Confinding on the Internet—
A New Speech Genre?

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ABSTRACT

Scientific objective: The aim of the paper is to examine how confiding online differ from regular one, i.e. with semantic features given by semantics and lexicographers (see Dąbkowska, 2019). And whether these differences are significant enough to consider online confiding as a separate speech genre or just as an alternative sub-genre, which, however, can be treated as, possible due to the new medium, a variant of the canonical pattern, a type of modification of regular confiding. **Research methods:** Analyzes of structural (compositional), content, stylistic, and pragmatic features of confiding recognized as a speech genre will lead to conclusions. As a starting point, it was assumed that confiding is a speech genre, and its specificity can be explained using semantic procedures—by examining the meaning of Polish words that name the genre (to confide/confiding). For this purpose, the definitions contained in contemporary Polish dictionaries, thesauruses, and linguistic works on speaking verbs will be used. **Results and conclusions:** Online confiding may be treated as a variant of the genre known for a long time, however, the statements representing it are of a non-prototypical nature within the genre, and therefore are located on the periphery of the genre. The emergence of such a variant is associated with the adaptation of a traditional genre to a new medium, which is the Internet—it is a kind of remediatization of the genre. **Cognitive value:** The cognitive value of the paper are genological analysis and description of the issue of privacy in Internet communication.

KEYWORDS

internet forum, speech genre, online confiding, regular confiding

The paper analyzes statements from Polish Internet forums that can be interpreted as confidence. The research material includes about 2000 posts published in the years 2009-2016 on 12 forums containing discussions on private topics: menshealth.pl, forum.o2.pl, polki. pl, forum.gazeta.pl, netkobiety.pl, forum.interia.pl , wizaz.pl, pomesku.org.pl, www.pytamy.pl, www.zaadoptowani.pl, www.f.kafeteria.pl, forum.muratordom.pl. Confidences were extracted from entire dialogue sequences of Internet users who comment on individual thematic threads.

The paper adopts the notion of the genre defined by Maria Wojtak (2004), who believes that it is "an abstract creation, a set of conventions that prompt members of a specific communicative community, what shape to give to specific interactions" (p. 30).

Regular Confiding

Confiding belongs to a family of speech genres, the content aspect of which is related to the disclosure of private and secret content by the speaker.

The verb "to confide" belongs to the group of speaking verbs. Zbigniew Greń (1994) in the book *Semantics and Syntax of Verbs Denoting Speech Acts in Polish and Czech* [Pol. *Semantyka i składnia czasowników oznaczających akty mowy w języku polskim i* czeskim] describes its meaning as follows:

> the world presented in the act of speech referred to is narrowed to prior situations; the person to whom the represented world applies is the sender; the message of the content of the world presented is 'secret'; the concept of guilt is absent (p. 106)

The predicate-argument structure of the analyzed verb consists of the agent, recipient, and the theme, it consists of the personal object of communication that is subject to the secret (the one about whom we confide) and the content of the secret (what we confide) (Greń, 1994, p. 108).

The most extensive analytical material important for the presented issues can be found in the dictionary of Anna Wierzbicka (1987) *English Speech Act Verbs. A Semantic Dictionary*. It contains the definition of the English verb "to confide":

> I want to say to you something that causes me to feel something
> I assume you understand that other people don't know it
> I assume you understand that I wouldn't want to say it to many people
> I feel I can say things of this kind to you
> I am sure you will not say it to someone else
> I am sure that you will not do something because of this that would be bad for me
> I say: X
> I say this because I feel I want to say this to someone (pp. 319–320)

In the discussion the researcher emphasizes revealing something that is a secret—she rightly believes that the subject of confiding cannot be commonly known content. She further notes that confiding implies a specific relationship between the sender and recipient that is based on trust. The author acknowledges that one cannot confide in the crowd. She also points to the difference between confiding and revealing a secret—the first verbal action implies, while maintaining discretion, the ability to understand and good will of the sender. When we confide in someone, we treat the interlocutor as a friend. However, revealing the secret does not imply this condition.

Magdalena Zawisławska (1997) in the paper "Verbs Revealing Secrets in Contemporary Polish" [Pol. „Czasowniki ujawniania tajemnicy we współczesnej polszczyźnie"] classifies the verb „to confide/confiding" as a verb meaning passing the secret to selected people. She writes:

Agent Z acts consciously and voluntarily. According to Z, the recipient is one who can be entrusted with the secret. Agent believes that Y will not disseminate the information about p. Because Z still does not want anyone except Y to know that p, it can be considered that the secret is still reserved (p. 204).

All general dictionaries of contemporary Polish, and as such the author recognizes reference books from the second half of the 20th century and from the two decades of the 21st century, record both the verb "to confide/confiding" and the noun "confidence."

For the sake of clarity, lexicographic definitions are summarized in the table.

Table 1. Meanings of the verb "to confide/confiding" and the noun "confidence" in contemporary Polish dictionaries

Dictionary	*To confide/confiding*	*Confidence*
Dictionary of the Polish Language [Pol. Słownik języka polskiego] ed. Witold Doroszewski	"to tell someone in confidence about one's affairs, problems, and experiences" (Doroszewski, 1968, p. 1340).	"what one confide in someone; confidential confession" (Doroszewski, 1968, p. 1342).
Dictionary of the Polish Language [Pol. Słownik języka polskiego] ed. Mieczysław Szymczak	"to tell someone in confidence about one's affairs, problems, and experiences" (Szymczak, 1981, p. 1071).	"what one confide in someone; confidential confession" (Szymczak, 1981, p. 1071).
Dictionary of the Modern Polish Language [Pol. Słownik współczesnego języka polskiego] ed. Bogusław Dunaj	"to tell someone about one's personal matters and experiences; confess something to someone" (Dunaj, 1996, p. 1380).	"what someone confided in someone; confidential confession" (Dunaj, 1996, p. 1380).
Other Dictionary of the Polish Language [Pol. Inny słownik języka polskiego PWN] ed. Mirosław Bańko	"1. If one confided in someone about something, e.g. about one's dreams or troubles, one told someone about it in confidence. 2. If one confide in someone, one tell someone about one's personal matters, troubles, and dreams" (Bańko, 2000, p. 1398).	"one's confidence is information about his or her private matters that he or she passes on to someone in confidence" (Bańko, 2000, p. 1397).
Universal Dictionary of the Polish Language [Pol. Uniwersalny słownik języka polskiego] ed. Stanisław Dubisz	formal "to tell (talk) in confidence about one's personal affairs, problems, and experiences" (Dubisz, 2003, p. 1095).	formal "what someone confided in someone, a confidential confession" (Dubisz, 2003, p. 1094).
Great Dictionary of the Polish Language [Pol. Wielki słownik języka polskiego] ed. Piotr Żmigrodzki	"to tell someone in confidence about one's personal affairs" (Żmigrodzki, n.d.).	"information about something personal, provided in confidence, as well as its transfer" (Żmigrodzki, n.d.).

The ways of defining the words in each of the dictionaries are very similar.

First of all, "to confide/confidence" are treated as act of speech in all.

Secondly, in all we find a reference to a component expressed by the *trust*. We have confidence when we do or say something in the presence of other people and we hope that they will not tell anyone about it.

Thirdly, the collated lexicographical descriptions capture confiding as an act of speech, the content of which concerns the private sphere of the speaker/the sender (cf. about one's matters, affairs, experiences).

Fourthly, lexicographers emphasize the negative nature of the experiences being the content of confiding (cf. troubles) and the priority of the experiences in relation to the moment of talking about them.

Only in the *Other Dictionary of the Polish Language* (Bańko, 2000, p. 1398), one of the newest dictionaries, the positive content of the confidence is admitted as possible, and that it may concern not the real experiences of the speaker, but thoughts—by definition, these features of content of a confidence are associated with the dream component.

In table 2, synonyms of the verb "to confide/confiding" and the noun "confidence" are compiled on the basis of several thesauruses.

Table 2. Meanings of the verb "to confide/confiding" and noun "confidence" in thesauruses

Thesaurus	To confide/confiding	Confidence
Thesaurus [Pol. Słownik synonimów polskich] eds. Zofia Kurzowa, Zofia Kubiszyn-Mędrala, Mirosław Skarżyński, Justyna Winiarska	"to confess, to admit, to reveal, to discover, to emerge, to disclose" (Kurzowa, Kubiszyn-Mędrala, Skarżyński, & Winiarska, 1998, p. 523).	No entry.
Thesaurus PWN [Pol. Wielki słownik wyrazów bliskoznacznych PWN] ed. Mirosław Bańko	"to discover the soul, to confess (to a friend), to ascend, to emerge" (Bańko, 2005, p. 1002).	At the entry "a confidence" is a reference to "a confession" (Bańko, 2005, p. 1002).
Thesaurus [Pol. Słownik wyrazów bliskoznacznych] ed. Stanisław Skorupka	"to make a confession: to whom. Open my heart: to whom. Discover one's intentions" (Skorupka, 1988, p. 288).	No entry.
Thesaurus [Pol. Słownik wyrazów bliskoznacznych] eds. Danuta Ludwiczak, Alicja Piskadłowa, Ewa Tarka-Huczek	"To entrust: entrust someone with a secret, a confidence; To emerge; To unburden yourself: To unburden one's tormenting doubts to someone; To confess: To confess to someone, before someone, one's feelings, experiences, guilt, sins; To make a confession: make a confession to a friend; To open one's heart: To open your heart to beloved woman; To discover one's intentions; To admit; To reveal one's cards; To lay one's cards on the table" (Ludwiczak, Piskadłowa, & Tarka-Huczek, 1998, p. 315).	No entry.
Thesaurus [Pol. Słownik synonimów] ed. Lidia Wiśniakowska	"To discover the soul; To confess (to a friend); To admit; To emerge" (Wiśniakowska, 2007, p. 429).	No entry.

Synonyms collected in thesauruses prove how metaphorical our thinking about confiding is. The content of confiding is depicted as something initially invisible to the interlocutor because:

– it is hidden deeply (cf. to emerge, to open one's heart);
– it is covered or veiled (cf. to discover the soul, to discover one's intentions);
– it is classified, mysterious (cf. to disclose, to entrust someone with a secret).

Two synonyms cited allow us to believe that we link confiding with experiences that are valued as negative (see "to confess, to admit").

Moreover, some synonyms are clearly equivalent words—they are, in terms of semantics, more distant from the analyzed verb. In fact, they call similar acts of speech, not the same as "to confide/confiding", e.g. "to confess/confessing" and "confession."

Online Confiding

Maria Wojtak (2004) in the paper "Genre Patterns of Statements and Textual Realizations" [Pol. "*Wzorce gatunkowe wypowiedzi a realizacje tekstowe*"] referring to the phenomenon of genre changeability, proposes the kind of its description that allows treating genre transformations in terms of a certain continuum. She uses the concept of alternation and adaptation pattern. The genre pattern, according to the researcher, under the pressure of factors such as the dynamics of communication processes or the variability of social and cultural conditions, is gaining a new shape—next to the canonical and alternate pattern, adaptive patterns are established.

Wojtak's methodological proposal was considered useful in relation to the subject of this paper. In the case of confiding on the Internet, it is rather difficult to talk about a new communication need forced by a new medium—the Internet only gives a new place and creates new possibilities of confiding, unavailable in traditional communication.

If the realizations of confiding online differ from the canonical pattern, i.e. the regular confiding, described earlier, it results from the specificity of the medium through which they are made, and not from new communication needs. Genre realizations in this new communication situation are undergoing an adaptation process, as a result of which some of the most important genre characteristics of the canonical pattern lose their importance, playing a secondary role, but others remain unchanged.

The forums among all forms of Internet communication probably show most clearly that there is a very subtle difference between openness and exhibitionism. Of course, it is difficult to say unequivocally when a person who discusses on a forum really needs advice or support that he or she do not find in the real world, and when it is just a desire to draw attention or even to shock the recipient. Other users also rate such statements in a variety of ways—from harsh criticism, through emotionally neutral references to a topic, to reciprocation with their confessions or declarations of help.

Finnish researcher Reijo Savolainen (2011) in the paper "Requesting and Providing Information in Blogs and Internet Discussion Forums" notes that more and more people are engaged in discussions on online forums—both as active participants and silent observers. The author believes that growing interest in this form of communication is related to the fact that forums help in solving problems, sharing information, and providing mutual support and empathy. In addition, a forum is usually a place where no one is discriminated against.

Savolainen calculated that Internet users most often refer to their own experience when answering—95.7% of bloggers do so, as well as 95.5% of their readers and 88.6% of forum users. They report other sources less frequently, such as expert knowledge, printed sources, etc.

In turn, Peter Holtz, Nicole Kronberger, and Wolfgang Wagner (2012) in the paper "Analyzing Internet Forums: A Practical Guide" examine internet forums for psychological research. The authors consider the material collected to be relatively authentic natural data. They justify that, in contrast to the face-to-face situation, the relative anonymity of the Internet makes users more open in their statements. They also believe that due to the widespread availability of sample material, its analyzes are more transparent.

Piotr Stasiak (2009) in the paper "*Ch@mowo*" [Eng. "A C@d's Place" or "A R@t's Place"] published in *Polityka* gives the 90–9–1 rule, which means that 90% of website users are passive viewers, 9% of them occasionally express opinions, while only 1% are so called creators, i.e. people who produce original content, run blogs, ambitious discussion forums, publish information and analyzes. From this it follows—although this data may have slightly changed—that we are able to know the opinions of only 9% of people reading forum posts. Not only is the identity of those who are usually speaking not known, but also the vast majority will never reveal themselves. According to the author "to confide/confiding" on the web is just a kind of modification of the regular confiding created within the new medium, namely the adaptive variant of the canonical pattern (defined in Wojtak's paper from 2004, not from 2014). Although this variant to a large extent continues the genre of speech that has been known for a long time, the properties of this type of messages appearing on the Internet should be identified, taking into account the aspects constituting the genre and described in relation to regular confiding, i.e. content, pragmatic, structural, and stylistic aspects

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- I Content Component

The collected research material in the form of posts (regarding personal and private issues) posted by users of public online forums concerns five thematic categories:

1. Physical health (including: diseases, sexual indisposition, pregnancy and childbirth, disease prevention).
2. Mental health (including diseases and indisposition).
3. Beauty, its care and appearance of the body (including beauty deficiencies, underwear, tattoos).
4. Feelings and relationships between people (including: love, friendship, family relations, relations at work).
5. Worldview (including religious experiences, ethical problems).

Most threads containing user confidence in terms of content focuses on embarrassing experiences and difficult feelings associated with them. Often, the thread starts with confiding—describing a problem that is bothering the Internet user, which then asks other forum users for advice (which frequently has the form of confessions).

Due to the limited space, one example per each of the thematic categories is given.

Re 1. In the analyzed forums, not only the own health problems of Internet users are discussed, but also those concerning the health of close third parties. Important among them is sexual indisposition (posts from the *polki.pl* forum):

cebu90
11:44 25-07-2013
My husband has potency problems. How can I help him? I see he is tired of it. Is Viagra a good solution?

Sulfa98
11:51 21-08-2013
I also had it with my husband. It was not common, but sometimes it happened and I saw that he was tired of it. Viagra is probably not a good solution—there are other means that can also help. We

bought Liderin because it is a ginseng dietary supplement. When we planned a little something, my husband took it an hour before and we could easily make love.

~ChinOLKA
14:30 21-10-2013
I understand your pain—mine also had a problem with potency and for quite a long time did not want to talk about it. We went through torments: / It wasn't until his brother instructed him Permen (such a dietary supplement), he started to take it and it actually helped. He was very embarrassed and for nothing in the world he did not want to talk to me about it. : /

The woman starting the thread undoubtedly goes beyond the limits of privacy, talking about her husband's sexual problems. However, this is not criticized by other forum users; on the contrary—responding Internet users (mostly women) not only give her advice, but also talk about their own and their partners' struggles with this indisposition. In this way, they also speak about their own privacy, not limited to answering the question. It can be considered that in this thread a kind of anonymous support group is being created. Talking about the quality of sex life, thanks to media and advertising, is no longer a taboo. This is clearly demonstrated by the responses of Internet users involved in this topic. Not one of them is critical or mocking.

Re 2. Among the topics covered in the forums is a group referring to mental indisposition, by which the author understands the conditions described by Internet users, which from a layman's point of view cannot be classified as diseases (such as depression or schizophrenia). Here is a statement from the *interia.pl* forum, describing mental dilemmas:

Written by: Titi - Sunday, July 5, 2015 (10:32)
Where to look for motivation, when we completely want nothing and it is difficult to mobilize myself for action? And this is both about prosaic things such as lack of motivation to work, when there is a beautiful weather outside, and we no longer want to go outside, cleaning the apartment after renovation (as in my case). And for those high-caliber, such as lack of motivation to live, for example. How do you find motivation to act? I know it's best not to be afraid to just get to work, but if someone is a typical lazy person or has depression? Then what?

Thanks to anonymity and the fact that it is easier to find similar people on the network, building a communication community on the Internet requires less effort than in the real world. Hence the greater boldness of people confiding.

Re 3. Subjects related to the beauty and body appearance I consider intimate, because they relate to the hidden due to the custom parts. Most often, Internet users describe their imperfections, which they would like to get rid of. Such threads are also set up by men. Perhaps there is greater consent for women in Polish society for discussions on this subject, which is why men who notice beauty deficiencies share their anxieties on the Internet. For example, on the *menshealth. pl* forum, there is a thread about the excessive male hair removal:

Umkwatata
October 07, 2012 - 18:16
Hello!
I have huge problems for a long time with excessive hair, but only today I decided to write about it. Well, I noticed some time ago that my armpits, stomach, chest, and back part over my bottom are really too hairy—it started to irritate me and I have decided to do something about it. The problem is that I have incredibly hard facial hair and extremely delicate, almost "girlish" skin.
At the beginning, as every inexperienced I used razors—as it was, but I could not hate it anymore and let go (except armpits, there is a tolerable razor during shaving). I started to buy ointments /

creams, which were supposed to weaken my hair (I mean stomach and chest) and easy removal (with the help of spatula that everyone hated)— first I bought a Bielenda Vanity cream for a test for PLN 10—no effect—and then visiting a dermatologist I bought Veet depilatory cream (for sensitive skin for PLN 40)—also no results. […]
I completely miss the ideas of what to do next—after all these trials, most of the time I only have rough, stinging, short bristles, lots of irritation (I use salicylic alcohol and Ointment Alantan and Benzacne). Is really the only alternative for me laser hair removal ?? I sweat excessively and would like to look like a human and not a monkey, so growing longer hair is not an option.
Please help!
Chris

In response, there were open statements in which other men freely describe the details of their care treatments, and respond to the author's confiding with their experiences.

Re 4. One of the topics related to the category "Feelings and Relationships Between People" is the issue of searching for biological parents by people who were adopted in their childhood (see Dąbkowska, 2016). Users of forums, finding out (often by accident) that they are adopted, feel lost, and when they do not find hope for help among relatives, they look for support on the Internet. These statements are highly expressive. If the purpose of these entries were to be only to obtain help in finding biological parents, then much of this information is unnecessary—for example there is no need to describe emotions. On the *www.pytamy.pl* forum one can read:

> Ada15 February 26, 2009 20:48:15
> By accident I heard the conversation of my "parents." I have found out that they are not my biological parents. I do not know what to do. However, they raised me and gave me home, but it is difficult for me now to live with the thought that I have real parents. Why did they leave me ?? What should I do, look for them? What if they don't want me? I'm lost ... Please help me ...

The examined confiding are approved by other users. In the analyzed forums there was no statement criticizing the phenomenon of sharing that kind of problems with strangers.

Re 5. Among the problems of the "Worldview" category, moral and ethical issues, often very delicate ones, occupy an important place. An example from *forum.interia.pl*:

> wojm - July 8, 2015 (08:14)
> I decided that I would never go abroad to work because here in Poland I have graduated and here I will stay working for my country, but what has recently happened to me here in my country is bureaucracy and bribing an official for what I can achieve without it. It got me to the doctor after acquaintance or for a bribe, to work in the state administration also where I live? I AM LEAVING THIS COUNTRY OVER A HUGE LOSS !!!

From the statement of the author of the thread it is clear that strong emotions are tormenting him and that he decided to share them with strangers.

- II Pragmatic Component

A different type of interaction between the sender and recipient differs regular confiding from online one. In a regular confiding with the presence of the sender and recipient, face-to-face one, the involvement of the interlocutor is obligatory—the success of people implementing this type of speech depends on it. If the sender does not receive an empathic attitude from the recipient, i.e. there is no form of cooperation between the communication partners, it will be wrongly received, it may result in offense, breaking contacts (as in the case of revealing the secret contained in the act of confiding). In the case of regular confiding, one has more tools to influence—including

punishing a possible traitor (breaking contacts, social ostracism)—than on the Internet, where generally nobody knows anyone by name.

On the Internet, the recipient's empathic response is not obligatory, although, as it seems, desirable. If it wasn't, then it would be enough to save such confiding on a hard disk, which no one except the author has access to.

Because communication takes place indirectly (Internet medium), the recipient does not feel so strongly obliged to express empathy. He or she can do it, but if he/she does not want or, for example, does not feel competent enough to comment on a given situation, he/she can remain on the forum only a reader, a passive observer.

In choosing the recipient of regular confiding, the sender is guided by trust that comes from a sense of closeness—trust is motivated primarily by long-term relationship or recognition of the authority consciously chosen by the confiding person whom he/she entrusts private matters. In the case of online confidence, however, trust is not so much about life-verified loyalty of the recipient (the secret of the confiding one is somehow neutralized by the anonymity of all forum users) as to the assumed similarity and community of life experiences of the potential recipient. They fund trust in Internet users.

Face-to-face or letter confidence is usually directed to one selected person (rarely several people, e.g. marriage or family). Confiding through the medium, which is the Internet, takes place in a situation where, in general, the sender not only do not know the recipients, do not choose them, also is not even aware of how many there are.

In the online confiding, however, we do not observe any clear change in the intentions of the senders—the reasons why they take up private and personal topics and tell others about them. The Internet users declare, often straightforward, that they simply want to "talk" or need support (especially when they do not find it "in the real life") or advice. Sometimes confiding on the Internet, just like in reality outside of it, is simply used by people to get something off their chest (for example, memories, experiences), to feel relief, and are often associated with a request for help.

- III Structural Component

Both regular and online confidences can have the form of a closed, compact statement or appear as a fragmented text, consisting of an initiating issue and additions that are replicas to the active, verbal reactions of the recipient of the statement, which to some extent encourages the sender to develop, expand, complete his/her confidence. As in reality outside the Internet, it is difficult to indicate clear conventionalized opening formulas, as well as closing ones. The function of opening formulas have expressions such as "Hello! I have a huge problem with ... / Hello. I also had a problem with ... / Hello, my problem is that ... ".

- IV Stylistic Component

Confiding is a primarily spoken genre—that is why texts belonging to this genre are informal. This is also observed in the online adaptive variant of confiding—statements on forums are not carefully prepared, they look rather spontaneous, as evidenced not only by their grammatical (especially syntactic) shape, but also spelling; in their structure they resemble a colloquial flow. Often, Internet users make typing errors, of which it can be concluded that they do not read their posts before posting them on the forum, which is probably caused by the desire to communicate as soon as possible (sometimes controlled by emotions). Anacolutes often appear in the analyzed statements.

There is also noticeable stylistic disruption—Internet users combine colloquial and formal vocabulary, for example: "I also had a problem with hemorrhoids, I was struggling with it for over

a year and I know what kind of pain it is, a man can't defecate well, I took all the suppositories, I soaked in a bowl it is a pity to say indescribable pain …"

Perhaps stylistic instability is a derivative of the content and pragmatic conditions in which Internet confidences are realized. On the one hand, they relate to private and personal issues, which we usually talk about with relatives, reaching for the colloquialisms. On the other hand, the recipients of our statements—Internet confidences—are strangers with whom we reach for higher stylistic registers when talking in non-Internet realities.

Conclusions and Research Perspectives

The basic similarity between regular and online confiding is their personal topic and the disclosure of content known only to the sender.

Referring to the terminology of cognitive linguistics, it can be stated that confiding as a genre of speech is also internally a fuzzy concept. The belonging of speech acts to this genre is to some extent gradable, because it is not characterized (except for private and secret content) by strict conditions that every confidence must meet. The features of the statements belonging to this genre seem so diverse that establishing a truly common register (i.e. observed in all statements) becomes problematic. More adequate in their description seems to be the assumption that there are more prototype statements (the most popular, widespread representations of the genre) and less, located further from the center of the genre category, having a peripheral character.

The prototype confiding is a spoken, not written genre. The speaker's expectations include a human recipient, usually individual one person, less often—several people.

On the peripheries of the genre, on the other hand, are written statements (for example in the form of a letter) or directed to a multi-person, non-specific recipient.

In the prototype confiding, the sender chooses a recipient he/she knows and whom he/she trusts. On the periphery of the genre, there are confidences addressed to random people (for example, on the train, in the queue, at the bar, at the hairdresser's). The component of trust is then neutralized, because in such circumstances the sender has the courage to talk about his/her private matters to a stranger, being convinced that he/she has no mutual friends with the interlocutor, who could reveal the secret entrusted to him/her.

The world represented in the prototype confiding is narrowed to situations prior to the act of speech. Statements about the future and plans of the speaker should be considered peripheral within the genre.

Confiding on Internet forums can be treated as a variant of the genre known for a long time, but the statements that represent it have a non-prototypical nature within the genre, and therefore are also located on the periphery of it. The emergence of such a variant is associated with the adaptation of a traditional genre to a new medium, which is the Internet—it is a kind of remediatization of the genre. Because of the Internet, the number of confiding recipients is widening, which cannot be predicted as to the number or gender—they remain personally unknown to the sender. The basis of trust in the recipient is also undergoing transformation. Prototypically, trust is founded on the prior loyalty experience of the recipient—because of the bonds of friendship or good family relations; in representatives of the genre on the web, the basis of trust is faith in the identity or comparability of human experiences.

Internet confidences de facto only concern difficult and problematic issues; the purpose of such confidences, in addition to the relief that is to be brought by telling someone about them, is usually to get advice. People write about their private experiences on forums mainly to "unleash stories" about similar experiences with other forum users in the hope that these other experiences will be helpful in solving the problems of the thread initiator. Others, however, confide in their

own private experiences in the hope that these confidences will be helpful to other people with similar experiences.

Anonymity replacing the conscious choice of a loyal recipient of a confession is already observed in such peripheral confidences whose recipients are strangers (e.g. on a train or bar). The network gives more anonymity than a train or bar—people talking on Internet forums do not see each other, they do not know their personal data, so even if in the future they meet by accident, they do not recognize each other. Such a threat of recognition is more likely in the case of confiding in strangers in the real world, but it may be supposed that the interlocutors do not assume that such a situation will happen. Not only a sense of anonymity, but also a "crowd of recipients" encourages to confide on the Internet, in which it is easier to find similar people. Internet users, explaining why they confide online, point to such reasons for their actions as lack of support in the real world or fear of ostracism caused by the improper behavior of their own confided behavior.

The transfer of confiding from the real world to the Internet is a manifestation of more general cultural processes—the sphere of personal matters, including intimate, is now ceasing to be private—something that is not discussed in public. Or at least the privacy border is shifting—there are fewer topics that are kept secret (of moral or religious taboo). In connection with the described phenomena, the matter of trust in a conversation partner on such topics is not as desirable as it was before the Internet era. This is probably why on Internet forums, confiding senders are rarely criticized for raising private matters. The subject of confiding is more often condemned, for example failure to see a doctor in the event of visible symptoms of the disease. Rarely, Internet users, provoked to confide in other forum users, refuse to talk about their private matters, and if they do, it is not motivated by unwillingness to cross the borders of privacy, but other reasons.

In real life, confiding is not only a sign of close relationships, but also builds the potential of it (its symmetry): "I will do something for you, and then you will do something similar for me." This rule does not actually exist on the Internet.

Internet confiding appears to be an attractive form of interaction because it is anonymous. In the future, the generation of cybernatives may be more likely to confide on the network than in the real world. After all, the young generation spends more time on the Internet than the middle and older ones, and it is less often seen that it seeks to interact with strangers outside the network (now in a bar or train people stuck in their own phones or laptops rather than talk to people who stand next to them).

The Internet is still a fairly new medium that is changing rapidly. Therefore, the confidences made through it may undergo further transformations even in the near future. In the research perspective, further observation of the genre and verification whether the undergoing transformations will completely change its defining features or only develop selected ones, causing inter-genre shifts from the center to the periphery or vice versa may turn out to be cognitively interesting. In these shifts, perhaps, the components that have so far been inherent in prototype realizations, such as trust or conscious choice of the recipient based on the experience of loyalty, will lose their significance, and it will become crucial that the content entrusted to the recipient will remain secret to some extent due to the false sense of anonymity that a new medium gives us.

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