with the third-sector public relations or marketing, it is solely focused on the instrumental aspect of communication. Meanwhile, the main objective of our project is to examine the main determinants of the text and interaction which together make up this communication and make it effective in the context of the aims adopted by its authors. Thus, we assume that this efficiency (since we analyze 30 subjects who are top-ranked in terms of the funds obtained via the 1% tax donation) is due not only to the instruments used (in the tactical sense), but also to the semantically, as well as discoursely communicated identity and to the constructed emotional relationship. The above-described issue has not yet been addressed by researchers, particularly using the adopted methodology and from the perspective of social sciences and humanities, as well as in the context of the improving social functioning of the third sector in Poland.

We treat the discourse of the third sector as a concrete form of linguistic and visual manifestation of its identity. In order to analyze it, we will implement two main research modules. As part of the first one, we construct a dedicated speech corpus, which consists of "About us" and "Why should you help?" type texts, deposited on the websites of companies and organizations, which managed to attract the largest funds according to the report mentioned above. The second module will be devoted to the analysis of associations created as a result of the researcher's interactions with the websites of third-sector institutions. In addition to completing the questionnaire, we also investigate micro-expressions of respondents in order to distill the emotional aspects of the perception of website communication.

The research idea: Creative industries (branding)

The aim of this project is to attempt to empirically capture the identity of the creative industry sector, based on the analysis of linguistic and visual representations of market entities that construct themselves as branding agencies (branding is understood as designing and managing the brand image). In the absence of stable and systemic definitions of branding, which is an increasingly important and significant phenomenon in the context of market practice and social life, we attempt to reconstruct the self-image and the ways of self-description of the branding industry in Poland using the empirical approach characterized above. We assume that there is a relatively consistent and identifiable image of the studied object, deposited in the linguistic image of the world, communication strategies and discursive symbols/semantic formations. At the same time, we are interested in the role of emotions in the domain of formally

professionalized communication of the industry, specifically an emotional dimension of the image of the websites of Polish branding agencies, which we treat as carriers of their linguistic and visual self-presentation.

The population of the researched texts is the database of two leading Polish associations of several dozen professional entities that provide services in the field of branding and communication design of Klub Brand Design (Brand Design Club) and Stowarzyszenie Twórców Grafiki Użytkowej (Association of Graphic Designers). The analysis of text and visual content will be conducted on the websites of the branding companies agencies, which constitute a significant point of contact (communication) of the brand and (its) customers. The group of respondents who will take part in the perceptual experiment will constitute a deliberately chosen sample of $n = 100$.

Branding, which is understood as a creative industry, practical field, cultural phenomenon and recently in Poland also an academic discipline, requires an empirical description as a part of the scientific meta-reflection. The presented research approach is based on the triangulation of the methods applied, theories and data sources considered, in which linguistic analyses of text corpora supplement the study of the emotional dimension of web layouts, aiming to reconstruct the identity and self-report strategies of specific industry dynamics. The attempt or even the necessity to empower reflection on branding, as a key concept for today's thinking about communication in the professional register, and the primary discipline towards marketing and advertising, as well as the need to introduce systemic and posterior distinctions as part of considerations on the broadly understood creative economy, are the main reasons for formulating this research problem.

The aim of the research is to make an attempt, not only nationally, to empirically capture the industry identity (its fragment) of the creative sector based on the analysis of language and visual representations of market entities that construct themselves as branding agencies (branding is understood as designing and brand image management).

At the same time, we are interested in the role of emotions in the domain of professional industry communication, specifically the emotional image of websites' layouts of Polish branding agencies, because we treat these websites as carriers of their linguistic and visual self-presentation and manifestations of the image, which enable the targeted positioning of these companies/organizations in the consciousness relevant to their target audience (current/potential customers).

Language, identity and discourse — between theory and methodology: The idea of empirical research

Summary

The main goal of the text is to present some ideas about theoretical/methodological possibilities of communication research and to propose two ways of their implementation — for the self-description and identity analysis of the Polish third sector (foundations, associations) and the creative sector (mainly branding agencies). In a broad sense, it is also an attempt to answer the question about the correlation of the reconstructed linguistic and discourse facts (ways to talk about things) with the kind and intensity of emotions arising in the process of decoding their messages and subsequently with their efficiency in social practice (brand communication or fundraising).