

# Informing About the Consequences of Publications as a Way of Self-Promotion of a Media Broadcaster

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## ABSTRACT

The paper shows how media broadcasters use communication about the consequences of their publications to build a positive public image. **Scientific objective:** To present the most commonly used linguistic means for this purpose, to locate the analyzed content in the structure of messages and types of consequences of the publication, to determine on this basis for what reasons such elements of communication are useful for broadcasters. **Research methods:** Functional analysis of the meanings of words, grammatical forms, and syntactic structures. The research material were information messages of various types of media broadcasters (press, radio, television, and Internet), from the years 2006–2018. **Results and conclusions:** Typical linguistic means informing about the consequences of publication are constructions with the preposition “after,” as well as words such as “effect,” “result,” “reaction;” “intervention” was also common. The researched elements were eagerly placed in the foreground, e.g. in the title, lead, or the first paragraph of the body of press or internet texts, in the lead of the radio information services, or in the first news report of TV news programs. As the consequences of their publications, media broadcasters generally show a reduction of evil or gain of good. To emphasize the importance of their achievements, persuasive measures are often used, for example, hyperboles, on the one hand stressing the nuisance and severity of problems, on the other, highlighting the speed and multiplicity of medium’s take on the topic. Not all the published results of the publication are real changes of reality. They also show mental (e.g. emotions) and communication (statements) reactions, as well as future activities. The research has shown that communicating about the consequences of own publications is useful for media broadcasters, because it allows to activate many basic self-presentation strategies (ingratiation, self-promotion, exemplification, and intimidation). **Cognitive value:** The paper increases knowledge about linguistic methods of self-promotion and self-presentation of media broadcasters.

## KEYWORDS

after-effects, image, information, media, press, self-promotion



In the conditions of free market competition, a media has to be promoted like any other commodity. Media broadcasters try to show their offer and themselves as valuable entities, or at least better than direct competitors.

Promotional activities have two main dimensions: pro-sales and pro-image (Jupowicz-Ginalska, 2013, p. 94). Showing the consequences of own publications to a greater extent belongs to the second sphere – notifying that the activities and publications of the media broadcaster influenced reality helps to build his positive image. The aim of the article is to explain why notifying about the consequences of own publications is so valuable for the image of the media broadcasters – based on analyses; what consequences (actual or expected) of their activity the media show to recipients in news reports; what language measures they use in such situations and in which places of the message they place such content. Subject to analysis are news reports from various types of media broadcasters (press, radio, television and Internet) during the years 2006–2018.

### **Media as entities involved in reality shaping**

Media messages affect reality, even though they do not have the power like, for example, official texts. The media can be the “source and catalyst for social change” (Goban-Klas, 2009, p. 129), but they are usually not its direct perpetrators.

Media broadcasters shape, above all, the mental sphere, influencing opinions and attitudes (opinion-forming function). Changing someone’s way of thinking about something is a very important effect, but difficult to achieve. It is not easy to prove that certain views or actions of a person are a consequence of (only) contact with the media.

The intention to shape reality may be openly expressed in media publications (typical recipient is aware that the broadcaster is trying to influence him/her or a different area of reality) or be hidden (typical recipient does not realise that the message is to shape the world to a certain extent). Open impact occurs, e.g. in the implementation of journalistic genres encouraging to specific assessment and interpretation of events. Hidden impact (unnoticed by the typical recipient) is, e.g. the selection of information (*agenda setting*) or placing the valuation in messages that the viewers perceive as purely informational.

The pursuit of shaping reality may be on the one hand the implementation of tasks set for the media by society, on the other – be dictated by care for the broadcaster’s own interests and the consequence of his ideology.

One of the basic tasks of the media in democratic societies is to perform a control function, being a *watch dog* or the fourth power. The media is to ensure the transparency of the public sphere and the fair management of common goods. Media broadcasters look at the hands of the authorities and all kinds of decision-makers, and reveal pathologies if necessary (e.g. fraud, nepotism, and pursuit of private interest). They cannot hold the perpetrators to account, but they initiate a chain reaction that can lead to a solution. The control function is linked to investigative and intervention journalism.

Investigative journalism is based on the fact that the media gathers information and uses methods similar to law enforcement in order to show the irregularities of social life. “The basis of good investigative journalism is the curiosity of the world, courage in seeking truth and inquisitiveness” (Pisarek, 2006, p. 45).

Intervention journalism is usually a reaction to complaints or reports of various people noticing some irregularities in the political or social life of a given environment. A typical form is an intervention report in which the journalist acts as an observer, then a prosecutor or attorney, and at the end as a judge (Wolny-Zmorzyński, Kaliszewski, & Furman, 2009, p. 89).

Medias' attempts to influence the reality (and information about it) may also be associated with caring for their own position – the dissemination of ideology or gaining followers. A significant part of the media broadcasters are commercial entities involved in the network of business connections, ideological and political; their main objective is to gain profit – according to the critical theory of political-economic, the public interest in communication is subordinated to private interests (Goban-Klas, 2009, pp. 125–126). A typical activity focused on the benefits for the broadcaster is self-promotion. It can be open (advertisements, announcements) or hidden (self-promotional elements discreetly mixed with various messages, for example information).

The pursuit of shaping the reality by the media (and informing about it) may therefore have various motivations, characters and goals. On the one hand, it can be considered a departure from the basic idea of the institution of the medium, which (according to the etymology of the term) should not focus attention on itself, but act as a transparent intermediary between the recipient and the reality. On the other hand, a properly understood and reasonably exercised fourth power brings tangible social benefits. The medium can then be seen as an entity situated between those who do evil (or do not do good) and those who are hurt by that and those who care for them.

### **Analysis of media material**

The subject of the analyses were information messages of the press, radio, television and the Internet from the years 2006–2018. The material examined included, among others:

- a) information texts of national dailies: “Gazeta Wyborcza”, “Rzeczpospolita”, “Dziennik Gazeta Prawna”, “Polska The Times. Metropolia Warszawska”, “Nasz Dziennik”, “Fakt Gazeta Codzienna”, “Super Express”;
- b) information services of nationwide radio stations: Polskie Radio Program I, Polskie Radio Program III, Radio ZET and RMF FM;
- c) news programs of nationwide television broadcasters: “Wiadomości” (TVP1), “Panorama” (TVP2), “Wydarzenia” (Polsat), “Fakty” (TVN);
- d) informational texts of internet websites related to nationwide or local media broadcasters (e.g. “Gazeta Lubuska”, “Głos Szczeciński”, “Gazeta Wroclawska”).

The research covered about 140 examples of communication about the consequences of previous publications and activities of media broadcasters. In the material, it was analysed:

- a) what linguistic means are typical for informing about the consequences of publication;
- b) in what places of the message structure such content is placed;
- c) what kind of consequences of their publications were communicated by the analysed media broadcasters.

### ***Formulations typical for communicating the consequences of publication***

The most characteristic element in communicating the consequences of information messages are constructions with the preposition *after*, e.g.:

(1) After our publication on how employees of “Zabka” shops have been working without employment contracts, ZUS benefits and remuneration, the proceedings were initiated by the prosecutor’s office [NOW–11.07.17]<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The square bracket contains the source code of the quote and the date of publication (day/month/year). The list of codes can be found at the end of the article.

(2) After our article, a damaged road was repaired in Koźuchów [GLU–6.04.10]

(3) After the publication of “DGP”, RPO will examine the secret services of the tax office [DGP–26.10.10]

(4) After the intervention of Fakt, one of the elevators at pl. Wilsona was repaired in a few hours [F–11.02.12]

The prepositional combinations included the term referring to the broadcaster (pronoun *our* in locative or the name of the medium in genitive) and the name of what caused the resulting consequences. Usually it was a message, e.g. *publication* (1), *article* (2), *text* (3), much less often a form of action like *intervention* in example (4)<sup>2</sup>.

The preposition *after* in the discussed constructions indicates the chronological sequence of events (that the publication preceded specific actions), and, what is more important in terms of image, suggests a cause-effect relationship between the message and specific changes in reality.

It is also beneficial for the image of the media broadcaster to use the term *intervention*, because it indicates exerting influence on the course of some matters, for example in order to help someone or prevent conflicts (Bańko, 2000, pp. 545). By intervening, the medium therefore does something useful and then informs about it<sup>3</sup>.

Other terms typical of the situation are: *effect*, *response*, *aftermath* or *result*:

(5) effect of the intervention of RMF FM journalist: there will be traffic lights on the pass in Granica near Warsaw [R24–18.01.16]

(6) Minister Ewa Kopacz personally explains the striking stories of Czerniakowski Hospital – informs Piotr Olechno, a spokesman for the Ministry. This is a response to the publication of “Gazeta” [GW–3.09.10]

(7) Head of MSZ demands explanations from the police management. This is the aftermath of our text about the lack of supervision of convicts who worked as part of rehabilitation at the Kraków police station [RZ–28/10/14]

(8) Actions of the District Public Prosecutor’s Office in Poznań is the effect of the texts published in “Polski Głos Wielkopolski” and appeal of local journalists [PTM–14.11.08]

These terms were almost always connected with the names of the messages: *publication* (6), *text* (7), (8), *article*, *interview*, much less often there were names of actions, like *intervention* in example (5). All the words in this group communicate something that took place later than specific activities, processes and related states, however, each of them emphasises different details. *Effect* and *aftermath* are synonyms meaning in Polish a final result of something, usually a positive one (Bańko, 2000, pp. I 366, II 153). Their use in the text, therefore, means rather positive evaluation of the broadcaster’s achievements. The word *effect* stresses that something happened thanks to publications or actions. If something is the result of some action, process or state, it appears under their influence and we think that it would not have appeared if it were not for them (Bańko, 2000, p. II 613). The term *response*, referring to someone’s behaviour in a certain way under the influence of something, exposes the fact that the messages and actions of the media broadcaster prompted other people or institutions to act.

While presenting the consequences of their publications or actions, broadcasters also used verbal forms that name their actions or indicate their influence or results. Here are examples of sentences communicating about the medium’s actions:

<sup>2</sup> Acting can also be seen in some uses of the term *publication*.

<sup>3</sup> In this way, it implements the basic principle of public relations: “Do good and talk about it loud”.

(9) Director of the Regional Sports and Recreation Centre in Praga-Północ, Zbigniew Korcz (59), about whom we wrote on Thursday, was disciplined by the mayor Piotr Zalewski (47 years old) [SE-11.02.12]

(10) We honestly admit that we do not know if the priest felt guilty or someone from the curia intervened. We are eager to inform that the priest's off-road Porsche, which we spoke of two days ago, is available for purchase. We urge you to bid, because the money will go to Caritas [TVN-9/11/17]

(11) The controversial court decision in the matter of employee poaching, about which "DGP" wrote on Monday, was revoked by the Warsaw Court of Appeal [DGP-7.01.11]

To communicate about their previous actions, the media most often used verbs in the first person plural – *we wrote* (9) or *we spoke* (10). The verbs in the third person combined with name, as in example (11) – *DGP wrote* – were less common. In such examples, the relationship between publication and specific changes in reality is not expressed explicitly. It is suggested pragmatically (communicating in one place about publications and new important events in a given case) and non-linguistically (general knowledge about the world).

It is different in the case of the second group of verbal forms, which speak directly about the impact of the medium's actions on reality, calling the relationship between the publication or actions of the media broadcaster and certain events, e.g.:

(12) Publication of "Super Express", in which you can see how the mayor of Błonie – Zenon Reszka (54 years old) – had sex in the service car, caused a huge scandal not only in this suburban town [SE-14.11.14]

(13) We are waiting for UTK to address our doubts related to the audit – says company spokesman Krzysztof Malawko. It was forced by the article "Polska" from 28 October entitled "Warsaw Metro does not care about the safety of people" [PTM-19.2.09]

(14) NFZ from Małopolska sent to the principal's office. Audit, inspired among others by articles in "DGP", started yesterday and will last until the end of the week [DGP-11.1.11]

In such situations, media broadcasters show themselves or their messages as direct and sole causes of specific events (generally negative or negative for culprits) or behaviour or mental states of other people: *caused a scandal* (12) or *forced the audit* (13). Only in the example (14) the relationship between the text and the actions of other people or institutions are defined as more complex (*inspired*) and expressed with more safeguard (term *among others* communicates that the text could be one of the many factors).

Less frequently used means included constructs containing *thanks to* or *in connection with* and the term *success* (pointing to the positive effects of intervention):

(15) Alina Janowska (83 l.) is extremely happy! Thanks to the intervention of Fakt, her role in the soap opera "Złotopolscy" blooms again [F – 11.10.06]

(16) MPs of the opposition were asking for the second day what the government is doing about extreme nationalists and what we know about them. Questions were asked in connection with the recording of Hitler's supporters by "Superwizjer" journalists [TVN-26.01.18]

(17) Success of Fakt! After our article and protests of passengers, the officials of the Municipal Transport Board decided not to liquidate E-2 express way connecting Bemowo and Wilanów [F-13.01.12]

(18) SUCCESS OF "SUPER EXPRESS": ROAD MAINTENANCE OFFICE ADJUSTED THE LIGHTS AT UL. SZWEDZKA [SE-25.11.11]

The term *thanks to* says that someone or something has made something good happen for us. Such agent deserves gratitude, respect and admiration. Perhaps because of this the good-doer is always indicated in the text accurately, using the proper name (there are no pronominal

adverbs like *thanks to us*). The word *success*, which means that a goal was achieved (Bańko, 2000, p. II 717) was used in the analysed contexts almost exclusively in the tabloids. The purpose of the media broadcaster was usually described shortly after the announcement of success using conventional methods of hyperbolization: exclamation points (15), (17), term *another* (29) or *great*.

\* \* \*

When communicating the consequences of their publications, media broadcasters indicated themselves in three ways: using proper names (journal titles, names of radio stations and TV channels); using pronoun *our*; using the verb forms of the first person plural. Proper names determine the medium directly and precisely, focusing attention on itself. First-person forms (pronoun *our* and verbal forms) are more natural, but they indicate the broadcaster in a contextual and indirect way, exposing its relation to the message or activities performed by it. Verbs in first person plural are very rich in content; they personify the media broadcaster, emphasise the group activity of its employees and the strength of the medium that can result from it.

### ***The location of the studied elements in the message structure***

Communicating that the actions of the media broadcaster change reality very often appeared at the very beginning of the message or its component (e.g. news on a radio service or television program), i.e. in places reserved for main content. Structural display of these contents is another proof that they are very important for the media image. The initial position catches the attention of the recipient and emphasises the relationship between the actions of the broadcaster and other entities (authorities, institutions).

The compositional distinction of the examined elements is best seen in the press. They often opened the text: they appeared in the title, at the beginning of the lead or in the first paragraph, for example:

(19) After our intervention, ZUS will pay all outstanding sickness benefits [DW–24.05.10]

(20) After articles in “Gazeta” and the TVN program “Uwaga”, the city is looking for refugees from the Stanica and Zakątek orphanages in Katowice. Caught children will be sent to resocialisation centres under strict discipline [GW–16.02.07]

(21) For four months, Ekon association has not been able to start the construction of waste sorting facility on a plot of land rented in Ursynów, leased from the city after long fights. Why? Because officials have lost documents allowing them to start the works. After our intervention, the town hall declared help to the lawyers of Ekon [PTM–19.01.09]

Example (19) is the title of the text on the Internet – most examples of the discussed content in the titles came from the web. Titles are also present in examples (2), (3), (5), (44). In example (20) structure with a preposition *after* opens the lead; from that part of the text come also fragments (7), (11), (12), (27), (29), (31), (35), (38), (52). Tabloids were eager to inform about their effectiveness in leads. Example (21) is the first paragraph of the body of the message. These elements at the same time often opened the sentence, therefore the answer to the question “what did the publication cause?” was more important than “what happened?”.

In radio and television messages, examples of informing about the aftermath of the publication were often placed in headline or the first news, e.g.:

(22) After 10 years of efforts, therapy for children with neuroblastoma is available – this is result of the case publicised by TOK FM [TOK–9.02.15]

(23) After Radio ZET reached shocking recordings, the prosecutor’s office, educational authority and Minister for Education address the case [ZET–11.03.15]

(24) “There is no consent for the propagation of fascism in Poland” – these words today, after the broadcasting of TVN’s “Superwizjer” report were repeated by the rulers and the opposition, the prosecution also reacted [TVN–22.01.18]

(25) Detention, searches and requests for delegalisation. The services react after the report of “Superwizjer” [...] After the report of “Superwizjer” the prosecutor’s investigation is already under way, and there will also be a request for delegalisation [TVN–23.01.18]

Example (22) comes from the opening of the radio service (the topic was further discussed in the second news section of the program), the headline featured a fragment (58), quotation (23) was taken from the first news of the service. Sentences (24) and (25) refer to the consequences of the disclosure (by “Superwizjer” and “Fakty” of TVN) of the celebration of Hitler’s birthday. The case was discussed for several consecutive days, exposing various reactions and effects of the publication and constantly emphasising that they were caused by actions of this, and not other media broadcaster. This news always occupied the first position in the program.

### ***Consequences of media publications and actions***

Presenting the results of publication in the informational messages can be grouped according to two criteria:

- a) type of change; two general groups are reducing evil (striving to eliminate pathology) and spreading the good (improving someone’s situation);
- b) the degree of change feasibility; whether, at the time of publication, they are already a fact or purely mental and/or communicative (volitional, emotional, communicative reactions) or are just about to happen.

In further analyses, attention will be paid to the relationship between content and language forms (e.g. the degree of feasibility of changes is clearly related to the time category), as well as to language measures typical for describing and evaluating the various consequences of publication.

### ***Types of consequences – elimination of evil or growth of good***

Two basic types of consequences of media publications can be specified in general as the elimination of evil and spreading of the good. The first group includes primarily the disclosure of the actions of the authorities and other people managing the common public goods: frauds, self-serving, negligence, waste, nepotism or appropriation. Publications are to contribute to the cessation of unjust actions and to punish the perpetrators. The second type of consequences is related to showing the poor condition of an individual or a group. The message is supposed to help someone: make someone receive something, avoid threats, unhappiness, etc. There are also possible examples that combine both threads. When negligence or dishonesty are the cause of harm to others, the actions of the media broadcaster may lead to punishing the perpetrators on the one hand, and helping to improve the situation of the victims on the other.

Examples related to the elimination of evil are often revealing the unfair management of public money:

(26) After the publication in “Gazeta Lubuska”, the payment of prizes to the management board of the Voivodship Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management in Zielona Góra was suspended. And they were supposed to be exceptionally generous. A total of PLN 143,000 was to be put into the pockets of the board members [GLU–10.04.14]

(27) Success of “Super Express”! The Supreme Audit Office will inspect ZUS for expenditures on foreign business trips and prizes. This is, among others, the effect of our publications in which we described the controversial spending of money by ZUS [SE–5.01.12]

(28) Special teaching council, press conference of school principals and councillors – all of this after our text on the Centre for Practical Training and Continuing Learning [CKUiP] [...] Teachers discuss money that is earned in EU projects in schools. After we wrote that only in 2008 the director of CKUiP, among others thanks to EU projects, additionally earned over PLN 100,000 [GLU–7.02.10]

Media broadcasters show abuses such as awarding prizes and expensive travel (26)–(28). In general, specific, significant amounts are given, provoking even more emotions through linguistic means – terms like *generous* and *as much as* like in example (26) or *only* in fragment (28).

Other reprehensible behaviour is self-serving or breaking the law:

(29) Another success of Fakt in tracking the abuse of authorities. The driver of Minister Michał Kamiński (43 years old), who after working hours used the limousine to deliver flowers to his partner's stall, was fired yesterday, after our publication! [F–28.03.15]

(30) After our text, commune head told the police about the illegal cutting of trees. [...] A week ago we reported on illegal cutting of dozens of trees that belonged to the commune of Białowieża [AL–8.02.16]

In example (29) we deal with a rare situation of explicit communication of the media broadcaster's intention, which is to track the abuse at the tops of power<sup>4</sup>. The text in the journal contributed to the fact that self-serving was punished. Other examples show the consequences of disclosing violations of the law – acts explicitly referred to as *illegal* (30) or euphemistically as *controversial* (11).

Examples regarding the spread of good speak mainly about helping (improving the situation or preventing deterioration) individuals or groups. Examples of interventions in collective cases:

(31) Finally open! You can already drive on the viaduct at ul. Rembielińska. Although it was ready a long time ago, it still remained closed. After the publication of Fakt, it was made available to drivers [F–27.10.10]

(32) After our intervention in Sławno, they fixed the lamps. After our intervention, lighting poles at ul. Łączna have been moved [G24–16.11.16]

(33) It will be safer at the level crossing in Granica near Warsaw! In the second half of the year there will be a new traffic light installed. After the intervention of RMF FM reporter Michał Dobrołowicz, spokesman for the Warsaw Commuter Railway, Krzysztof Kulesza, promised to call for bids regarding a new signalling [R24–18.01.16]

Media broadcasters intervene in the matter of public infrastructure, for example overpass (31), lighting columns (32) or new traffic lights (33). Such lasting effects of the publication were most often shown by local media, emphasising their involvement in the life of the local community.

The second group of examples of spread of good concerns the information that the medium has contributed to the improvement of the situation of individual people or families:

(34) A mother with a six-month-old son who does not breathe alone was to move out of the flat into a 14-meter-long room without a bathroom or toilet. After the intervention of "Gazeta", officials from Śródmieście stopped the eviction [GW–16.01.09]

<sup>4</sup> Only tabloids wrote openly about the fight against pathologies. Interestingly, the second basic goal, or spreading the good, was never mentioned directly in the examined material.



(35) The day after our publication there came money and doctors eager to operate a patient with a catheter in the vein [GW–28.09.08]

(36) We are back to the subject of a pair of homeless people in Opole. A woman suffering from jaundice was refused a place in the night shelter, because... she was not registered here. After our intervention, the couple managed to get a registration. They are back under the roof [OP–2.10.17]

The described individual problems include threat of eviction to a much worse home (34), lack of willing to undertake a difficult operation (35) or refusal to accept a homeless person to a night shelter (36). Individuals and families whom the medium tries to help, are often burdened with problems independent of them, mainly health-related (a son who does not breathe on his own, a woman suffering from jaundice).

Media, especially tabloids, also intervene in matters that are less dramatic, e.g.:

(37) Ewa from Gardna Wielka waited several months for the Internet to be connected to her new house. After our intervention, she finally got it. The case has been continuing since the beginning of the year [GP24–15.04.13]

(38) After the publication in “Super Express”, the priest removed a portable toilet, which he previously placed by the grave of her husband [SE–27.04.15]

The example (37) informs about help in bringing the internet to a new house of a reader, which can be considered a matter of lesser significance than the health and living problems outlined above. It is similar in message (38) regarding intervention about the toilet in the cemetery. The rank of the problem sometimes contrasts with the presentation – removal of the toilet was announced a great success of “Super Express”.

Both in the case of elimination of evil and the spreading of good, matters often appear hyperbolically – the more exaggerated pathologies, threats, deficiencies or needs, the more valuable the activity of the media broadcaster will seem. Language is used to emphasise the intensity of the problem, e.g. with words like *nightmare* or *derailed* in example 55, but also its duration – *already*, *long time ago*, *still* and *finally* in example (31) or *has been continuing* and *finally* (37). Long duration of the problem is often contrasted with the speed of change after the publication: *day after* in example (35), *just one day after* (39), *in a few hours* (4).

### ***The degree of feasibility of the consequences***

If we divide examples by the second criterion, i.e. the degree of feasibility of the consequences, we can distinguish three main categories:

- a) real changes to reality (events, decisions, behaviours, etc.) after the topic was presented on the pages or in the radio, before the publication of the message informing about these changes;
- b) mental (internal) consequences, manifested first of all by statements; they occurred after the medium touched the topic and before the publication of the message informing about these consequences;
- c) announcements of changes that did not take place until the publication of the message regarding the effects of publication; communicates about planned activities that may or may not occur in the future.

The boundaries between the groups presented are fuzzy, among others because for media broadcasters it is beneficial to blur the difference between what has already happened with their participation and what may (but does not have to) happen.

Real (noticeable) changes in reality include physical changes (performed works, e.g. renovation works) and decisions taken by various authorities (real statements), e.g.:

(39) On Thursday, 7 December, we wrote about the so-called bridge of love in ul. Berbeckiego, which was vandalised with a spray. There were vulgar drawings and swastika on

the walls. [...] Just one day after the publication of our article, the Municipal Roads Authority has announced that spray texts have already been removed. We confirmed this on the spot, the drawings disappeared [GL–9.12.17]

(40) Less than two weeks ago, after the publication of Fakt, the following had to leave: spokeswoman of the government, Iwona Sulik (51 years old), the head of the cabinet of the Prime Minister, Jolanta Gruszka, and adviser Adam Piechowicz (52 years old) [F–2.02.15]

(41) The three sons of Magdalena Kloda, taken away from her by controversial court judgement, returned to family. After our article published on GazetaWroclawska.pl, the court agreed that grandmother and grandfather of boys would be a foster family [GWR–13.02.14]

(42) It is true that the appellate court, after the texts of the “Super Express” and the IPN’s request, decided that General Czesław Kiszczak (90 years old) may appear before the court for imposing martial law, but it is still unclear whether this process will take place! [SE–27.04.15]

Example (39) informs about the restoration of a devastated public place, the previously mentioned passages (2), (4), (18), (31), (32) are similar in nature. The next case (40) concerns personnel changes in various positions (their number shows the significance of the case, and at the same time the value of the publication and the media broadcaster); earlier, another fragment (29) spoke about the dismissal of a dishonest person. In situations (11), (41) and (42), media publication contributed to the court’s reconsideration and changes of the judgement, and in examples (1), (25) and (30) specific decisions related to the prosecutor’s office were made.

Although the media is happy to suggest their own contribution to the presented changes, they rarely shape reality directly and independently. Media reports inform and encourage something, but the real power lies in decisions and actions of other people or institutions. In addition, publications are often just one of many factors that can influence the course of events. In the example (42), the tabloid text and the IPN’s request are mentioned simultaneously, so it is not possible to indicate precisely if and how the press publication itself influenced the situation.

The second category of changes are the mental and communicative consequences of messages, i.e. volitional, emotional reactions and related utterances. Publication changes the perception or valuation of a given sector of the world by a given entity (which is usually reflected in its statements), but (yet) it did not translate into specific activities of the entity. These reactions can be individual (one person) or collective (group, environment, etc.). They are communicated in the past or present time.

Emotional reactions are described with words like *storm*, *scandal*, *rage*, e.g.:

(43) Storm on Podhale after the article of “Gazeta”, describing the backstage of the introduction of alternating traffic on the bridge in Biały Dunajec [KR–19.07.13]

(44) Rage in PSL after the text: Piechociński, show the receipts! [...] The outrage of the PSL members caused by the recording revealed by “SE”, where the president tries to intimidate using the mysterious list of “business and personal connections” of the members of the supreme council [SEI–22.07.13]

The words used in the examples indicate a quick and strong emotional response: *Storm* (43) is a “violent reaction to something”, *scandal* (12) is “an atmosphere of general scandal and indignation”, and if there is *rage* in a given community (44), people are upset (Bańko, 2000, p. I 717, II 587, II 1051). The basic feeling attributed to the environment is outrage caused by someone’s improper behaviour, although usually media broadcasters as a cause of reaction indicate their own messages (*article*, *publication*, *text*, *recording*) rather than the events described in them.

Another type of reaction to a media publication are various types of statements:

(45) We put the cat among the pigeons – our yesterday’s material about problems of Pendolino provoked an avalanche of comments [POL–13/11/14]

(46) When we publicised this scandal, more reports about the callousness of greedy bailiffs began to appear [F-4.02.15]

(47) After the September reports of the Polish Radio, the ombudsman's office asked for clarifications from the health department, the director of the institute and the patients rights advocate [PR3-13.11.14]

(48) After yesterday's publication of "Dziennik", the health department admitted that it is developing a list of guaranteed services for which patients will have to pay themselves [DPE-18.01.08]

In this group there are many different terms using verbs and nouns, which are similar as they call communication activities. Examples (45) and (46) use the term *provoked avalanche of comments* and *more reports began to appear* – the consequence of the medium's action is the response of recipients shown hyperbolically by the word *avalanche*. This is to prove the importance of the problem raised, as well as the popularity of the media broadcaster.

In other examples, different people or institutions *ask for explanations* (47), *demand explanations* (7) or *ask* (16). When one institution asks the other for explanations, one cannot be sure whether and when it will get it (the significance of the reports is, however, proved by the multitude of organs to which the ombudsman's office send inquiries); when the supervisor requests explanations from the subordinate, the chances of getting them are greater.

Example (48) uses the verb *admit*, suggesting that the information was given rather reluctantly, under pressure, perhaps it would remain (at least for now) more widely unknown. Disclosing it is the achievement of a media broadcaster, proving his professionalism: curiosity, tenacity and effectiveness.

The next type of reaction to the publication are volitional declarations, mainly defined by combining the verb *to want* with the infinitive, e.g.:

(49) After our article, scientists from the polytechnic want to help little Ola [GKR-21. 03.14]

(50) Military prosecutors want to hear the mayor of Ursynów. This is the effect of our yesterday's publication, in which we showed photos of the victims of the crash and the remains of the government Tupolev, which were found in Smoleńsk in the garage of the Russian farmer [SE-14.03.12]

This subgroup also includes example (21), which uses the term *declared help*. Communicated willingness is to cause certain actions and changes in the future, but nothing has happened yet at the time of publication.

The third group of examples speaks not about the changes that have already been made, but about their announcements, that is, about potential future consequences, the existence of which cannot be confirmed at the moment of communication. In this type of examples, the future forms of verbs are most prominent:

(51) After our intervention, PCK will deal with containers [OL-22/11/17]

(52) The Łódź prosecutor's office will check DGP's information that Dariusz Drzewiecki, brother of the former minister of sport, proposed arranging contracts for investments supervised by the minister [DGP-22.01.10]

The examples show the most frequent use of perfective verbs *will deal with* (51), *will check* (52), *will examine* (3), *will pay* (19) or *will inspect* (27). Perfective verbs more strongly convince that the announced activities are not only media declarations, but they will indeed take place. However, this is not guaranteed, there are few specific dates.

Future changes were also communicated using modal structures:

(53) The nurses did not receive a bonus from the minister. After our publication, the hospital is to pay it [DW-17/08/18]

(54) After our text, the provincial branch from Bielany promises changes in the patients' menu. The meals are to be tastier and more colourful [NOW–31/08/13]

(55) The nightmare of the inhabitants of Podkowa Leśna, whose life is derailed by railway sirens, should end soon. This is the result of the intervention of RMF FM reporters [RMF–19.11.14]

In examples (53)–(54), a verb-based construct was used: *is to – is to pay, are to be*. Such connections say that one can expect something, but do not specify how probable it is in the future: whether it is someone's predictions, non-committal declarations, plan, intention, obligation, or objective necessity (Bańko, 2000, p. I 853; Bralczyk, 1978, p. 86). Another modal construct is *should end* in example (55). The verb *should* expresses a strong hypothesis (Rytel, 1982, p. 31), so it announces changes more decisively than the future tense, but it does not determine anything.

Communicating the possible consequences of the message has three major advantages. First of all, it allows to increase the number of examples related to the shaping of reality through the medium's actions, although at the time of publication it is only a potential impact. Secondly, it is safe because it escapes the truthfulness assessment (broadcaster cannot be accused of lack of reliability). Thirdly, future and modal forms do not inform precisely whether any binding decisions have been taken in a given matter, or whether they communicate only about promises or intentions – the recipient can therefore consider some things to be certain, while they are not.

## Summary and conclusions

Analyses of information messages of various media broadcasters showed that typical language measures informing about the consequences of publication are constructions with the preposition *after* and words such as *effect, result, reaction; intervention* was also common. The researched elements were eagerly placed in the foreground, e.g. in the title, lead or first paragraph of the press or online text, in the lead of the radio information service or in the first news of the TV program.

More researched elements were found in press and internet publications than in radio or television. This does not mean, however, that radio and television publications do not affect reality or that their broadcasters do not care about showing the results to the public. In these media it is done in messages other than information (e.g. in intervention reports).

As a consequence of their publications, media broadcasters generally show a reduction of evil or gain of good. To emphasise the importance of their achievements, persuasive measures are often used, for example hypererboles on the one hand stressing the nuisance and duration of problems, on the other – highlighting the speed and multiplicity of the effects provided by the medium. Not all the published results of the publication are actual changes of reality. Also mental reactions (e.g. emotions) and communication reactions (statements) are presented, as well as future activities.

The analysis of the examples also allowed to precisely determine why information about its impact on reality is so useful for media broadcasters – it allows to transmit at least four very valuable image suggestions. First, the medium can present itself as a subject close to the recipient, interested in their good, empathic, compassionate, altruistic. It appears as a guardian and defender of both the whole society and its individual members, always willing to help or defend the weaker, vulnerable, neglected, abused and injured, which no one wants to hear. This is a typical feature of tabloids (Kajtoch, 2011, p. 128), the presence of such content in other media can testify to their tabloidisation.

Secondly, the medium can demonstrate the right moral attitude – it is a subject who values integrity, justice, honesty. Media broadcasters appear as guardians of common values and goods (e.g. public property), tracking, exposing and stigmatising pathologies in social life.

Thirdly, showing the consequences of publications and activities suggests the professionalism of the media broadcaster. It influences others due to the fact that it is adequately (substantively, organisationally, technically) prepared (e.g. it knows the law well).

Finally, the media broadcaster can visualise himself as a strong, effective and dangerous entity (of course dangerous only for those who do evil). Revealing irregularities, often diligently hidden, is not easy, so the medium that has done this seems persistent, determined, able to fight and relentless. It is also courageous and ready for sacrifices, because publicised matters often concern high-ranking people who may take retaliatory actions.

The self-promotional usefulness of informing about the consequences of publications results from the fact that it allows the media broadcaster to activate almost all basic self-presentation strategies described, for example, in the classic work of Jones and Pittman (1982): ingratiation (empathy, altruism), exemplification (morality), intimidation (force) and self-promotion (professionalism).

An additional advantage of the analysed image-building activities is the fact that the successes achieved can be bragged about without violating the etiquette's rules, because in the foreground there is informing about elimination of evil or helping others. In turn, the disadvantage of this strategy is that it must be based on at least some facts, which does not happen as often as media broadcasters would like. In the absence of real achievements, sometimes they try to create them.

### **List of abbreviations indicating the sources of examples**

- DGP – “Dziennik Gazeta Prawna”
- DPE – “Dziennik Polska Europa Świat”
- DW – [www.dziennikwschodni.pl](http://www.dziennikwschodni.pl)
- F – “Fakt Gazeta Codzienna”
- G24 – [gk24.pl](http://gk24.pl)
- GP24 – [gp24.pl](http://gp24.pl)
- GKR – [gazetakrakowska.pl](http://gazetakrakowska.pl)
- GL – [www.24gliwice.pl](http://www.24gliwice.pl)
- GLU – [www.gazetalubuska.pl](http://www.gazetalubuska.pl)
- GW – “Gazeta Wyborcza” (Warsaw edition)
- GWR – [www.gazetawroclawska.pl](http://www.gazetawroclawska.pl)
- KR – [krakow.wyborcza.pl](http://krakow.wyborcza.pl)
- NOW – [nowosci.com.pl](http://nowosci.com.pl)
- OL – [gazetaolsztynska.pl](http://gazetaolsztynska.pl)
- OP – [opole.tvp.pl](http://opole.tvp.pl)
- POL – Polsat (“Wydarzenia”)
- PR3 – Program Trzeci Polskiego Radia [Polish Radio Three] (“Serwis Trójki”)
- PTM – “Polska The Times. Metropolia Warszawska”
- R24 – [www.rmfm24.pl](http://www.rmfm24.pl)
- RMF – RMF FM (“Fakty”)
- RZ – “Rzeczpospolita”
- SE – “Super Express”
- SEI – [www.se.pl](http://www.se.pl)
- TOK – “Informacje TOK FM”
- TVN – TVN (“Fakty”)
- WSP – [wspolczesna.pl](http://wspolczesna.pl)
- ZET – “Wiadomości Radia ZET”

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