Populist Discourse in the Polish Media

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1. Theoretical Background and Methods of the Study on Populist Discourse in the Media

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Introduction

Populism as a socio-political phenomenon can be studied from many perspectives. Taking a political communication perspective, we can define populism as "a set of characteristics or elements of messages that have their roots in, or at least relate to, the aims, motivations and attitudes of political actors, the media or citizens" (Reinemann et al., 2017, p. 14). In this sense, populism is a *discourse practice* (Laclau, 2005), *communication style* (de Vreese et al., 2018), or "a communication frame that appeals to and identifies with the people and pretends to speak in their name" (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007, p. 322), and in particular "a communication framework which includes references to the people, identification with the people and aspirations to speak for the people" (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007, p. 322). A similar definition is proposed by M. Rooduijn (2014, p. 3), according to whom populism is "a characteristic of a specific message rather than a characteristic of an actor sending the message."

Adoption of the political communication perspective in the research on populism allows ed a scholar to focus not only on ideology (expressed in statements and through actions taken by political actors), but also on the role of the media in disseminating this ideology as well as the views, attitudes and expectations of voters (Reinemann et al., 2017, pp. 13–14). Moreover, it allowed the study to cover a wide range of subjects without primary determination of whether they are populist or not. This approach assumes that populist discourse can be used, to a greater or lesser extent, by all political actors, as well as by journalists and citizens (Akkerman, Mudde, and Zaslove, 2014; Rooduijn, 2014; Reinemann et al., 2017; de Vreese et al., 2018).

In order to characterize populist discourse, it is necessary to refer to other perspectives, especially those that define populism as a *thin ideology* (Freeden, 1996; Mudde, 2004) or a "mental map through which individuals analyze and comprehend political reality" (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013, pp. 498–499). The starting point is recognizing the characteristics of this ideology and the basic populist categories, such as the Manichean perception of society as divided into two completely separate, internally homogeneous groups and antagonistic camps: 'the elite' and 'the people' (Mudde, 2004). This dichotomous division valorizes the category 'us', i.e. the people, as positive, and the category 'them' ('the elite') as negative. In other words, the essence of populism is anti-elitism – an attitude of opposition to all those in power

(political parties, officials, but also supranational institutions and organizations). 'The people' can be a nation (right-wing populism), a class (left-wing populism), or a sovereign (in a specific vision of democracy based on a literal understanding of the power of the people).

Many researchers also mention other constitutive elements of populism, such as the exclusion of 'out-groups', charismatic leaders (Canovan, 1999), a narrative of crisis and threat (Moffit and Tormey, 2014; Taggart, 2004), or rhetoric using colloquialisms, emotional statements, predatory style in referring to political rivals, simplification, and directness (Canovan, 1999; Moffit and Tormey, 2014).

J. Jagers and S. Walgrave (2007), assuming that populism is a style of political communication, distinguished four types of populism: (1) *empty populism*, where references to 'the people' are the only element present, (2) *anti-elitist populism,* with references to 'the people' combined with attacks on 'the elite', (3) *excluding populism,* with references to 'the people' combined with the exclusion of 'out-groups', and (4) *complete populism*, which is a combination of the references to 'the people', attacks on 'the elite', and exclusion of the 'out-groups'/'the others'.

The J. Jagers and S. Walgrave's (2007) concept is the theoretical basis for a number of international studies on populism conducted over the last few years, such as the project *The Appeal of Populist Ideas and Messages* (NCCRIII – Module 2, carried out by a team headed by F. Esser from the University of Zurich), COST IS 1308 *Populist Communication in Europe: Comprehending the Challenge of Mediated Political Populism for Democratic Politics*, implemented between 2014–2018 by researchers from more than 20 European countries (Aalberg et al., 2017), or *Election News in Europe: What is Covered and How?*, initiated and coordinated by S. Salgado from the University of Lisbon, covering 6 countries (Salgado, 2019).

In Poland, the phenomenon of populism has been analyzed mainly by political scientists and sociologists (the review of Polish literature on the subject includes, see among others, Marczewska-Rytko, 2005; Stępińska et al., 2017; Lipiński and Stępińska, 2018; 2019). Most Polish works on populism are theoretical reflections on the variants (types) of populism (Szacki, 2006; Tokarczyk, 2006; Franczak, 2004), its historical and systemic diversity, and the impact of populism on democracy, including the attitudes and behaviors of citizens (Dzwończyk, 1995; 2000; 2003; Kasińska-Metryka, 2006). Some analyses focused on select activities undertaken by political parties and their leaders, especially during electoral campaigns (Stępińska, 2003; 2004; Sasińska--Klas, 2006; Drelich, 2010; 2012; Czechowska-Derkacz, 2012; Jajecznik, 2006; Górka and Magierek, 2012; Kasińska-Metryka, 2006; Marks, 2003).

The problem of populism in Poland has also been tackled by linguists. Until recently, linguistic analyses have focused on description of the distinctive linguistic features of populism. However, the researchers themselves point out the incompleteness of their approach to the problem, limited to selected elements of this phenomenon (Bralczyk 1999, p. 86; Ożóg 2006, p. 209). It should be noted that the publications of those two authors were not based on the extensive corpus. Furthermore, most of the works are quite general and do not differentiate the research material according to political entities, the time of writing of the texts, or the medium through which they were addressed to the audience. In those works, populism is always addressed as *linguistic populism*. However, as J. Bralczyk argues, linguistic devices of this arbitrarily

defined *linguistic populism* are not specific only to populism itself, but are present in the broadly understood political communication (Bralczyk, 1999, pp. 83–84).

Moreover, although Polish linguists tend to prefer the term *linguistic populism* (Bralczyk, 1999; Burda, 2012) or *the language of populism* (Ożóg, 2006, p. 209), they differ in their categorizations of populism. J. Bralczyk (1999, p. 82) indicates that populism is sometimes understood as "political tactics, sociotechnical method, political movement, ideological current, relative of demagogy, doctrine of impatient people, collection of folk slogans, manipulation, tendency, primitive socialism, political mysticism, idea, social demagogy." Most often, however, in linguistic works published before 2015, populism, defined as *political populism* or narrowly understood as a political phenomenon, is characterized as an ideology which manifests in language at the level of rhetoric building a characteristic vision of the world by means of a specific *populist rhetoric* (Ożóg, 2013; cf. Ożóg, 2006, p. 29). This definition of populism, narrowed down to rhetorical categories, is also visible in a publication on the language of contemporary politics, whose author, L. Polkowska (2015, p. 156), describes populism as one of the eristic fallacies – *argumentum ad populum*. In this understanding, populism contains a simplified vision of the world, a simplified form and content of communication, accompanied by a dichotomous structure of the presented world and a self-portrait of the sender which allows the receivers – here referred to as 'the nation' – to identify with the sender (Polkowska, 2015, p. 156). Such a broadly outlined eristic tool, going beyond the constitutive features of this rhetorical figure, shows that the phenomenon of populism goes far beyond the set of linguistic means, and therefore requires an extra-rhetorical categorization.

Political linguists M. Kołodziejczak and M. Wrześniewska-Pietrzak see the phenomenon of populism in much wider terms. They focus on the populist discourse defined by K. Ożóg (2006, p. 209), referring to the concepts of T. van Dijk (2006, p. 1021). In Poland, these concepts were expanded by J. Bartmiński and S. Niebrzegowska-Bartmińska, founders of Polish ethnolinguistics (2009, pp. 32–33). Here, the concept of discourse includes the text with its sender's attitude and characteristic relations between the sender and receiver implicit in the statement. This discursive approach to populism highlights the relationship between the attitude of the populist senders and the language strategies they use to build a specific production-reception relationship, a populist relationship. These assumptions led M. Kołodziejczak and M. Wrześniewska-Pietrzak to define the following constitutive elements of populist discourse: (1) the mythically understood 'people' always takes the focal position in the constructed vision of the world, (2) 'the people' are always placed in opposition to those who are not members of this group (e.g. 'the elite' or 'out-groups'), (3) the linguistic image of the social world is simplified, which is accompanied by a high degree of intelligibility of the message, aimed at the greatest possible number of recipients, and finally (4) there is always a leader, acting as a real or self-proclaimed *vox populi* (Kołodziejczak and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2017a; 2017b; 2017c; Wrześniewska-Pietrzak and Kołodziejczak, 2017).

Polish researchers have also focused on analysis of the behaviours of political leaders and their leadership styles, including the issue of charismatic leadership (Marx, 2003; Stępińska, 2003; 2004; Sasińska-Klas, 2006), as well as the anti-systemic nature of political leaders (Kołodziejczak and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2017a). Many ear-

lier studies conducted in Poland focused exclusively on such parties as Samoobrona Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej (*Self-Defense of the Republic of Poland*) and Liga Polskich Rodzin (*League of Polish Families*) (Jajecznik, 2006; Maj, 2006; Drelich, 2012; Ożóg, 2006; Burda, 2012), while in recent years there has been more focus on the political organization Kukiz'15 and its leader Paweł Kukiz (Kołodziejczak and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2018; Lipiński and Stępińska, 2018; 2019).

Little systematic empirical research has been devoted to analysis of populist political discourse in the statements of various political entities. One of the few such studies was the analysis of the content of electoral programs and parliamentary reports conducted by P. Przyłęcki (2012). In addition, in recent years more attention has been paid to social media content distributed by populist political actors (Kołodziejczak and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2017a; Wrześniewska-Pietrzak and Kołodziejczak, 2017; Lipiński and Stępińska, 2018) and the elements of populist discourse in media messages during the 2015 election campaigns (Stępińska and Adamczewska, 2017; Adamczewska, 2017; Lipiński and Stępińska, 2018; Stępińska, Lipiński, and Adamczewska, 2019).

Furthermore, in populist studies to date, little attention has been paid to the fact that "the media, intentionally or not, may serve as powerful mobilization tools for populist causes." (Mazzoleni, 2003, p. 2). Populist actors need the 'oxygen of publicity' to reach broad social groups with their visions of society and the state. Research in other European countries has shown that the media not only directly benefit populists, but also create favorable conditions for them by addressing specific topics such as crime, immigration, and economic problems, and can even be the source of populist expression (Mazzoleni, Stewart, and Horsfield, 2003; Stanyer, 2007; Ellins, 2010; Bos et al., 2010; Aalberg et al., 2017). Only recently that issue has been given more attention by scholars, including the international team conducting a research project under the aforementioned IS COST Action (Aalberg et al., 2017; de Vreese et al., 2018; Reinemann et al., 2019).

Research Project

Interdiciplinary Approach to Populist Discourse

This publication presents the results of research carried out by the team of the project entitled *Populist political discourse in the Polish public sphere* (funded by the Ministry of Science and Higher of the Republic of Poland as a part of the National Programme for the Development of the Humanities in 2016-2019; grant no. 0131/NPRH4/H2b/83/2016). The team consisted of researchers from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, representing two faculties: Faculty of Political Science and Journalism and Faculty of Polish and Classical Philology. Both the composition of the team and the research approach reflected an attempt to combine research methods across political, media, and linguistic sciences.

The need for collaboration between representatives of various disciplines stemmed directly from the subject of the research, i.e. political statements by two types of entities: (1) political actors and (2) journalists. Each researcher contributed to the research by using their own research perspective and new theoretical constructs and methods,

although the interpretation of research results developed across disciplines may pose a number of methodological (and often epistemological) difficulties. The impulse for such collaboration comes from linguists (Pisarek, 2007; Grucza, 1983) as well as political scientists who either called for inter-disciplinary studies in a field of political communication or conducted them on their own (see for example: Kołodziejczak, 2012; 2014; Stępińska and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2006; 2011; Kołodziejczak and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2017a, 2017b; 2017c; 2018; Wrześniewska-Pietrzak and Kołodziejczak, 2017).

Following J. Fras (2005, p. 118), we define a political statement as "a relatively stable genre in terms of political content, composition (structure) and style, a type of statement shaped according to its function (main functions: informational, persuasive) and the situation of use (primarily official)." In this approach, a political statement may also be treated as a unit of the discursive political reality. Meanwhile, T. van Dijk (2006, p. 1021) proposes that discourse is "a communicative event or an instance of social interaction." He also advocates "a broad multidisciplinary approach to discourse, which integrates a detailed and explicit study of structures of text and talk with an analysis of their social and cognitive contexts as a basis for problem-oriented critical discourse analysis. In such an approach, the study of relevant knowledge, ideologies and other socially shared beliefs is crucial in describing many of the properties and social functions of discourse. In the same way, both these cognitions and the discourses based on them need to be studied in relation to the relevant structures of institutions, groups, power and other aspects of society and culture."

The main objective of this project was to analyze linguistic manifestations of populism in the public statements of Polish political actors and journalists. To this end, we used various research perspectives, taking into account the communication context of the analyzed texts, including pragmatic aspects of the statements of individual subjects. The subject matter was, therefore, the populist aspect of public statements. In this context, political expression is a manifestation of a socio-political phenomenon which cannot be directly observed, but manifests itself primarily in the language.

It should be stressed, however, that linguistic manifestations of populism may imply the occurrence of two phenomena: (1) an internally established political orientation, i.e. populist *ideology*, and (2) a pragmatic linguistic attitude, not reflected in the political orientation of the producer of the statement (sender), i.e. populist *style*. The results of the study of linguistic manifestations of populism allow analysis of populist communication strategies undertaken by actors located in two spheres: politics and media.

The main objectives of this study are (1) to determine characteristic, repeatable elements, forming a relatively permanent pattern of populist discourse (both in terms of content and language) in Poland, based on the existing Polish and foreign literature on populism; (2) to extract components (key words) of the populist narrative in the statements of select political actors and journalists in Poland (linguistic articulation of anti-elitism and topics articulated through populist communication); (3) to identify and comprehensively analyze differences in the functioning of populist content in the statements of particular political actors and journalists resulting from different political orientations, attitudes, and social and linguistic behaviors; and (4) to analyze the socio-political effects of political statements and linguistic interactions between political actors and journalists.

Research Material and Sampling

This research focused on the content of media messages: both the statements of political entities and statements constructed by journalists (reports, comments). The collected material included content from print media, television, and online media. These included dailies *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Rzeczpospolita*, *Fakt*, and *Nasz Dziennik*, and weeklies *Polityka*, *Newsweek*, *Do Rzeczy* and *W sieci*. These titles were selected according to three criteria: circulation (in 2015), type (quality press and popular press/tabloids), and the political orientation of the media organization.

The study utilized print research material from the years 2015–2017, and therefore covered both the presidential and parliamentary election periods in Poland in 2015 and the post-election period (2016–2017). The materials selected for analysis were those published during the two weeks preceding the voting days in 2015 in the daily press and weekly newspapers, and in the period from February to April 2016 and 2017 in the case of weeklies. On the other hand, for the analysis of the content of print media published in 2016 and 2017, we used a 'constructed week' for each year, which consisted of 6 days, respectively: 22 February, 1 March, 9 March, 17 March, 25 March, and 2 April from 2016, and 20 February, 28 February, 8 March, 16 March, 24 March, and 1 April from 2017. The detailed characteristics of the selected media outlets are presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1. Characteristics of the media outlets under the study

	Frequency	Type	Average daily/weekly circulation*	Political orientation
Gazeta Wyborcza	Daily	Broadsheet	244,811	Center-left (liberal)
Rzeczpospolita	Daily	Broadsheet	64,414	Center-right
Nasz Dziennik	Daily	Broadsheet	Data not available	Right-wing (conservative)
Fakt	Daily	Tabloid	435,050	Center
Polityka	Weekly	Broadsheet	171,516	Center-left (liberal)
Newsweek	Weekly	Broadsheet	184,827	Center
Do Rzeczy	Weekly	Broadsheet	119,305	Right-wing
W sieci	Weekly	Broadsheet	149,677	Right-wing

Own elaboraton.

Source: National Circulation Audit Office (2015).

Materials for the analysis were selected using keywords: names of political parties (the Polish names of: Law and Justice, Civic Platform, Kukiz'15, Together Party, Democratic Left Alliance, New Right Congress, National Movement, Your Movement, Direct Democracy, Real Policy Union, KORWIN) and names of political leaders (Grzegorz Braun, Andrzej Duda, Adam Jarubas, Bronisław Komorowski, Janusz Korwin-Mikke, Marian Kowalski, Paweł Kukiz, Magdalena Ogórek, Janusz Palikot, Paweł Tanajno, Jacek Wilk, Jarosław Kaczyński, Leszek Miller, Beata Szydło, Ewa Kopacz, Ryszard Petru, Barbara Nowacka, Janusz Piechociński, Adrian Zandberg). Additionally, the sample included articles containing the following keywords: populi*, naród*, narod*, elita*, elity*, suweren*, elitka*, obc*, Pola*, partiokrac*,

oligarchi* (allowing for the various forms of the Polish words for populism, nation, national, elite, aliens, Poles, oligarchs). Details of the print sample will be discussed in chapter 4.

Print materials were provided by a company Press Service – Media Monitoring. The access to a selected database of press articles was provided by the portal Inforia, owned by Press Service – Media Monitoring (uam.inforia-beta.net, 2018). One of this portal's main advantages is simultaneous access to the graphic and text versions of individual articles. Graphics provide the layout of content, illustrations, charts etc., while the text version improves the coding process and later analysis of the collected material thanks to the possibility of copying the extracted quote.

Research also included material from three television news programs: *Wiadomości* by TVP1, *Fakty* by TVN, and *Wydarzenia* by Polsat, as well as journalistic programs broadcast in public media (*Tomasz Lis live* on TVP2; *Salon dziennikarski* on TVP Info) and commercial media (*Kropka nad i* on TVN24 and *Loża prasowa* on TVN24). In the case of electronic media, the main selection criteria were the type of station (public or private), popularity of programs measured by the number of viewers, and the format (participation of politicians or journalists).

The content of TV news programs was recorded and archived with the use of CAST (Content Analysis System for Television), which is a system developed and implemented by the Faculty of Political Science and Journalism of the Adam Mickiewicz University. Its primary task is to record, store, and make television programs available. Since mid-2014, the system records 6 channels: TVP 1, TVP 2, Polsat, TVN, TVN24, and TVP Info continuously, 24 hours a day. For technical reasons, some programs could not be recorded, although this gap did not exceed 4% of the broadcast. The programs are stored in a database, described by metadata generated on the basis of EPG (Electronic Program Guide). Thanks to the advanced search engine, which supports logical operators, it was possible to construct complex queries, allowing for precise selection of materials for analysis.

Initially, the project also planned to include the content of party and election programs of Polish political parties, disseminated in the form of brochures, booklets, as well as messages posted on the party websites. However, due to the growing role of social media, in particular Facebook and Twitter, we decided to analyze only the social media content.

Research Methods and Tools

(a) Quantitative Analysis: Codebook and Coding

This study used methods of quantitative and qualitative content analysis. The quantitative approach was used to extract components of populist discourse in the statements of select political actors and journalists, as well as the topics discussed in their statements. It allowed the determination of the frequency of appearance of specific themes, issues, and persons mentioned in the texts, as well the number of TV appearances and the time devoted to their presentation.

For the purpose of quantitative research, a codebook was developed in two versions: (a) to encode printed press material and (b) adapted to television news program

material. The starting point for the development of the codebook was the research experience gained during participation in a project as part of the COST IS 1308 Action *Populist Political Communication in Europe: Comprehending Challenge of Mediated Political Populism for Democratic Politics* in the years 2014–2018 (see Stępińska, Piontek, and Jakubowski, 2017).

The codebook consists of three main parts. The first contains information describing a given object of analysis (text in print media or news on TV). This section contains categories such as: media organization, date of publication, title of the material, author of the material, journalistic genre (in the case of print media), location of the text in the printed material, its ordinal number in the news program (on television), and subject matter.

The second section of the codebook contains categories of the key populist aspects identified in the material: references to 'the people', anti-elitism, and/or exclusion of 'out-groups'. Appropriate codes were assigned to each type of these elements, i.e. type of 'the people' (political, economic, geographical, cultural, etc.), type of 'the elite' (general political elites, parties in general, specific parties, specific politicians, etc.), or type of 'out-groups' (political, economic, geographical, etc.). Furthermore, the main indicators of the populist discourse can be represented by the use of specific communication strategies (Blassnig et al., 2019). Thus, references to 'the people' can take the form of (1) approaching 'the people'; (2) praising the virtues of 'the people' (positive qualities/attributes: hard-working, good, wise, honest, courageous, positive autostereotype of Poles, etc.) (3) praising 'the people's' achievements (positive assessment of actions, activities, deeds, successes) (4) homogenizing 'the people' (common features, values, attitudes, experiences, plans) or (5) demanding popular sovereignty (the will of 'the people'; appeals to the national wisdom of Poles, demands that power be given to 'the people' by enabling independent decision making in accordance with the principles of direct democracy).

Strategies for expressing anti-elitism include: (1) discrediting 'the elite' (attributing negative characteristics: corrupt, incompetent, lazy, stupid, etc.); (2) blaming 'the elite' (charging responsibility for negative actions, showing negative phenomena as the results of the elite's actions, highlighting mistakes made by 'the elite' with dire consequences for 'the people'); and (3) denying elite sovereignty. Finally, the strategies used to refer to 'out-groups' consist of (1) excluding (indicating those who do not belong to 'the people' or are the opposite of 'the people') through discrediting specific groups (attributing negative characteristics), or (2) blaming specific groups (attributing responsibility for negative actions, showing negative phenomena as the effects of the others' actions) (Blassnig et al., 2019).

The main categories ('the people', 'the elite' and 'out-groups') and detailed strategies mentioned above are derived from the codebook compiled by a team led by prof. F. Esser at the University of Zurich for research purposes within the framework of the aforementioned COST Action.[1] Consequently, the results of research conducted by the Polish team are comparable to the findings of research conducted by other teams participating in the COST Action.

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[1] Agnieszka Stępińska, Artur Lipiński, and Dorota Piontek participated in the project, including the process of developing and testing the codebook.

However, during the preparation of the codebook for the purposes of this study, some of the aforementioned categories were adjusted to the Polish context (e.g. among the elite types there were: Catholic church representatives, generals of army, police, other uniformed services, and judicial elites). Moreover, apart from the classical features of populist discourse, which were mentioned above, the codebook included elements specific to the Polish social, cultural, and political context.

Some of these elements come from the list presented by P. Przyłęcki (2012, pp. 119–122). In our study, the following categories are used (although in several cases modified – by merging or separating threads): (1) *Euroscepticism*/*anti-Europeanism* (negative information campaign against the EU, desire to contest all major decisions taken within the EU, aversion towards European integration); (2) *negative attitude towards Germany* (discourse of fear-mongering by appeals to the past and/or alleged German property claims); (3) *anti-communism* (negative opinion about left-wing groups with communist roots, about post-communist parties; allegations of the left's failure to settle accounts with the past, and transfer of negative patterns of behavior from the communist past, including corruption); (4) *social justice* (social differences presented as a result of unequal distribution of capital, unfair behaviors of groups that own the means of production, poor versus rich, calls for a new social order based on equal access to goods); (5) *social state* (calls for an increase in budget deficits to improve quality of life, especially among the poorest; promises to increase spending on social, educational, housing, and health purposes, etc.); (6) *reference to religion* (reference to Christian/Catholic values; references to persons important in the Catholic Church – including pope John Paul II); (7) *reference to tradition and history* (events, symbols, memory, historical policy); (8) *criticism of the Third Polish Republic* (critical statements concerning the period after 1989; the point of departure for building the Fourth Republic); (9) *the Fourth Polish Republic* (the idea of building a new social, political, and economic order, either in opposition to the Third Polish Republic or as an independent idea); (10) *critique of liberalism* (liberal democracy presented as an example of a state hostile to the poor and ruled by corrupt neoliberal political elites alienated from society); (11) *intervention in the free market* (negation of free market democratic institutions; critique of the free market; advocating an increase in the role of the state in the economy; market regulation). Thanks to the inclusion of the categories proposed by P. Przyłęcki (2012), it became possible to analyze changes and continuations in the discourse of individual Polish political actors between the years 2001–2009, the period covered by P. Przyłęcki (2012, pp. 7, 123) and 2015–2018, i.e. the period covered in our study.

Some additional categories were proposed by this research team: (1) *negative attitude towards Russia* (discourse consisting in arousing fear by referring to historic and current relations); (2) *negation of political correctness* (expressed directly or indirectly as a criticism of an attitude characterized by the avoidance of statements that could offend representatives of a particular social group, e.g. minorities); (3) *constructing a crisis perspective* (describing the *status quo* as a critical moment that will determine the future, or a negative state caused by certain political actors).

In addition, the codebook contains three categories focusing on the relationship between the subject (the source of populist discourse) and 'the people'. In all cases, the subject names him/herself as 'the voice of the people', but qualifies him/herself for the

role by different criteria. The first is *paternalism*, understood here as placing oneself hierarchically higher in relation to the people, describing/defining one's own role in relation to 'the people' as the person with a greater/better knowledge, being the only one who knows the truth, being the only solution, or showing the right way. *Servitude/ serving the people* refers to the situation where the sender is hierarchically below 'the people', perceives and defines his/her own role as a listener obedient to 'the people', serving 'the people', following the instructions of 'the people', and fulfilling the expectations of 'the people', etc. On the other hand, the category of *resemblance to the people* describes a situation in which the sender is on equal footing with 'the people', perceives and describes/defines his/her own role in relation to 'the people' as normal, ordinary, thinking like Poles, belonging to 'the people', knowing the problems and needs of 'the people' because these are also their own problems and needs.

It should be emphasized that in the coding process each recognized element of populist discourse had to be provided with a relevant quote, which allowed the qualitative analysis of the populist statements presented in the media.

The third part of the codebook contained categories referring to the material's resonance (clearly negative tone, negative tone with positive elements, neutral or balanced style, positive tone with negative elements, clearly positive tone) and the journalists' attitudes towards populist statements from other subjects (neutral – coverage of statements, critical – negative assessment of statements, favorable – positive assessment of statements, or ambiguous assessment of various statements). These categories were intended to identify the attitudes of journalists towards the use of populist discourse by other entities, in particular political actors.

The decision-making scheme for coding (Krippendorf, 2004, pp. 135–136) was as follows: if a given material (i.e. an article in the press, news in a TV program, or a post on Facebook) contained a reference to Polish political entities, the first question was: "Does the material contain a populist statement?" The starting point for further coding was the recognition one of the three constitutive features of populism in at least one sentence: (1) reference to 'the people', (2) anti-elitism, or (3) the exclusion of 'out-groups'. Their absence resulted in a negative answer and thus ended the coding of a given material (article, news, post). In the case of a positive answer (recognition of one of the three components of populism in a statement), the coder moved on to the second part, which contained 164 fields to be filled in or selected.

It was important to identify and specify the actor (speaker) whose statement contained at least one element of populist discourse, and then to find and code the elements of the populist discourse in that statement (also when quoted or paraphrased by others). In each material, the coder recorded populist statements coming from not more than 5 speakers (i.e. when there were more speakers in a given material, they were skipped). The distinction between statements directly quoted in the material and those paraphrased by another person (e.g. a politician or a journalist) made it possible to indicate the role of the media in the dissemination of populist discourse, i.e. whether it consisted in merely reporting on populist statements or creating original populist content by journalists (more about this in chapter 3).

The last question in this part of the codebook was whether the identified speaker was the last in a given material whose speech contained populist elements. The positive answer transferred the coder to the third part of the codebook (discussed above),

after which the coder could move on to another TV material. The negative answer allowed encoding the statements of another speaker who appeared in the same material.

Thanks to the adopted research procedure, which consisted of encoding the indicators of populist discourse even when a given statement did not contain a constitutive element of populism, i.e. a reference to 'the people', it was possible to identify six different types of statements; those containing (1) only a reference to 'the people' (*empty populism*); (2) only a criticism of 'the elite' (anti-elitism); (3) only the exclusion of 'out-groups' (negative relation to others); (4) a reference to 'the people' and 'the elite' (*anti-elitist* populism); (5) a reference to 'the people' and excluding 'out-groups' (*excluding populism*); and (6) those containing all three indicators of populism (reference to 'the people', anti-elitism, and exclusion of 'out-groups') (*complete populism*).

The selection of the sample and the adopted decision-making scheme had several important consequences. Firstly, three categories of materials were included in the database: (1) those referring to Polish political actors, but not containing any populist statements, (2) those containing references to 'the elite' or 'out-groups' but not populist statements according to the aforementioned definition by J. Jagers and S. Walgrave (2007), (3) populist statements, i.e. those that included reference to 'the people' and other elements of the populist discourse (anti-elitism and/or exclusion of 'out-groups').

In order to distinguish the second category from the third, i.e. statements which do not qualify as populist (according to J. Jagers and S. Walgrave's [2007] concept) from those which characterize their proposed type of populism, we will use the phrase *statements containing at least one indicator of populist discourse* to address the broadest category of collected and coded statements, namely those which contained either a reference to 'the people', or a critical attitude towards the elites, or a negative attitude towards 'out-groups'. In turn, the term *populist statement* will be reserved for those statements that contain a reference to 'the people' and/or other elements of populist discourse (anti-elitism and /or the exclusion of 'out-groups'). This method of selection made it possible to distinguish statements containing criticism of individual parties or politicians, but without any reference to 'the people', i.e. those that cannot be defined as populist statements.

Our previous research indicated a clear domination of anti-elitist populism in Polish media messages during the parliamentary election campaign in 2015 (Stępińska and Adamczewska, 2017; Stępińska, Lipiński, and Adamczewska, 2019), and therefore, it seemed important to precisely define the category of the political elite and whether the criticism of 'the elite' was actually accompanied by references to 'the people'.

Secondly, using this approach, it was possible to determine which topics were discussed in the materials on Polish political actors, how many materials concerning the Polish political scene from a given period contained any element of populist discourse, and which types of populism (*empty*, *anti-elitist*, *excluding*, or *complete*) were present in the statements of various actors.

Thirdly, it should be noted that the main emphasis was placed on the speakers: individuals who formulate statements containing elements of populist discourse. As a result, it was possible not only to identify the category of the speaker (political actor, journalist, expert, public administration official, representative of social organizations, non-governmental organizations, or citizen), but also to create a personal list of speakers (among political actors, journalists, and experts) who used populist discourse most

frequently in the media (or, in other words, the media most frequently reported their populist statements).

The biggest challenge during coding, both substantive and technical, was the second section of the codebook. Given the large number of categories (and fields to be filled), it was decided that in order to avoid common errors during coding, it was necessary to move away from the still-popular approach based on recording observations in a spreadsheet. It was therefore necessary to consider the choice of a tool that would better facilitate the work of researchers. We decided to use an external tool, that is a website containing a questionnaire that allows the selection of one or more answers. One of the advantages of such a solution was the possibility to use the same coding interface for different types of material (in this case print media and television programs). Moreover, this solution helped to minimize the number of errors, thanks to the ergonomics of the coders' workstations, the intuitive interface, the linear coding process (no need to return to already coded elements), and the ability to set the "no" answer for many more detailed categories. In practice, this meant that the coder had to fill in the field (change it from no to yes) only when a given category was present in the analyzed statement. Selecting the positive answer to the question about the presence of a given category had to be accompanied by an illustrative quote.

As mentioned previously, the structure of the codebook took into account the fact that quantitative analysis was to be followed by a qualitative analysis of the collected research material. Each identified case of reference to 'the people', anti-elitism, or 'out-groups' required not only clarification of the type of 'the people', 'the elite', or 'out-group', but also provision of the respective quotation with the element of populist discourse. The collected quotations were used in the verification of quantitative observations and simultaneously served as the subject matter of in-depth qualitative analysis.

The collected material was coded by 9 coders. In order to ensure inter-coder reliability we organized several seminars and coder training sessions prior to the coding process. We formally tested the inter-coder reliability based on material (20 items) taken from one of the analyzed newspapers (*Gazeta Wyborcza*). We followed K. de Swert (2012) who suggested that Krippendorff's alpha (KALPHA) could be the basic measure to apply for researchers conducting a content analysis. Sample size, multiple (more than 2) coders or missing data are not problematic for calculating KALPHA, and all measurement levels can be tested. For running KALPHA tests we used a macro developed by Hayes (2005) that makes KALPHA calculation possible in SPSS.[2] Overall scores are satisfactory, with an average of 0.86. For the group of variables on topic (main categories) the average was 0.91.

(b) Qualitative Analysis

Content analysis of media messages containing statements by political actors and journalists was performed mainly with Atlas.ti software, which allows for a multi-level

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[2] KALPHA is calculated per variable. It provides information on the reliability of variables, not of coders (even if structural patterns of different coding by certain coders may become apparent from merely preparing the data for the SPSS file we were going to use to test the reliability). Therefore, for each variable we wanted to test for inter-coder reliability, we made a separate SPSS file to calculate KALPHA.

content analysis, particularly useful in dealing with very large databases. Atlas.ti allows for the performance of both textual and conceptual research. It is suitable for determination of the occurrence of words or categories, and includes the possibility of assigning categories and tags to sentences, paragraphs or texts that contain certain words. One may use this software to build relationships between categories, to create a structure of codes and relations between fragments of texts. The program also facilitates the preparation of material for interpretation. Another useful function is the ability to create visualizations of individual stages of research.

The identification and in-depth analysis of populist content was based on the tool of political-linguistics modified for the purposes of this study (Pisarek, 1986), which covers three levels of analysis: (a) descriptive, (b) normative/axiological, (c) pragma-linguistic (pre-suppositional and connotational).

These analyses were deepened by research into the types of linguistic means (especially lexical) used by speakers, which took into account the relation between the systemic, conventionalized meanings of individual units and their contextual (pragmatic) use. Semantic shifts within the lexis, as well as attempts to redefine terms (key words), also allowed identification of the discrepancies between illocutionary, locutionary, and perlocutionary speech acts, resulting not only from presuppositions of the sender, but also from semantically ambiguous (unequivocal, multivalent) lexemes functioning as key words, e.g. 'system' or 'particracy' in Paweł Kukiz's statements (see Kołodziejczak and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2018).

Moreover, this research analyzed the image of reality presented by populist leaders. As previous research has shown, the simplified picture of reality encountered in populist texts is mainly related to their black-and-white vision of the world, bipolarity of values, simplified axiological hierarchy, as well as the simplicity of proposed political solutions. Available papers in this area analyzed references to such values as dignity, truth, and lies (Burda, 2012; 2013). The references to truth in populist statements were found to be associated with the frequent use of certain linguistic devices with the intention to increase the credibility of populist message (see Bralczyk, 1999; Ożóg, 2006).

Furthermore, our analysis investigated the relations between the indicated keywords, showing the axiological hierarchy that depends on the ideology adopted by the subject. Determination of the hierarchy of values in the analyzed statements helped to establish which classes of values were most frequently referred to and how they were organized. The determination of individual axiological classes allowed us to indicate the most explored axiological fields, as well as those which constitute the common axiological profile of the senders.

The research conducted in this project revealed a simplification of the world of values, which is built on the basic antinomy 'us' *versus* 'them', a kind of structural skeleton of the axiological hierarchy. Based on the analysis of Paweł Kukiz's statements, one can see the construction of a field of negative values used to define a negative component of the antinomy in a greater detail – narrowing it to persons or groups that threaten 'the people' or are outside this group (Kołodziejczak and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2018). The axiological hierarchy is functionalized in these statements. It serves to build a positive image of the populist leader and 'the people', whose actions are guided by higher, absolute, timeless values, while 'anti-values' are inseparable attributes of the alien 'out-groups' (Kołodziejczak and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2018).

This simplified world, created by the populist sender to persuade or manipulate the public, is also associated with the high comprehensibility of the language used by populists to communicate with the audience. The communicativeness of the message goes hand in hand with the desire to reach the widest possible audience. This simplicity of language makes it possible to include comprehensibility[3] within the constitutive features of populism.

Comprehensibility of language is essential in determining the effectiveness of populist statements. For this reason, the degree of complexity of the text of the message was also analyzed, taking into account the perception and cognitive capabilities of receivers, measured by Gunning FOG index, a tool developed in the 1950s by Robert Gunning. It was adapted to the study of statements in Polish by a team of researchers at the Laboratory of Plain Polish at the University of Wrocław, together with linguistic engineers from the Wrocław University of Technology (Broda et al., 2010).[4] To date, this tool has not yet been used to study political statements. Using the version available free of charge at www.logios.pl, the tool was used to study the degree of intelligibility of populist leaders' statements and showed a link between the populist characteristics of a statement and its intelligibility – accessibility to the greatest number of receivers possible (Kołodziejczak and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2018).

Our analysis also examined the degree of expressiveness of the statements, including the amount of emotive lexis, the incidence of colloquialisms, the incidence of emotional and axiological vocabulary, as well as the presence of proper nouns functioning in axiological or symbolic perspective (Kołodziejczak and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2018). The use of these elements contributes to the construction of a dominant position of a populist leader with regard to receivers (Kołodziejczak and Wrześniewska--Pietrzak, 2018; Wrześniewska-Pietrzak and Kołodziejczak, 2017).

At the same time, our discourse analysis was based on the historical-discursive approach proposed by R. Wodak (2011), which allows for the inclusion of contextual relationships to a much greater extent than classical linguistic approaches. In this approach, discourse is perceived as a specific strategy, and the emphasis is placed on the role of the discursive context, necessary to understand the statements of the speaking subjects. Moreover, this approach emphasizes the need to explore discourse in many social fields, e.g. administration, election campaign, media, etc. This encourages establishment of interdiscursive and intertextual references, interrelationships between discourses, diffusion of particular discursive devices (e.g. some categories, themes, or argumentation schemes), and their decontextualization and contextualization. These tools have proven to be particularly useful in the study of the transfer of discursive contents and forms between the political and media spheres.

Within this approach, methods were also developed for examining allusive and ambivalent speech, which is particularly useful in the study of political discourse aimed at different types of audiences, oriented towards multiple goals (e.g. securing the support of the 'hard' electorate and simultaneous mobilization of moderates) and conveyed

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[3] Understandability is a feature of a text that is attributed to it by the receiver on the basis of subjective assessment depending on his or her competence.

[4] This collaboration contributed to the creation and description of a new language standard, which in foreign research is referred to as *plain language*, in relation to Polish the authors called it *plain Polish*.

through media with different ideological profiles (e.g. interviews given by a politician X to *Gazeta Wyborcza* or *Nasz Dziennik*). R. Wodak (2011) proposes to study five discursive strategies: nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivization, and mitigation. Each of these strategies uses their own means to achieve a persuasive goal, e.g. categorizations/lexis, metaphors, metonymies, synecdoches, mechanisms of attributing negative or positive features, presuppositions, argumentation schemes, topoi, rhetorical figures, means of strengthening or toning the illocutionary power of speech. R. Wodak's proposal was complemented by the concept of political argumentation research developed by N. Fairclough and I. Fairclough (2012), as well as analytical tools proposed by authors such as P. Chilton (2003), E. Richardson (2007), and J. Charteris-Black (2014).

Structure of the Publication

This publication contains ten chapters on a presence of populist discourse in the Polish media. The subsequent chapters present the results of quantitative or qualitative research conducted by the members of our team. For the purpose of that book, we selected a content analysis of materials from the print press (chapters 2, 3, 4, and 10), television (chapters 5 and 6), and social media (chapter 8). Chapters with the findings of the study are supplemented with two chapters (7 and 9) addressing theoretical and methodological challenges of the studies on populist discourse.

Chapters 2–4 provide findings of quantitative content analysis of the Polish daily newspapers and magazines in order to provide answers to three main research questions: What is a frequency of populist discourse indicators in the Polish print media? Who is the main source of statements employing populist strategies? And what topics trigger the use of these strategies? Thus, chapter 2 provides answers to basic questions about the presence of elements of populist discourse in the Polish daily printed press and opinion weeklies. It illustrates the frequency of references to 'the people', criticism of 'the elite', and exclusion of 'out-groups'. In addition, it presents information on the occurrence of elements specific to Polish populist discourse. Chapter 3 concerns two types of agents: political actors whose statements are quoted or paraphrased in journalistic materials (in print media) and journalists themselves: employees or co-workers of press titles who use populist discourse in their statements. Finally, chapter 4 presents themes found in materials containing various elements of populism. Due to the selection procedure of analysis materials (names of Polish parties and politicians being the main keywords), the vast majority of the analyzed print publications referred to issues of Polish national politics, including elections and relations between particular political parties. It was additionally interesting to find other topics than just domestic politics that trigger the use of populist discourse in Poland.

The second part of the book focuses on television. Chapter 5, analyzes the content and role of the chyrons accompanying the materials presented in the news program *Wiadomości* on the public television channel, TVP1. This is the only chapter containing materials outside the project's timeframe: the analyzed material comes from 2018, i.e. the time when the news tickers resulted in a series of controversies. And because the results of quantitative research showed that journalists are the most com-

mon source of populist statements in print (chapter 3), special attention has been paid to this group – chapter 6 presents a qualitative analysis of journalists' statements on TV programs based on interviews with guests (including politicians) or discussions between journalists.

The third part of the book is devoted to the new space where populist discourse may be spread: the social media. While chapter 1 focused mainly on the presentation of the research procedure applied to traditional media (print and television), chapter 7 deals with the challenges of research into populist political communication in online media, particularly social media. Understanding the specificity of social media is indispensable for proper interpretation of the results presented in chapter 8, which explores the use of social media in populist political communication. In this chapter, the authors examine social media, which become a space for (populist) political communication for both political actors and citizens (potential voters). The analysis covered the contents of Paweł Kukiz's Facebook profile – a populist leader of the political organization Kukiz'15, which achieved spectacular success in the 2015 parliamentary elections (similarly to P. Kukiz himself in the 2015 presidential elections). Earlier analyses (Lipiński and Stępińska, 2018) have confirmed the important role of social media in this political actor's communication with his supporters. Therefore, this chapter contains an in-depth analysis of both the content of P. Kukiz's populist statements as well as the content of statements published by 'ordinary' Facebook users.

The final part of the book deals in a qualitative manner with a fundamental aspect of populism and populist discourse, that is a dichotomy between 'us' and 'them'. Chapter 9 discusses the 'us–them' antinomy from a linguistic perspective. Highlighting the importance of oppositions in populist discourse was necessary to show the specificity of the Polish language as a system, in which the 'us-them' correlation appears to be one of the most important methods of categorization. Furthermore, analysis of the use of this opposition revealed its ambiguity. Interdisciplinary (political and linguistic) reflections on this antinomy are crucial for research on populist discourse based on, the dichotomies of 'the people' *versus* 'the elite', 'the people' *versus* 'out-groups', and 'native' *versus* 'foreign', because they show that these antinomies are not characteristic only of populist statements. However, their high popularity and functionalization, as well as their susceptibility to being imbued with various contents, show that they constitute a kind of starting point for the creation of a dichotomous vision of the world, also in the axiological sphere. The problem of the antinomy is not only a characteristic of populist statements, but also its high attendance and functionalization, and at the same time susceptibility to various content fillings (Kołodziejczak and Wrześniewska-Pietrzak, 2017a).

Chapter 10, in turn, analyzes the mechanisms of discursive representation of the immigrant 'other' as an important element of populist communication strategy, encompassing three constitutive entities: 'the people' – the in-group, 'the political elite', and the excluded 'others' – out-groups. The chapter will identify the ways of categorizing and characterizing the immigrant 'others' and of using the figure of 'the other' in the argumentation about the 'in-group'. It will also discuss the theme of political elites as a subject which, in right-wing populist discourse, is constructed in close relation to the immigrant 'others'.

This publication therefore combines several aspects of populist research. It shows a multitude of research perspectives that give a multifaceted view of Polish right-wing

populism in an attempt to capture its specificity. It is a continuation of theoretical and interpretative discussions present in both Polish and foreign literature. The correlation between Polish and foreign research is important, as it allows for comparison of the results obtained in different research contexts, as well as for further theoretical discussion on the methods of researching and describing the discussed phenomena.

Furthermore, this publication represents an interdisciplinary approach to populist research. The co-existence of different approaches, research methods, and tools allows us to capture the multiformity of populism, and thus to transcend the 'research boundaries' of particular disciplines.

Nevertheless, the authors are aware that the chapters presented here do not constitute a complete description of populist discourse. On the contrary, they rather open up new fields of research, continuing the current and lively scientific discussion on populist political discourse in Poland and abroad.

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