

**Populism and elitism. Political narrative
in the *exposé* of Polish Prime Ministers from 1998-2019.
A linguistic study**

Summary

The subject of the dissertation is a linguistic analysis of programmatic speeches delivered by Polish prime ministers aiming at obtaining a vote of confidence and taking office in the years 1989–2019 in the context of two predominant attitudes in contemporary political communication: populism and elitism.

The choice of genre (*exposé*) and research period (III Polish Republic) stems from the fact that the programmatic speeches of the prime ministers of free Poland are momentous texts from the perspective of which it is possible to observe the socio-political changes. The analysis of this genre is provided by political science [Patyra 2004, Kubala 2013] and linguistic works [Siewierska-Chmaj 2005]. However, so far there has been no attempt at a comprehensive linguistic analysis of the *exposé texts* from the period I am interested in. Therefore, this work attempts to fill this gap. The reference to forms of political narrative associated, on the one hand, and elitism, on the other, is instead dictated by the style of politics observed in the language of contemporary Polish politics by party groups seeking to gain and maintain power. Populism, seen as a bottom-up movement, seeks to represent the interests of the "ordinary person". Elitism, in turn, assumes that society should be led by a selected group of people with the highest competence. Historical analysis reveals the complexity of these ideologies and their adaptation to changing social conditions, while linguistic analysis reveals the linguistic mechanisms of persuasion and manipulation used by speakers. It also reveals that both strategies are important elements of political and social analysis, and that their evolution and impact on contemporary society requires constant observation and research.

The main aim of the dissertation is to conduct a linguistic analysis of 21 texts of programmatic speeches (278 pages of parliamentary transcripts), including: an in-depth genological analysis of the *exposé*, a pragmatic and linguistic analysis of speech acts, and subjecting to scientific reflection the attitudes of populism and elitism manifested in the texts under study. Therefore, the issue of the genological status of the analyzed genre was discussed in turn (the parameters of description were adopted from M. Wojtak). Through the analysis, constant and variable aspects of the structure of this genre were indicated: constant - e.g. addressing the addressee, program, request for a vote; variables - e.g. topics not directly related to the program, i.e. history, the situation in the country and abroad, self-presentation. It was noted that despite the presence of obligatory elements, this genre allows the expression of the individuality of the sender. There are areas where the uniqueness of the speakers manifests itself.

While the dissertation aims to analyze and contrast the political narratives contained in the *exposé* of Polish prime ministers from the period 1989–2019, with a particular emphasis on the occurrence and specificity of elements of populism and elitism, the research conducted focuses on recognizing the ways and extent to which these two different approaches to politics are reflected in the language and rhetoric of the prime ministers. The aim is to gain a deeper understanding of the contrasts between populism and elitism in the context of contemporary Polish political discourse and to contribute to expanding knowledge about the impact of these strategies on the lexicon and communication narratives constructed by leaders. At the same time, the analysis revealed that it is not possible to make an absolute distinction between populism and elitism, as the two tendencies are often intertwined. Therefore, it became important to examine how the speeches of prime ministers from different political groups are dominated by either of these tendencies.

The analytical material includes 21 programmatic speeches by prime ministers from 1989-2019, which were obtained from government sources. Analysis of these texts provides a deeper understanding of the dynamics of power and the influence politicians can have in shaping the country's future. These documents are also a valuable source of information about the challenges faced by the Polish politicians as they sought to respond to the needs of society and the economy in difficult times of transition. The Prime Ministers' statements, their *exposés* and other materials from this period constitute not only a historical record, but also a basis for analyzing political strategies and their effectiveness in the context of the changing reality.

The dissertation has a two-part structure. The first part is theoretical - it deals with the discussion of the findings of modern genology and pragmatics. The review of genological research began with a discussion of the concepts of M. Bakhtin and S. Skwarczyńska. Reference was also made to the findings of such researchers as: A. Furdal, S. Gajda, A. Wierzbicka, B. Witosz, A. Wilkoń, J. Bartmiński and S. Niebrzegowska-Bartmińska, and M. Wojtak. Each of these positions makes a unique contribution to the understanding and description of speech genres, and has also made it possible to characterize *the exposé* as a speech genre and link it to pragmatics and political communication. In this context, *an exposé* appears as a formal statement or presentation of the government program by the Prime Minister, which plays an important role in shaping political discourse, being a platform for politicians to present their plans, strategies and program assumptions. Therefore, the analysis of this genre requires an in depth understanding of both the linguistic structure and the socio-political context in which *the exposé* is presented. Moreover, attention should be paid to how *the exposé* is received by various groups of recipients, including experts, the opposition and citizens, which may influence further political communication and public perception of the politician or party. Therefore, this analysis must be multidimensional, covering not only the text of the speech, but also its functioning in a broader media and social context. Such a comprehensive analysis made it

possible to understand the mechanisms affecting the effectiveness of political communication and to identify potential areas for improvement in political messaging.

The second – analytical part – presents three aspects: structural, pragmatic and cognitive. The first chapter presents the elements, building the structure of *the exposé* primarily its textual frame. The second chapter discusses speech acts and genres characteristic of *exposé* (as a complex genre). The third analytical chapter deals with elitism and populism as categories at the core of the political narratives under study.

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