



Jakub M. Pawlik¹
Xie Hui Qing²

Belt and Road Initiative in View of the Polish Press

Introduction

Never before has the world witnessed the resurrection of a historic initiative as impressive as the New Silk Road. Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a unique project on a global scale designed to strengthen cooperation and connectivity between a group of entirely independent countries from several continents, seeking to establish closer infrastructural, economic, social, cultural, and political ties. This global undertaking initiated by China's president Xi Jinping in 2013, every day continues to expand its structures with new ideas and members, becoming the largest project in the World's International Relations currently. The essential emphasis is put on the economic aspect expressed by enormous bilateral and multilateral infrastructural investments, lifting barriers in trade, merging national potentials, and building economic and cultural connections among more than a hundred countries around the globe, including the Republic of Poland – one of the key entry points to the European Union.

How media report on international projects such as the BRI to local societies enormously impacts the success of those initiatives. Attitudes and opinions are shaped this way. Understanding and analysing the language through word constructions, metaphors, historical contexts, and geopolitical factors can help make predictions and construct plans to avoid the failure of those initiatives.

¹ Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, China, Wroclaw University of Economics and Business, Poland, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5411-2460>, e-mail: jacob.pawlik@gmail.com.

² Maharakham University, Thailand, e-mail: 199078358@qq.com.

Issues of Genre

According to Swales, genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share sets of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognised by the discourse community and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains the choice of content and style³. According to Bhatia, even though the social objective of the press article is to “inform readers” about specific facts, it is inevitable and typical for the editors to use “linguistic strategies to create various perspectives in news reports, thus bringing to some degree of subjective interpretation or even bias in their reporting”⁴. Those strategies “range from convenient selection of facts to a subtle use of vocabulary”⁵. It is indeed the process of making constant choices made from a variable range of possibilities⁶.

The topic of the New Silk Road has been discussed over the past years by Polish media across all disciplines – general press, business press, political press, and education institution press. This study analyses data from 103 articles from the Polish press that mentioned and referred to the Belt and Road Initiative, BRI, R&B, New Silk Road, One Road One Belt, or simply OBOR [all translated into the Polish language]. Some sources view BRI as an excellent chance for the Polish economy; some say it is a political game of influence in the world played between China and USA. Some sources advise caution, and some media sub-genres point out the general lack of active involvement by Polish institutions and businesses in the Initiative. The main purpose of this paper is to examine the case of the Belt and Road Initiative in Polish media and answer the following research questions:

1. Does the Polish press view Belt and Road Initiative positively or negatively?
2. Are there many differences regarding positive-negative attitudes towards the BRI among the different genres of the Polish press?
3. Have the editors in Polish press discourse made the right linguistic choices when reporting the news and presenting the OBOR initiative to Polish society?

³ J.M. Swales, *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*, Cambridge 1990, p. 58.

⁴ V.K. Bhatia, *Analysing Genre: Language Use in Professional Settings*, London 1993, p. 20.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 20.

⁶ M.G. Moyer, *Pragmatics. The state of the art. A talk with Jef Verschueren*, Barcelona 1995, pp. 127–140.

To answer those questions, over one hundred articles from the Polish press have been analysed based on:

- Selection of information and vocabulary, i.e., making choices from a variable range of possibilities based on Verschuren's Adaptation Approach
- Keyword-based corpus study
- Verification of each editorial within the context, i.e., which newspaper institution it was released by, which political party is the paper favoured by, and who is responsible for the statement.

Linguistic and pragmatic analysis in the view of corpus study and Verschuren's theory will help us understand how the Polish press presents the One Road One Belt Initiative, and whether a more positive or negative approach dominates in Polish society regarding the recreation of the Silk Road.

In the following sections, I will describe the data collected and used for the needs of this research. I will briefly introduce Verschuren's Adaptation Theory and the process of linguistic choice, which is the dynamics of adaptability according to different salience of the adaptation processes from the two aspects of contextual correlates and structural objects⁷. Next, I will present the results of corpus-based analysis and Verschuren's Theory focusing on specific lexis and sentence structures. The findings shall be concluded in the final section of the paper.

Theoretical Framework

This research's objective is to discuss the view of the Road and Belt Initiative (BRI) in Polish media by means of language use in a press discourse on the grounds of Jef Verschueren's Language Adaptation Theory (LAT). For this purpose, articles of the Polish press have been studied in the context of:

- Political views, i.e., whether the statement comes from the opposition leader or the ruling party. Also, whether the article was published by the paper favoured by the ruling party.
- Business approach, analysing the chances and threats that come with BRI expansion.
- Education institution opinions consider broader thinking such as geopolitics, Heartland and Rimland theories, etc.

⁷ J. Verschueren, *Pragmatics as a Theory of Linguistic Adaptation*, London 1987.

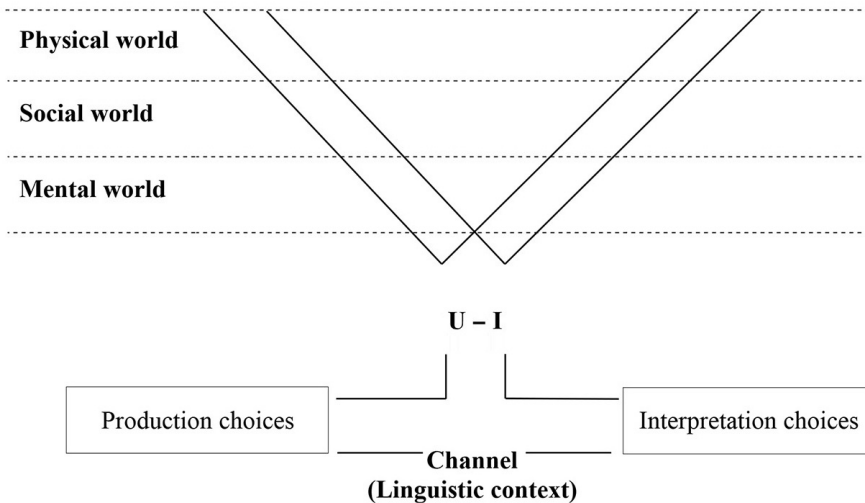
Within Verschueren's pragmatic model, it is possible to present the use of press discourse strategies as the process of adaptation to physical, social, and mental variables. It can be perceived as the result of editors' choices, dynamic negotiation, and linguistic adaptation. The interpretation of press articles in Polish media could also be looked at from the perspective of four focal points: context, structure, dynamics, and salience.

Jef Verschueren stipulates that the use of language "must consist of the continuous making of linguistic choices, consciously or unconsciously, for language-internal (structural) or language-external reasons"⁸. Both the form and the communication strategy result from choices made by the utterer and interpreter each time they participate in the dynamic process of language exchange. The success of the communication depends on the adequacy of choice made by editors and interpreters of the press discourse. Verschueren strongly highlights variability, that there is a very large availability of choices between a language, a style, syntactic structures, lexical meanings, etc. Moreover, those choices are not definite; they are negotiable, which signifies that choices are not made automatically by following fixed rules, but rather with high flexibility and individualism. It refers to linguistic choices made by the utterer and the interpreter. It is a living organism of linguistic and pragmatic strategies that can be reinterpreted and restructured to achieve the communicative purpose. The question that must be asked then is how it is still possible for people to communicate if all they are doing is making choices from countless possibilities with no fixed rules. Here Verschueren introduces the third concept that "does not provide an explanation for that but which at least provides a name for the phenomenon; it is the notion of adaptability. It is the property of language which enables human beings to make negotiable choices from the variable range of possibilities in such a way as to satisfy basic human communicative needs"⁹. Consequently, with the higher-order notion of adaptability, we shall consider four main points of Verschueren's theory, i.e., contextual correlates of adaptability, structural objects of adaptability, the dynamics of adaptability, and the salience of the adaptation process.

⁸ J. Verschueren, *Understanding Pragmatics*, London 1999, pp. 55–56.

⁹ M.G. Moyer, *Pragmatics. The state of the art. A talk with Jef Verschueren*, Barcelona 1995, p. 132.

Figure 1. The contextual correlates of adaptability are shown below

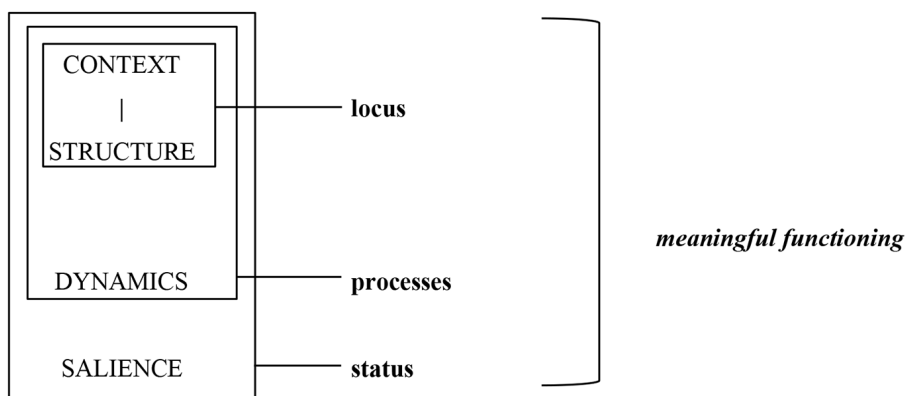


Source: Jef Verschueren, *Understanding Pragmatics*, Arnold 1999, p. 76.

The focal points of contextual correlates of adaptability are the utterer (U) and the interpreter (I), who inhabit different worlds that overlap. U and I are focal points because the “contextual aspects of the physical, social, and mental worlds do not usually play a role in language use until the language users’ cognitive processes have somehow activated them¹⁰. The second “angle of investigation” states, that analysed processes must be placed regarding various structural objects of adaptability. Context and structure may be defined as the locus (‘place’) where the dynamic adaptation processes happen with different degrees of salience. To put it differently, communication and the use of language is a dynamic process of mutual adaptation between linguistic structure and context at different levels of salience (consciousness). It is considered that context and structure are the locus or ‘place’ where the dynamic processes of adaptation take place with different degrees (or statuses) of salience. In other words, the use of language is a dynamic process of mutual adaptation between linguistic structure and context at different levels of salience.

¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 132.

Figure 2. Theoretical framework based on Verschueren's Adaptability Theory



Source: Jef Verschueren, *Understanding Pragmatics*, Arnold 1999, p. 67.

The representations of Verschueren's theory present an adequate theoretical framework for the study of the views of the Belt and Road Initiative in the Polish press. Editors make continuous choices from the varied repertoire of linguistic forms and strategies within the scope of Verschueren's Adaptability Theory, accounting for its four focal points. The uttering and interpreting articles on the BRI in Polish media are the outcome of the dynamic adaptation between contextual and structural correlates, and therefore Verschueren's theory has been chosen as a theoretical framework for this study.

Data

The data sample used for the study consists of 103 articles chosen from the Polish press and categorised into four groups: general press, political press, education institution press, and business press. Data counts a total of 187 pages, 57188 words. Articles have been published in Poland's official most-read press journals between 2015 and 2019. The reason for not including the years 2020–2022 is that the COVID-19 pandemic and war in Ukraine took the Polish media's attention away from the Belt and Road projects. The data has been researched and chosen based on having relevance to the BRI, and at the same time, referring to Poland-China relations. All articles have been written in Polish, which is the press language this study focuses on, because the goal is to analyse the true view of articles published in Poland targeted at Polish

readers. For corpus analysis and correct word recognition, the diacritical marks (ą, ę, ć, ł, ń, ś, ź, ż) and digraphs (dź, dż) characteristic of the Polish alphabet have been simplified and changed according to the English alphabet.

This case confirms the common occurrence of the dataset significantly influencing the analysis and the results. As stated, the research is designed to identify positive and negative vocabulary in the press to determine whether Polish media present the BRI in a good or unfavourable light. The composition of the dataset was not intended to put together equal numbers of positive and negative articles about the Belt and Road project. Although, the salience of similar positive aspects became evident during the study. Hence, it is apparent that the study poses limitations regarding the data gathered. Those limitations result from a relatively small number of BRI-related articles and the similarity of available editorials reporting the same news (like the visit of President Xi Jinping to Poland or signing bilateral agreements), occasionally in a different light. The methods used to examine the dataset build on existing corpus-based and pragmatic research. Antconc software has been used to distinguish the frequency of lexemes and expressions associated with the BRI and Sino-Polish cooperation. It is true that using a rather simple corpus analysis in texts written in a language as linguistically complicated as Polish poses great difficulties in the form of, for example, the inability to identify more complex or indirect forms of positive/negative expressions about the BRI. Nonetheless, there is a sufficient number of keywords and tools to confirm that commonly recognised lexical items are useful enough to serve as a starting point for further research when more data is available in the future¹¹. Inspired by Vershueren's Adaptation Theory from the viewpoint of pragmatics, which involves the issue of language choices, in the next part of data analysis, this paper takes a closer look at fragments of press articles that are of particular (linguistic) interest for this research.

Analysis

The dataset has been researched for lexemes that indicate positive/negative approaches. The relative frequency of the keyword and its derivatives have been found in the table below:

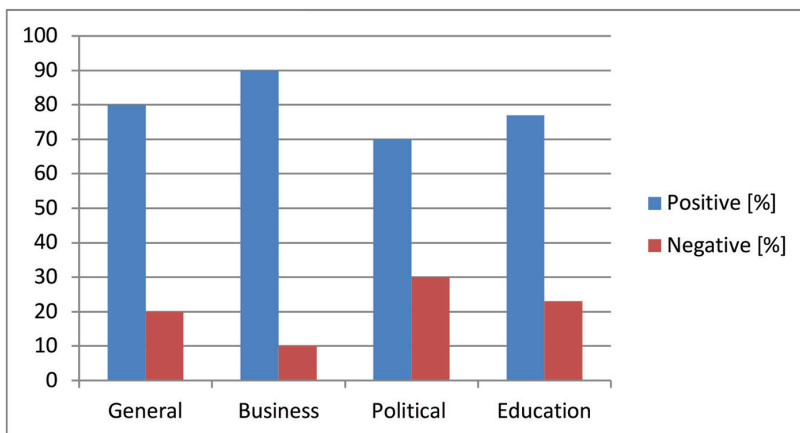
¹¹ A.H. Jucker, I. Taavitsainen (eds.), *Apologies in the history of English: routinized and lexicalized expressions of responsibility and regret*, Amsterdam 2008, pp. 229–244.

Table 1. Relative frequency of positive/negative lexemes about the BRI in Polish press. Source: Own study

KEYWORD (POLISH)	KEYWORD (ENGLISH)	FREQUENCY	NEGATIVE/POSITIVE
współpracy	cooperation	298	Positive
Rozwoju	development	151	Positive
inwestycji	investments	100	Positive
Win	win	88	Positive
Jednak	however/but	63	Negative
podczas (gdy)	nonetheless	56	Negative
korzyści	benefits	39	Positive

Lexemes conventionally recognised as positive in Polish articles have been identified concerning “cooperation”, “development”, “investment”, “win”, and the “benefits” that the Road and Belt initiative presents to its members. Even though a positive lexical approach is evident in the Polish press regarding the BRI, there was also quite a significant number of statements that suggested carefulness. Keywords can typically identify those fragments of articles: “however”, “but”, and “nonetheless”. Due to the complexity of the Polish language, “manual” confirmation has been required to ensure that identified lexemes indeed described positive/negative views of the New Silk Road project. All instances where the keywords have not been used according to the research goal have been discarded.

Figure 3. Views on the BRI across Polish press articles



Source: Own study.

Most lexemes are equally dispersed among all sub-genres of press discourse, i.e., political, business, general, and education institution editorials. However, there was a slight dominance of “however” and “nonetheless” lexemes in the political and education institution press articles, especially those that analysed the Belt and Road Initiative in terms of geopolitical and global-power context. Negativity in the political press can be mostly seen in newspapers favoured by political opposition. It disrupts the research slightly and should be treated with a trust margin, as it results from the political fight rather than the actual attitude towards the Initiative. It is important to note that the word “negativity” has been used to simplify the purpose of the study and could be interpreted more as an “advised caution” or “suggested carefulness”.

As mentioned, language use (uttering and interpreting) results from dynamic adaptation among contextual and structural correlates. Communicating means continuously making choices from various forms and strategies, with a scope of flexibility and different level of consciousness. Since variability, negotiability, and adaptability are common language characteristics, press discourse is no exception. The four focal points of Verschueren’s Theory of Adaptability will be used further as a theoretical framework to analyse specific fragments of Polish press articles.

The following part will address some fragments of articles, strategies, and interpretations of linguistic choices in selected press discourse. As confirmed by the corpus study, based on Verschueren’s theory, I will further investigate the hypothesis that a positive approach towards Road and Belt Initiative is the dominating one in the Polish press. The study’s data are analysed and presented below, regarding Verschueren’s Adaptability Theory, paying attention to particular lexis and structures which serve as an indicator of a “positive/negative” approach towards the BRI¹².

Figure 4. Passive elements of the analysis

Passive elements	Utterer: editors
	Interpreter: Polish society
	Physical world: Poland
	Social world: New Silk Road

Source: Own study.

¹² B.K. Al-Gublan, *A Pragmatic Study of a Political Discourse from the Perspective of the Linguistic Adaptation Theory*, Riyadh 2014.

Table 2. Linguistic choices in selected press discourse indicating a “positive” or “negative” approach towards the BRI

Press	Positive (P) or Negative (N)	Locus PL	Mental world (personality, emotions, beliefs, desires, intentions, and motivations)	Dynamics of adaptability	Saliency of adaptability
Business Press	P	Polska ma atuty do zwiększenia eksportu do Chin przez Nowy Jedwabny Szlak	Poland has the ascendancy to increase exports to China through the New Silk Road	Adaptation of encouragement strategy	Intention of informing Polish businessmen that they can increase profits
	P	Polska może dużo zyskać dzięki projektowi Nowego Jedwabnego Szlaku	Poland can gain a lot thanks to the New Silk Road project	Adaptation of encouragement strategy	Intention of informing Polish businessmen that they can profit from the Initiative
	P	Sprzyja temu położenie geograficzne i prawodawstwo spójne z europejskim	Favouring factor is the geographic location and coherent legislation between Polish and European institutions	Presenting positive facts	Intention of convincing Polish businessmen by highlighting well-known facts that make Poland and China natural business partners
	P	Zdaniem ekspertów Polska może się stać dla chińskich eksporterów przewodnikiem po rynkach Unii Europejskiej	Poland has a chance to guide Chinese exporters through European Union markets	Adaptation of encouragement strategy	Intention of presenting how important role Poland can play in Sino-European relations
	N	Problemem mogą się za to okazać różnice w prawodawstwie pomiędzy Chinami a Polską i Unią Europejską. – Nie jest to rzecz łatwa, trzeba poznać chińską kulturę	The problems may occur due to the differences in the legislation between China and Poland, as well as the European Union. – It is not an easy thing, as one needs to understand Chinese culture	Adaptation of the element of caution	Intention is to point out, that profits will not just come to the companies; cooperation with China requires hard work and preparation
	P	Jeden pas jedna droga – łądowa część tylko przez Polskę	One Road One Belt – land part only through Poland	Adaptation of encouragement strategy	Intention to convince business people in Poland that its geolocation and political situation in Arabic countries indicate that the BRI must include Poland
	P	Obecnie Chiny dostrzegły szansę na przyspieszenie wymiany handlowej, poprzez połączenie łądowe z Europą. Jedynym dostępnym wariantem dla przebiegu łądowej części jedwabnego szlaku jest trasa Chiny, Kazachstan, Białoruś, Polska.	At present, China has seen an opportunity to accelerate trade through a land connection with Europe. The only available option for the silk route is: China – Kazakhstan – Belarus – Poland.	Adaptation of encouragement strategy	Intention to convince business people in Poland that geolocation and political factors indicate that the BRI must include Poland

Press	Positive (P) or Negative (N)	Locus PL	Mental world (personality, emotions, beliefs, desires, intentions, and motivations)		
			Dynamics of adaptability	Salience of adaptability	
Business Press	P	Obecnie Chiny dostrzegły szansę na przyspieszenie wymiany handlowej, poprzez połączenie lądowe z Europą. Jedynym dostępnym wariantem dla przebiegu lądowej części jedwabnego szlaku jest trasa Chiny, Kazachstan, Białoruś, Polska.	At present, China has seen an opportunity to accelerate trade through a land connection with Europe. The only available option for the silk route is: China – Kazakhstan – Belarus – Poland.	Intention to convince business people in Poland that geolocation and political factors indicate that the BRI must include Poland	
	N	Mówi się, że stanowić on będzie narzędzie dla politycznej ekspansji Chin	It is said that it will be a tool for China's political expansion	Intention is to indicate that business and politics often go hand in hand. It may also suggest a pro-US approach, that advises high-level of cautiousness	
	N	Wojsko blokuje	The army is blocking	Adaptation of element of caution	Intention to openly criticise the Polish Minister of Army, who blocked one of the BRI investments
	P	Projekt Nowego Jedwabnego Szlaku jest szansą, aby zrównoważyć naszą wymianę handlową z tym perspektywicznym rynkiem	The New Silk Road project is an opportunity to balance our trade exchange with this prospective market	Adaptation of criticism strategy	Intention is to tell the Polish society that involving in the BRI will solve Poland's trade deficit problem
	P	Eksperti nie mają wątpliwości, że Nowy Jedwabny Szlak to nowe możliwości, ale trzeba do nich najpierw przekonać rodzimy biznes	Experts do not doubt that the New Silk Road is a new opportunity, but first domestic business needs to be convinced	Use of the "higher good" argument	Intention to convince the audience about the BRI by quoting experts in economics. At the same time editor points out the challenges of convincing polish entrepreneurs
	P	Chiny to nie tylko potencjalny, bardzo przyszłościowy, rynek zbytu czy dostawca dóbr i usług	China is more than a potential, highly promising market or a supplier of goods and services	Use of the "expert research" argument and caution	Intention is to show the business world that the Chinese market is enormous and open for Polish companies
				Adaptation of promotion strategy	

Press	Positive (P) or Negative (N)	Locus PL		Mental world (personality, emotions, beliefs, desires, intentions, and motivations)
		Dynamics of adaptability	Saliency of adaptability	
Education institution press	N	Nowy jedwabny szlak jako próba stworzenia mocarstwa lądowego w myśli klasycznych teorii geopolitycznych. Chiny nie ufają zachodowi i krytycznie postrzegają USA jako gwaranta bezpieczeństwa i wolności żeglugi	New Silk Road as an attempt to become a land power according to classical geopolitical theories. China does not trust the West and critically perceives the USA as a guarantor of security and freedom of navigation	Intention to justify the Chinese foreign policy approach and the BRI as a response to World order. Context of geopolitical relationships between China and USA. Reference to theories of: World's Pivot Area ¹³
	N	Pełkin stara się minimalizować potencjalne ryzyko blokady morskiej poprzez budowę różnorodnych instalacji lądowych	Beijing is trying to minimise the potential risk of maritime blockade by constructing various land infrastructure projects as an alternative	Intention to justify the Chinese foreign policy approach and the BRI initiative, as a response to World order. Context of geopolitical relationships between China and USA. Reference to theories of: World's Pivot Area ¹⁴
	N	Zdaniem ekspertów obawy państw europejskich są przede wszystkim związane z odmiennym podejściem firm chińskich do alokacji zasobów oraz zarządzania ryzykiem inwestycji	According to experts, concerns of European countries are primarily related to the different approaches of Chinese companies when it comes to resource allocation and investment risk management	Intention is to point out the trust issues between China and the West. The editor also tries to explain this problem by referring to the specificity of Chinese culture
	N	Decyzje chińskich inwestorów są przez to mniej przewidywalne i rodzą obawy, co do ich wpływu na przebieg dokonywanych inwestycji ¹⁵	The decisions of Chinese investors are therefore less predictable and raise concerns over their impact on the investment process ¹⁶	Intention is to point out the cultural differences between China and Poland, and how they can affect the cooperation

13 H.J. Mackinder, *The Geographical Pivot of History*, "The Geographical Journal" 1904, Vol. 24, No. 4, p. 435.

14 Ibidem, p. 435.

15 G. Owen, *Industrial Policy in Europe since the Second World War. What has been learnt?* London 2012.

16 Ibidem.

Press	Positive (P) or Negative (N)	Education Institution press		Mental world (personality, emotions, beliefs, desires, intentions, and motivations)	
		Locus PL		Dynamics of adaptability	Saliency of adaptability
	N	Należy wskazać na społeczną niechęć tych krajów objętych inicjatywą Pasa i Szlaku potęgowaną dodatkowo przez stosowanie tzw. dumpingu	It is important to highlight the social reluctance of some of the BRI member-states, intensified by the use of the so-called dumping	Recalling historical problems	Intention to justify that Europe has trust issues with China; the historical context of Chinese economic expansion in the West bankrupted many companies. China was selling goods below the production costs (thanks to government subsidies). The West perceives this way of doing business as deceitful
	P	Podając analizę dotyczącą porównania nawiązane przez firmy chińskie widzimy, że składają się one bardziej ku podnoszeniu wielkości produkcji oraz zwiększaniu zatrudnienia w przejmowanych firmach	Analysing the existing agreements implemented by Chinese companies, we notice that they tend to increase the production volume and employment in the companies they took over	Adaptation of redemption strategy	Intention of the author is to show that China's intentions are pure, and that cooperation can be started with a clean slate
	P	Nowy Jedwabny Szlak, „win-win cooperation”	New Silk Road, “win-win cooperation”	Adaptation of strongly encouraging – and praising – approach	Intention of the title is to suggest to Polish society that actively joining the BRI will benefit them
	N	„Powinniśmy wdrożyć nową wizję obopólnych korzyści dla wszystkich” (win-win outcomes for all)	“We should implement a new vision of mutual benefit for all” (win-win outcomes for all)	Adaptation of strong encouragement and praise approach	Intention of quoting President Xi Jinping to prove, that Chinese intentions are pure and beneficial for Poland
	N	OBOR zagrożeniem dla jednoci UE?	Is OBOR a threat to the EU's unity?	Threat strategy embedded in a question	Intention is to highlight the seriousness of the situation and ask questions about whether China chose European partners according to their competitive advantages and location, or if it is a political move. Question asked in the context of the European integration and “16+1” cooperation
	P	prof. Wiesław Banyś podkreślił, że byłoby grzechem zaniechania, gdyby polskie uczelnie nie wykorzystywały szansy, jaką daje udział w projekcie	Prof. Wiesław Banyś emphasized that it'd be a sin of negligence if Polish universities did not take advantage of the opportunity offered by the project	Adaptation of religious lexemes	Intention is to emphasise how big of a chance BRI poses for Polish education institutions

Press	Positive (P) or Negative (N)	Locus PL		Mental world (personality, emotions, beliefs, desires, intentions, and motivations)
			Dynamics of adaptability	
General Press	N	Nowy Jedwabny Szlak jest pełen zasadzek	The new Silk Road is full of ambushes	Salience of adaptability Intention is to give a warning
	P	Prezydent Chin daje sygnał do inwestowania w Polsce	The President of China gives a green light to invest in Poland	Intention is to mark the meeting of the presidents of China and Poland as a starting point for big cooperation. Interpretation of President Xi's speech as an encouragement to cooperate
	P	Dzisiaj jest dzień przełomu, a mam na myśli wydarzenia gospodarcze, które towarzyszą wizycie prezydenta Chińskiej Republiki Ludowej	Today is the turning point, and I mean the economic events that accompany the visit of the president of the People's Republic of China	Intention of emphasising that Chia is serious about cooperating with Poland; the context of multiple bilateral agreements signed during President Xi's visit to Poland
	P	Taka wizyta jest traktowana przez chińskich inwestorów jak kompas	Such a visit is perceived by Chinese investors as a compass	Intention is to show Polish society, that if President Xi is visiting the country, he indicates to Chinese society that the two countries will have a big future together
	P	Polak na Jedwabnym Szlaku. Pekin chce, by pociągi do Chin jeździły codziennie	Pole on the Silk Road. Beijing wants cargo trains running to China every day	Intention is to attract the reader's attention to the fact that the train connection between Poland and China is open, and that it poses a great chance for cooperation
	P	Dotąd geografia Polski była naszym przekleństwem. Teraz znaleźliśmy się na nowym jedwabnym szlaku wiodącym z Chin do Europy. Tyle że to na razie rysunek na papierze	So far, Poland's geography was our curse. Now we are on the new silk route leading from China to Europe. Only that it is a drawing on paper for now	The author intends to indicate that Poland's location is a great advantage in the 21st century, as opposed to history when Poland was under many attacks from neighbouring countries. The editor uses a metaphor to warn Polish society, that BRI sounds good, but let us see how the reality will be. Context of historical wars and betrayals that greatly affected Poland is used
	N	Nowy Jedwabny Szlak. Macierewicz widzi w chińskim projekcie spisek	The New Silk Road. Macierewicz sees a conspiracy in the Chinese project	Intention to openly criticise the Polish Minister of Army, who blocked one of the BRI investments
	P	Nowy Jedwabny Szlak szansą dla Polski na zwiększenie eksportu	The New Silk Road is a chance for Poland to increase exports	Intention of informing Polish society that the BRI is an excellent chance for the economic growth

Press	Positive (P) or Negative (N)	Locus PL	Mental world (personality, emotions, beliefs, desires, intentions, and motivations)	
			Dynamics of adaptability	Salience of adaptability
Political Press	P	Mamy już bardzo sprawnie działające biuro w Szanghaju, ale z racji na zainteresowanie Chinami zdecydowaliśmy się na wzmocnienie naszej obecności, tym razem w Chinach Zachodnich. Stąd decyzja o otwarciu przedstawicielstwa w Chengdu	We already have a very efficient office in Shanghai, but due to the interest in China, we have decided to expand our presence, this time in Western China. Hence the decision to open a representative office in Chengdu	Intention to show that Polish diplomacy is serious about working with China
	P	Chengdu ma fundamentalne znaczenie dla polsko-chińskiej wymiany handlowej	Adopting strategic thinking language	Intention is to show Polish society that Polish politics is implementing a carefully planned strategy
	P	Koncepcja Nowego Jedwabnego Szlaku staje się faktem	The concept of the New Silk Road is becoming a fact	Intention to persuade Poland that China and Poland are working well together and that cooperation is mutually beneficial. Context of bilateral agreements and first railway project
	P	Korzyści z pośrednictwa Poczty w handlu z Chinami czerpać będą także polskie przedsiębiorstwa	The advantages of brokering Post offices in trade with China will also benefit Polish enterprises	Intention is to show how political decisions influence the business. Context of signing a bilateral agreement between Poland and China post
	P	Premier Beata Szydło podkreśliła z kolei, że polsko-chińskie relacje gospodarcze nigdy nie były tak intensywne jak obecnie	Prime Minister Beata Szydło emphasised, in turn, that Sino-Polish economic relations have never been as active as today	Intention to report that politicians are highly optimistic about the chances that the OBOR project can bring to Poland
	N	Eksperti: nowy Jedwabny Szlak korzystny dla eksportu, firm i uczelni zagrożeniem jest jednak to, że może skończyć się „na inwestycjach chińskich w Polsce, które będą tylko chińskimi inwestycjami”. „Chodzi o to, żeby angażować także polskich przedsiębiorców i polską myśl!”	Experts: the new Silk Road is beneficial for exports, companies and universities however, the threat is that it may end up being “Chinese investments in Poland, which will only be Chinese investments. The point is to engage Polish entrepreneurs and Polish philosophy”	Intention of assuring Polish citizens that the BRI will benefit the whole society and all sectors Intention of warning society and politicians, that we must carefully negotiate all agreements with China, so that both sides can benefit

Source: Own study.

Conclusions

Press discourse presented in this study confirms a great support in most texts favouring the One Belt One Road initiative. However Western influence, the history of Poland, the country's experiences, domestic political disputes, cultural differences, and news from other BRI member-states convinced many editors to add a layer of caution when communicating BRI-related matters to Polish readers through media articles. The linguistic choices of the Polish press include a multitude of synonyms, metaphors, and religious terms to report the OBOR news and shape opinions about it. Many articles refer to similar events like President Xi's visit to Poland, the opening of the railway connection between Poland and China, bilateral agreements on apple trade, etc. We can observe similar positivity in all news regarding those events, although linguistic choices, especially when reading texts in the original Polish language are very rich. Variability among the editorials, very specific to Polish reality, can also be observed when analysing the contexts of the articles, especially in titles and statements. Malinowski coined the term "context of situation"¹⁷, and, indeed, language use is always situated within a complex background related to it somehow. After all, context is the environment in which language exists, develops, and is used. In the case of the Polish press referring to the Belt and Road Initiative, there is a great context approach regarding the history of Poland, invasions, and exploitation by European neighbours, especially due to Poland's geopolitical location.

Many factors make the research extremely difficult regarding evaluating whether the Polish press presents the Belt and Road Initiative in a good or bad light. The Polish language is very complex. Polish grammatical case inflection has so many variations, additionally, diacritical marks and digraphs make it problematic for the computer software to produce reliable corpus results. Additionally, cultural and political disputes within the country also divide the media sources and cause distortions to the study results. Some papers back political opposition, others write in favour of the ruling party, and this division often clouds the real intentions and facts about specific topics and events. For years the country has been focused on internal political disputes, moving the attention of the press and public away from chances presented by international initiatives such as the BRI. That is why there is few articles and news about the Belt and Road Initiative.

¹⁷ B. Malinowski, *The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages*, [in:] *The Meaning of Meaning*, eds. C.K. Ogden, I.A. Richards, London 1923, pp. 296–336.

Heavy baggage of historic turbulences due to Poland's geopolitical position, the responsibility of being an Eastern border and an entry point to the European Union, as well as the pressures from the West, and opportunities from the East – make it difficult to address the matter of the BRI, and thus advise caution. That being said, the language of Polish discourse regarding the OBOR initiative is mostly positive. Strong will and encouragement to deepen cooperation with China can be seen across all press groups – business, politics, education, and the general public.

References

- Al-Gublan B.K., *A Pragmatic Study of a Political Discourse from the Perspective of the Linguistic Adaptation Theory*, Riyadh 2014.
- Bhatia V.K., *Analysing Genre: Language Use in Professional Settings*, London 1993.
- Jucker A.H., Taavitsainen I., *Apologies in the history of English: routinised and lexicalised expressions of responsibility and regret*, [in:] *Speech Acts in the History of English*, eds. A. Jucker, I. Taavitsainen, Amsterdam 2008.
- Mackinder H.J., *The Geographical Pivot of History*, "The Geographical Journal" 1904, Vol. 24, No. 4.
- Malinowski B., *The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages*, [in:] *The Meaning of Meaning*, eds. C.K. Ogden, I.A. Richards, London 1923, pp. 296–336.
- Moyer M.G., *Pragmatics. The state of the art. A talk with Jef Verschueren*, Barcelona 1995.
- Owen G., *Industrial Policy in Europe since the Second World War. What has been learnt?* London 2012.
- Swales J.M., *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings (Cambridge Applied Linguistics)*, Cambridge 1990.
- Verschueren J., *Pragmatics as a Theory of Linguistic Adaptation*, London 1987.
- Verschueren J., *Understanding Pragmatics*, London 1999.

Belt and Road Initiative in a View of the Polish Press

Summary

This study analysed how the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is presented in the Polish press through language use in media discourse based on Jef Verschueren's Language Adaptation Theory and corpus analysis. Antconc software has been used to distinguish the frequency of lexemes and expressions. The complexity of the Polish language and contexts require manual verification of the results. The number of writings about Belt and Road projects is fairly small. The sample consists of 103 articles categorised into four groups: general press, political press, education institution press, and business press. Articles refer to the period of 2015–2019, as the recent three years of the

COVID-19 and war in Ukraine took the press' focus away from the BRI. Corpus analysis shows a positive approach to the Belt and Road Initiative dominates all press groups. Most lexemes are equally dispersed among all press categories with a slight predominance of caution suggested by authors in education institution press. The hypothesis was further confirmed in the light of Verschueren's Theory, where the study presents examples of press language as a dynamic process of mutual adaptation between linguistic structure and context, at different levels of salience.

Keywords: Belt and Road Initiative, Polish press, Polish media, Jef Verschueren's Language Adaptation Theory

Инициатива «Один пояс, один путь» глазами польской прессы

Резюме

Целью данного исследования является анализ того, как инициатива «Один пояс, один путь» (ОПОП) представлена в польской прессе посредством использования языка в медиадискурсе на основе теории языковой адаптации Джефа Вершурена и корпусного анализа. Программное обеспечение Antconc использовалось для определения частотности лексем и выражений. Сложность польского языка и контекстов требует ручной проверки результатов. Количество публикаций о проектах «Один пояс, один путь» достаточно небольшое. Выборка состоит из 103 статей, разделенных на четыре группы: общая пресса, политическая пресса, образовательная пресса и деловая пресса. Статьи относятся к периоду 2015–2019 годов, поскольку в последние три года COVID-19 и военные действия в Украине отвлекли внимание прессы от ОПОП. Корпусный анализ показывает, что во всех пресс-группах преобладает позитивное освещение инициативы «Один пояс, один путь». Большинство лексем достаточно равномерно распределены по всем категориям прессы с незначительным преобладанием осторожности, которую авторы отмечают в образовательной прессе. Гипотеза была дополнительно подтверждена в свете теории Вершурена, где в исследовании представлены примеры языка прессы как динамического процесса взаимной адаптации между языковой структурой и контекстом на разных уровнях значимости.

Ключевые слова: инициатива «Один пояс, один путь»; польская пресса; польские СМИ; Теория языковой адаптации Джефа Вершурена