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PERSUASION IN THE TEXT TITLES ON THE WEB PORTAL*

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Internet portals are one of many ways of internet communication. This form is also an example of communication transferred from the real to the virtual world. In this case, the mechanisms used by broadcasters are of interest in order to interest potential network users. They are particularly visible in the titles and subtitles of the genres of expression.

Key words: persuasion, web portal, presupposition, denial, media.

One of the necessary forms of maintaining the social links is the ability to communicate. The concept of *communication* according to *Wielki słownik wyrazów obcych PWN [The Great Dictionary of Foreign Words]* is understood as announcing something, while the form *to communicate* means ‘to exchange information with someone [...]’¹. The first primitive ways of communication have changed over the years and today, by various means of communication, one can express thoughts and emotions, express themselves, exchange information or affect others. At present, *face to face* conversation can be replaced with the use of internet and mobile devices that enable fast connection, no matter what the distance between the interlocutors is. The changes have not impact the communication model though, as it still includes a broadcaster, a channel and a recipient (among others, the transfer of traditional media to the Internet). The web portal under consideration (Kozaczek.pl) is an example of such synchronous-asynchronous conversation², which allows the seeker’s intention to be realized in a short period of time. The communication discussed in this article relates to the analysis of persuasive function and the implementation of conversation maxims of P. Grice transferred from the real conversation to the web conversation.

In 1967 Grice, P. introduced a more common understanding of implication. In his considerations, the researcher started to distinguish ‘what the speaker says (pronounces)

¹ Bańko, M. (2003). *Wielki słownik wyrazów obcych PWN*. Warszawa, p. 659.

² Wallace, P. (2015). *The Psychology of the Internet*. [Polish translation by Hornowski, T. as *Psychologia internetu*. (2003) Poznań, p. 11-23.]

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and what they may additionally mean (imply)³. In linguistics, conversational implicature in which Grice distinguishes the maxims determining the proper way of communication, is crucial³. The principles of conversation are the forms that underlie the effective communication between people. Grice, H. P. (1975) was the first to attempt to describe them by setting the cooperative principle which reads:

Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

and consists of two maxims, **the maxim of quantity** and **the maxim of quality**. The above rules were generalized by Leech, G. N. (1983⁴) and refer to **the avoidance of speaking untruths, the relation to the conversation topic and the way of expression**. However, the above **cooperative principle** by Grice, required completing and Leech added **the politeness principle**, formulating six maxims in it. Both principles were incorporated into pragmatics and the politeness principle was connected with the rhetoric addressed to a specific purpose. The maxims proposed by Leech deal with, successively, **tact, generosity, approbation**, as well as **modesty, agreement when expressing thoughts and sympathy**, in other words, **understanding**⁵.

Grice's theory is the basis for further discussion in this article. It takes into account the headings and headlines⁶ that may consist of the title, superscription or subtitle. According to W. Furman the title should be concise, interesting, accurate and informative and its purpose is to inform the content and encourage to read the given text⁷. Filip, G. adds that the relation between the title and the content of the article (piece of reading) is not always explicit⁸, which may derive from various suggestions (persuasions) or language trends⁹. Ożóg, K. points out that fashion-friendly mechanics include identification with the group (including virtual communities), group prestige, distinguishing others from others, strengthening group bonds, solidarity and community as well as popularisation of group values¹⁰. At present, more virtual communities are created where the only form of communication is an *interface to interface* type. This change confirms that the users of these forms pre-

³ Jurkowski, M. *Implikatura*. [Implicature] [in:] Polański, K. (ed.) (1999), *Encyklopedia językoznawstwa ogólnego*. [Encyclopedia of general linguistics] Wrocław, p. 252.

⁴ [cf.] Leech, G. H. (1983). *Principles of Pragmatics*. London and New York [as cited in] Żurek, A. *Teorie grzeczności językowej, Kształcenie Językowe* [The theories of linguistic politeness, Language training], vol. 7, <http://kj.sjof.eu/category/7-17-2008-143>, p. 35.

⁵ Polański, K. (1999). *Zasady (reguły, postulaty) konwersacji* [The principles (rules, postulates) of conversation] [in:] Polański, K. (ed.) (1999), *Encyklopedia językoznawstwa ogólnego* [Encyclopedia of general linguistics]. Wrocław, p. 669.

⁶ Furman, W. *Nagłówek* [Headline] [in:] Pisarek, W. (ed.) (2008), *Słownik terminologii medialnej* [Dictionary of media terminology]. Kraków, p. 127.

⁷ Furman, W. *Tytuł* [The title] [in:] Pisarek, W. (ed.) (2008), *Słownik terminologii medialnej* [Dictionary of media terminology]. Kraków, p. 225.

⁸ Filip, G. (2003) *Gry językowe Jana Lama* [Language games by Jan Lam]. Rzeszów, p. 249.

⁹ Ożóg, K. (2001) *Polszczyzna przelomu XX i XXI wieku. Wybrane zagadnienia* [Polish language at the turn of XX and XXI century. Selected aspects]. Rzeszów, p. 201.

¹⁰ Ożóg, K. op. cit., p. 89.

fer anonymous¹¹ contacts and casual relationships without transferring them to real life¹², which contributes to creation of more virtual bonds¹³.

The material I am presenting is about one hundred titles published in the first quarter of 2015 on the Kozaczek.pl web portal. The site is a vortal with a public access, an insight into the content published on it is not authorised and its primary function is to provide information¹⁴ being the latest news from the lives of famous people. According to Taras, B. this multipurpose is a web conversation (in other words, a netlog¹⁵), including: the main article (mother-text), photos (or a short video) and user comments (opinion-texts), having the characteristics of a monologue, dialogue or polylogue¹⁶.

All the headings on Kozaczek.pl site consist of the title and the subtitle. In a discussed netlog, according to the definition from *Słownik terminologii medialnej* [Dictionary of media terminology] edited by Pisarek, W. the articles headlines are varied and appear in the form of sentence equivalents [1] *Stars at Guess dinner (PHOTO)*¹⁷, **single sentences** [2] *Agnieszka Szulim turns 37 today (PHOTO)*¹⁸ or **compound sentences** [3] *Top Model juror touches breasts, TVN pays a penalty*. Also, the analysed titles include **information and questions** [4] *Mila Kunis in second pregnancy?*, **comments** [5] *If not the famous guys, no one would hear about them (PHOTO)*, **appeals, allusions, metaphors or comparisons**¹⁹ [6] *Kylie Jenner and Tyga like an old good marriage?*

The transfer of information by the owners of the portal is based on the communication (as in the real world) where the author of the published content is a broadcaster, the Kozaczek.pl site is a channel and users-readers are the recipients. This dependency allows to show the persuasive function of the headlines on the portal, based on the conversation principle and its maxims.

¹¹ The concept of anonymity in the Internet was described in more detail by Taras, B.: Taras, B. (2004). *Anonim w Internecie, czyli o komunikacji incognito* [Anonymous in the internet, i.e. incognito communication]. [in:] Kita, M. and Grzenia, J. (ed.) (2004) *Dialog a nowe media* [Dialogue and the new media]. Katowice, p. 44.

¹² Castells, M. *The Internet galaxy* [Polish translation by Hornowski, T. as *Galaktyka Internetu: refleksje nad Internetem, biznesem i społeczeństwem*. (2003) Poznań, p. 135]

¹³ Małecka, M and Małecki B. *Analiza rozwoju portali społecznościowych w Internecie*. [The analysis of the development of the social websites on the Internet] (2008) Warszawa, p. 4.

¹⁴ Wit, B. (2008) *Electronic commerce – budowanie konkurencyjności przedsiębiorstwa w Internecie* [Electronic commerce – creating a competitiveness of a company on the Internet]. Lublin, p. 15. <http://bc.pollub.pl/Content/348/ecommerce.pdf> [accessed on: 17/01/2016].

¹⁵ A thorough discussion of a term is in the prepared for printing article *O języku i strukturze netlogu na podstawie portalu Pudelek.pl* [About the language and the structure of the netlog on the basis of the pudelek.pl site, [cf.] Taras, B. *Anonim w Internecie, czyli o komunikacji incognito* [Anonymous in the internet, i.e. incognito communication]. [in:] Kita, M. and Grzenia, J. (ed.) (2004) *Dialog a nowe media* [Dialogue and the new media]. Katowice, p. 42-51; Majchrowska, J. *Leksykalne i graficzne sposoby wyrażania radości na przykładzie netlogu* [Lexical and graphical methods of expressing joy on the example of netlog], [in:] Filip, G. and Patro-Kucab, M. (ed.) (2015) *Radość: aspekty językowo-kulturowe* [Joy – linguistic and cultural aspects] . Rzeszów, p. 120-121.

¹⁶ Taras, B. op. cit., p. 44. Wyrwas, K. (2004) *Kilka uwag o dyskusji na forum internetowym* [A few remarks about the discussion on the internet forum]. [in:] Kita, M. and Grzenia, J. (ed.) (2004) *Dialog a nowe media* [Dialogue and the new media]. Katowice, p. 54.

¹⁷ All examples of titles and subtitles are cited in the original to show the actual content.

¹⁸ <http://www.kozaczek.pl/>

¹⁹ Furman, W. op. cit., p. 225.

The term *persuasion* (Lat. *persuasio*) derives from Latin *persuado*, which is the translation from Greek *peithō* that means *I urge, persuade*²⁰. According to the lexicographical definition by Bańko, M., persuasion is understood as: ‘convincing something, persuading something or dissuading something [...]’²¹.

The analyzed headings have two meanings: primary meaning, i.e. semantically defined conditions of truth, i.e. ‘what is said’ and secondary meaning which is the conversational implicature, i.e. ‘what is meant’, e.g. statement:

[7] *Doda is going to show up in Dancing with the Stars*

Implies:

[7a] Doda will perform **as a participant** in Dancing with the Stars

However, sentence [7a] is not an outcome of sentence [7]. Sentence [7a] is some sort of suggestion under the influence of the sentence [7]. It is only the subtitle *So far, she will be singing. Is this a preview of the next edition?* that allows to state that Doda will be a guest who will perform two songs during the next episode of *Dancing with the Stars*.

Other examples of ‘suggestion’ are:

[8] *The model with a small pregnant belly gives birth*

The above sentence suggests that for the broadcaster it is more important that:

[8a] The model had a small belly and **then** (less important information) gave birth

The subtitle *The baby weight is known* confirms that the information about the small size of the pregnant celebrity’s belly was more important and the portal journalists (as well as its users) have already known, how much fits in the model’s belly.

Headline:

[9] *Marysia Niklińska NAKED in her clip (VIDEO)*

Suggests that:

[9a] Marysia Niklińska **performed** NAKED in her clip (VIDEO)

This title, when further specified with the subtitle *She dresses up as a nun and kisses a girl* does not communicate about the nudity of the celebrity. The use of capitals as a graphical alternative to scream in the word *NAKED* may be considered as the equivalent of a raised voice or distinction²² as according to Grzenia, J. In this case, the journalist tries to catch the reader’s attention by means of nudity. When reading the whole article (or when watching the celebrity’s full video) in the analysed netlog, the reader expecting celebrity’s nudity turns out to be cheated. In the video, only bare shoulders are visible. The author of this article uses one of the primary language functions – persuasive function, that underlines the concept of persuasion²³.

²⁰ Kołodziej, J. *Perswazja* [Persuasion] [in:] Pisarek, W. (ed.) (2008), *Słownik terminologii medialnej* [Dictionary of media terminology]. Kraków, p. 144.

²¹ [cf.] Bańko, M. op. cit., p. 967, Sobol, E. (ed.) (1996) *Słownik języka polskiego PWN* [The dictionary of Polish language]. Warszawa, p. 663.

²² Grzenia, J. (2012) *Komunikacja językowa w Internecie* [Language communication on the Internet]. Warszawa, p. 119-120.

²³ Korolko, M. divides persuasion into persuasive, propaganda and stimulating (agitation). [cf.] Korolko, M. (1998) *Sztuka retoryki. Przewodnik encyklopedyczny*. [The art of rhetoric. Encyclopedic guide]. Warszawa, p. 34.

Tokarz, M. states that the tendency to persuasion is the human second nature²⁴, as confirmed by Mehrabian, A. that 'the essential aspect of human interactions is the ability to persuade and influence others'²⁵.

However, without **effectiveness**, which in turn for O'Keefe, D. is a fundamental defining feature, one cannot talk about persuasion²⁶. The effects, in turn, depend on the situational context: the interrelationships between various sets of factors and adaptation of tactics to changing circumstances.

The essential feature of the persuasive act is therefore the intention, being on the part of the broadcaster²⁷. In the analysed material the main intention of the authors-journalists is influencing the readers who, when browsing the portal, will click on that specific headline and read that specific article, and not the other.

Grice, H. P.²⁸, when defining the notion of conversational implicature, defined the proper way of conducting the conversation and defined the cooperative principle along with its rules. Based on the content of the statement and the assumption that the broadcaster will comply with the rules, the recipient draws a conclusion. If the broadcaster breaks one of four rules, the transmitted content is a lie, which can be read immediately by the recipient after reading the whole article or similar articles on other portals.

The netlog discussed above deals primarily with the exploitation of the maxims, i.e. the generations of implications by ostentatious breaking the rules. In Kozaczek.pl portal broadcasters-journalists provide the wrong information in the headlines, formulate titles ambiguously, vaguely or in such a way that they are not connected to the articles content.

When reading the headline:

[10] *Renata Kaczoruk for the first time about the wedding with Wojewódzki (Insta)*

fans of Kuba Wojewódzki hope for the first reliable news about the wedding of 51-year-old celebrity. This headline suggests that:

[10a] Renata Kaczoruk **speaks** for the first time about the **planned** wedding with Wojewódzki (Insta) and therefore we assume that:

- the headline [10] is true,
- the headline [10] is a preview of the planned celebrity wedding,
- reading the entire article will inform the reader about more detailed wedding plans.

The subtitle to the above headline: *Surprised?* is a kind of confirmation of the subject matter, because no one is expecting a wedding of such an unpredictable celebrity and the recipient can answer: yes, I'm surprised!

Nonetheless, a short article informs about the Renata Kaczoruk's reaction to a fraudulent account on Kuba Wojewódzki's Instagram. The celebrity is not surprised that the other people would like to have the same surname as Kuba, and she either.

²⁴ Tokarz, M. (2006). *Argumentacja, perswazja, manipulacja*. [Argumentation, persuasion, manipulation]. Gdańsk, p. 194.

²⁵ Mehrabian, A. (1972) *Nonverbal communication*, New York, p. 54. [as cited in] Tokarz, M. op. cit., p. 194.

²⁶ O'Keefe, D. (1990) *Persuasion, theory and research*. London. [as cited in] Tokarz, M. op. cit. p. 195.

²⁷ Gorman, T. *Persuasion* [Polish translation by Matkowski, C. as Perswazja. Droga do osiągnięcia celów. (2009) Gliwice, p. 39-66.]

²⁸ The analysis conducted by the author was created on the basis of: Grice, H. P. *Logic and conversation* [Polish translation by Wajszczuk, J. as Logika i konwersacja, [in:] Przegląd Humanistyczny (1977), p. 85-99.]

In relation to the specific maxims, this is as follows.

Maxim of quality is telling what the broadcaster think is the truth.

Depending on the situation, the conclusion may or may not be the basis for further understanding. In the analysed headlines, the authors attempt to make the conclusions drawn by the readers a prerequisite for further exploration.

If the headline reads:

[11] *Dakota Johnson cuts her hair! (PHOTO)*

By adhering to the maxim of quality, it can be stated that the author of the article knows that Dakota Johnson has cut her hair. Hence, the recipient draws the conclusion that it is the truth that Dakota Johnson has cut her hair and now her hair is short.

This reasoning is appropriate as long as the information included in the article is probable. If an article contains the headline which is unlikely, it closes the entire reasoning without triggering the mechanism of drawing the conclusions.

Maxim of quantity requires that each part of a message is provided with sufficient information.

If in Kozaczek.pl portal, the headline says:

[12] *Gisele Bundchen walks down the catwalk for the last time*

It may be concluded that the title [13] states that:

[12a] Gisele Bundchen walked down the catwalk for the last time **and she will never do it again**

The words *for the last time* testify to the author's certainty and the crucial nature of the information provided.

Then:

[13] *Magda Modra takes her younger daughter out (PHOTO)*

The title allows to draw the conclusion that:

[13a] Magda Modra took **only** her younger daughter out (PHOTO),

However, the broadcaster is not certain, because he does not use the term *only*, allowing to think that they do not know if the celebrity took both or one daughter out. The headline is not precise, the message, although true, is incomplete.

Maxim of relation requires talking about the topic determined by the context (situational, linguistic). The compliance with this maxim allows for a causal conclusion of the information included in the following headlines:

[14] *If not the famous guys, no one would have heard about them (PHOTO)*

The basis for the guessing is the dependence that if the celebrities from the subtitle, Karrueche Tran and Chantel Jeffires, were not in relationships with famous partners, they would not have been known.

Maxim of relation triggers the mechanism of searching for the relations with the main thematic thread.

The last maxim, **the maxim of manner**, generates the implications that are received as conventionally ordered. Speaking of events, they are presented in a specific order (chronological, causal or on the basis of validity).

If the headline consists of Part A and Part B, it is usually Part A that is more important than Part B and Part A is a statement that is considered more probable, e.g.

[15] *Kim Kardashian changes her diet every 10 days*

The title suggests that it is more important and more likely to change Kim's diet than to do it every 10 days.

Similarly, the header:

[16] *Calvin Harris forbids Taylor Swift...*

shows that Calvin Harris, who dared to forbid, is more important in this article than what was actually forbidden.

In **summary**, the presented headlines concern presumptions or authentic events from celeb life. The journalists of Kozaczek.pl portal, by using the cooperative principle maxims confirm that their headlines perform a persuasive function, urging the readers to read the entire article. These titles, according to Pisarek's fundamental statement that 'the title of a piece is its own name', are a magnet to draw reader's attention. The analysis confirms that the conversations in real world or virtual world proceed in a similar way. The users-readers are exposed to the broadcasters' 'tricks' which affects lack of effective communication.

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26. <http://www.kozaczek.pl/>.

ПЕРЕКОНАННЯ У ТЕКСТОВИХ ЗАГОЛОВКАХ НА ВЕБ-ПОРТАЛІ

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Інтернет-портали є одним з багатьох способів комунікації в інтернеті. З їх допомогою передається інформація з цілого світу (незалежно від того, де вони розміщені), головню у формі онлайн-жанрів чи жанрів, що не є частиною інтернету, тобто netlog. Неінтернетні жанри – це адаптивні та альтернативні зразки, відомі переважно з преси. Окремі з них структурно подібні: мають заголовок, лід та викладені у формі журналістського матеріалу. Заголовок як власна назва матеріалу має інформативну та переконливу функцію. Макет на веб-порталах – це своєрідна візитка та анонс зовнішнього контенту, а також реклама. Кожен наступний заголовок – це зростаюча конкуренція для попередніх текстів, тому важливим є спосіб, який використовують телерадіомовники, щоб переконати користувачів читати конкретний текст. У розглянутому матеріалі, за принципом кооперації (співпраці) та розмовних сентенцій (кількість, якість, метод та актуальність) Пола Гріса, були проаналізовані заголовки та підзаголовки стосовно тексту матеріалу. Аналіз на основі продукування сентенцій є основною метою статті.

У рамках дослідження було помічено, що журналісти чи люди, які дописують на Kozaczek.pl, порушують усі розмовні сентенції. На порталі використовують такі сентенції: кількості – надана інформація є складною, неоднозначною, без посилання на текст; якості – контент є неправдоподібний; способу – надана інформація не впорядкована, в т. ч. й ієрархічно; релевантності – тема в основному тривіальна і, по суті, не збігається з проблемою, представленою в заголовку.

Розмовні сентенції як метод дослідження дозволяють виокремити переконливість заголовків та підзаголовків, стимулюють проведення досліджень більш широкого матеріалу, скажімо, як порталу пліток, так й інформативного порталу (наскільки це можливо).

Ключові слова: переконання, інтернет-портал, презумпція, заперечення, засоби масової інформації.