From Realism to Idealism.
An Attempt to Grasp the Evolution of Political Speech

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The article is devoted to political speech in Poland, presenting a broader look at the way it has developed from 1998, with special reference to parliamentary election campaigns. The general framework of Relevance Theory is adopted to analyse a corpus of TV broadcasts of the two leading parties in four political campaigns (1998, 2005, 2007 and 2011). The main interest here is directed towards the changes in structure of party political broadcasts and in the type of messages conveyed, both in terms of content and stylistic form. The broadcasts seem to evolve towards the form of easy entertainment. On the other hand, it also seems that politics is more and more about invoking either positive or the negative emotions with regard to their own party or to the opponents' respectively, rather than convincing the electorate of the merits of the party's own program.

Keywords: *Political speech, Relevance Theory, implicature, discourse analysis, elections*

1. Introduction

Political TV campaigns show the changing role of media in politics and the way parties use the media. It seems interesting also to notice that the way people treat the media has changed: some decades ago it was treated as an authority; a reliable source of knowledge. Nowadays the medium is open to any source of information or entertainment, not only the most valuable, therefore it is rather easy entertainment, and treating it as an authority now is no longer valid. Party political broadcasts (hereafter PPBs) have changed as well, moving towards the easy message, and away from specific, meritorious discussion. The article is an attempt at describing the changes in parliamentary election campaigns that took place in Poland in 1998, 2005, 2007 and 2011.

The theoretical framework adopted here is Relevance Theory since it seems most suitable to analyze not only the explicit meaning conveyed, but also the implied content which is becoming a more and more vital element in political communication.

2. Relevance theory - a brief outline

For obvious space limitations, only selected aspects of the Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson 1996) are here presented. They mainly concentrate on the data processing mechanisms and implicature derivation, which seem essential for the present analysis. Processing a stimulus starts in the peripheral input system, where a string of sounds is automatically decoded into a logical form. Logical form is an ordered set of concepts forming an assumption or an assumption schema. The concepts give access to three types of entries: lexical entry, providing information about the natural language counterpart of the concept; logical entry, consisting of a set of deductive rules, which apply to the logical forms of which

that concept is a constituent (e.g. *and*, *or*, *but*) and encyclopaedic entry, storing information about the extension and/or denotation.

Of the above three, the encyclopaedic entry produces, in the analysis, the most conclusive results, since it shows the content of the PPBs and the way the very content was changing over time. The knowledge activated in the encyclopaedic entry has been further specified (Rut-Kluz 2009) in order for the results to be more precise. Encyclopaedic knowledge activated in the course of explicature recovery for the interpretation of PPBs naturally includes political knowledge, which is the main interest here. General non-political knowledge means general knowledge with no political information activated for a given concept; political knowledge is further divided into strict political knowledge and general political knowledge. The former is concentrated on past political situations and their development up to the present moment and the latter includes general knowledge containing political information, which is then activated.
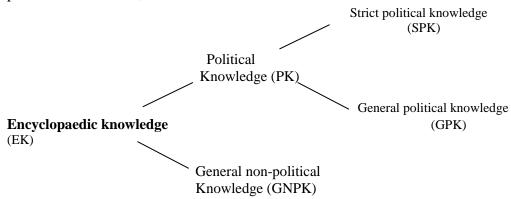
Strict political knowledge
(SPK)

Political
Knowledge (PK)

Encyclopaedic knowledge
(EK)

General political knowledge
(GPK)

General non-political
Knowledge (GNPK)

Figure 1 *The inner structure of encyclopaedic knowledge (for political discourse analysis) (Rut-Kluz 2009)*

The above classification of encyclopaedic knowledge can be further correlated with the estimated processing effort the hearer needs to make to retrieve the concept and consequently with the relevance of the analyzed utterance. Therefore, as mentioned in Rut-Kluz 2009, the detailed classification within encyclopaedic knowledge enables more precise estimation of the relevance of the analyzed utterances; the more effort spent on retrieving the concept from encyclopaedic knowledge the lower the relevance.

An explicitly communicated assumption is called an explicature, most explicatures can be interpreted further as implicating some information. The entries in turn give rise to two types of implications: analytic (which are of no interest for the present analysis) serve to understand what is said, and synthetic, which are called contextual implications. Here deduction plays a crucial role in the recovery of implicatures. No implicature can be deduced from the explicit content of the utterance alone, therefore background knowledge is indispensable. The hearer needs to supply implicated premises (the contextual assumptions intended by the speaker) by either retrieving them from memory or constructing them using assumption schema. Therefore, they may equally well come from new or old information; that is, in the former case from perception (including linguistic decoding), in the latter from encyclopaedic entries or from deduction. In common with other inferential approaches, Relevance Theory holds that linguistic meaning of the words decoded by the receiver is just

one of many inputs that can affect interpretation of the utterance. The implicatures and need to be consistent with the Principle of Relevance which presupposes that an utterance addressed to someone automatically conveys a presumption of its own optimal relevance. Consequently:

> **Presumption of optimal Relevance** means that
> (a) the utterance is relevant enough for it to be worth the hearer's effort to process it,
> (b) the utterance is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities
> and preferences   (Sperber & Wilson 1996: 270).

In other words it means the presumption of adequate cognitive effect at minimally necessary processing effort including the communicator's abilities and preferences. Finally the authors conclude that

> **The Cognitive Principle of Relevance**:
> "Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximization of relevance."
>   (Sperber & Wilson 1996: 260)

In processing information humans tend to maximize relevance, which actually means gaining maximal cognitive effects at minimal processing effort. Therefore it seems that the theory is well suited to the needs of political speech interpretation where, depending on the hearer, completely different interpretations can be made. They differ tremendously from supporters to opponents; while it is obvious that the party is mostly concentrated on the undecided electorate to gain their votes, they also need to strengthen the decisions of the declared voters.

3. Evolution in political speech

During political campaigns before parliamentary elections in Poland each party is given the same amount of free time on public television and PPBs of all the parties (in a random order) are broadcast in one block every day for a week before election day. The analysis covers political TV campaigns that took place in 1998, 2005, 2007 and 2011. The materials come from those free TV broadcasts of two main parties, Civic Platform and Law and Justice, who have been during this time, and still are, the main rivals on the political scene in Poland. The present analysis concentrates on four aspects of the PPBs; (i) structure and strategy, (ii) style, (iii) content and (iv) implied content.
        The structure of the PPBs includes the order of elements and their length. The strategies implemented by the parties are closely related to the structure of the PPBs, as well as to the next aspects analyzed, that is the type of information broadcast and the style in which it is presented. The final aspect includes the implied content which seems to be prominent in those PPBs.

3.1 *The structure and strategies of party political broadcasts*

The considerations of structure and strategies concern the overall framework or format of the program and the order of elements presented. The strategies involve the particular order of information presented with a particular effect that it is expected to evoke. The PPBs over time

change the general structure rather slowly, the strategies change rather in the intensity than form.

3.1.1 *The 1998 election campaign*

In 1998 the PPBs are close in structure to interviews, with a friendly interviewer. They have the format of a studio where the hosts and guests talk. During the interview the host is friendly, the questions are helpful to the minister or to the candidate, they both have the same goals to present the main ideas of the party in the campaign and persuade the audience to vote for the party. There is a dialog between hosts and guests; however it is asymmetric, often the ministers or the candidates for parliament take up the majority of the time. Apart from the parts presenting an interview in a studio each program includes a few longer clips. These are short films presenting other candidates and others providing illustrations of the final campaign slogan encouraging viewers to vote for the party.

Each program is devoted to one theme (e.g. agriculture, culture, investing), which, in essence, means that in 1998 one program is directed to one group of target audience. It seems that the authors most probably presumed that the audience is going to watch all of the PPBs broadcast to finally find the one most relevant to themselves. The PPBs are typically ended by an address to the audience encouraging them to vote for the party.

3.1.2 *The 2005 election campaign*

The material coming from 2005 contains mainly short films; the convention of a studio has been abandoned completely. The whole program is an edited assembly of short films coming from public meetings, party conventions or produced for the campaign, they seem to have the same format as films typically shown on the Internet.

The films cover a large number of themes, often they are only mentioned, the themes range from taxes, jobs, education, the disabled, the environment, health care, roads, culture, corruption to parliament's set-up. The great variety may suggest that the authors seem to realize that the audience may see one or possibly several such PPBs, therefore they pack almost all the important issues into one program. Actually almost each and every program contains the same issues (that are important for the party or rather the target voters) with the hope that when information is repeated it will stay longer and be more persuasive; that is, effective.

It can easily be observed that the choice of themes chosen to be presented in the PPBs reflect the problem areas in Polish public life; or more accurately, what politicians (alternatively their advisors) predict the voters may most probably experience as problems. The material analyzed reveals two main areas of weaknesses in Polish public life, those relating to politics (credibility of the politicians, being loyal to the voters, being one of the citizens close to their life and problems, or their political origin), and those relating to voters' lives (creating jobs, financing health care, fighting corruption, subsidies in agriculture, financing education or lowering taxes). The way the themes are chosen to build PPBs supports, and is in agreement with, the main claim stemming from the presumption of optimal relevance of an utterance; the utterance is to be worth its processing and it produces most cognitive effects compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences. The PPBs are to be relevant for the voters but on the other hand they reflect the preferences of the given political party as to the choice of themes presented.

The themes are to a greater or lesser degree emotionally loaded (to an increasing extent). Invoking emotions seems to currently be the main goal of TV entertainment and

advertising; some decades ago it was rather informing or educating. Now we can observe that in political election campaigns, invoking emotions has become a crucial element and a powerful tool in gaining votes. Naturally it is not a new phenomenon in politics and election campaigns, but what seem to have changed are the proportions: the balance between emotions and meritorious discussion. Now the discussion is minimized and limited to mentioning typical phrases naming the issues (without longer treatment of the problem).

In the PPBs of the 2005 campaign the candidates speak quite often, they mainly refer to the region they represent and use typical strategies. They may present a negative picture but very weakly, e.g. saying that *our region deserves investments and deserves more jobs* implies weakly what the problems of the region are now. Alternatively, they may start with a positive picture; a kind of morale boost in order to evoke fear (again very weakly) merely implying gently that it may be in danger and we need to defend it. No matter what the strategy it always ends with positive emotions promising a better future.

The overall number of words per utterance drops in the material coming from 2005, making the utterances shorter, which in effect lowers the processing effort and finally produces more cognitive effects. Any problems or negatively perceived issues are only weakly implied, there are no strong implicatures directed at the opposing party or any direct criticism either. Typically, in the final part party leaders address the voters encouraging them to vote for the party.

3.1.3 *The 2007 election campaign*
The general framework of the program stays the same; it contains a number of clips, similar to the 2005 PPBs. There are clips from party conventions, from public meetings with voters and clips produced for the campaign. However, the number of issues discussed (corruption, education, agriculture, health care, foreign affairs, roads, crime, economy) is smaller, and they are mentioned several times in each program broadcast. Here it seems that the parties decided to concentrate on the most important issues in order not to divide the attention of the viewers between so many problems in one election campaign. Another reason seems to be a desire to be different from the political rival; to show the contrast stronger so that the target voters may easily identify with the party goals. Another issue is the very idea of what are the 'most important issues'; they are the issues the party takes to be the most important as their goals in the future if they form a government after winning the elections. However, the choice is naturally correlated with what the target voters themselves see as the most vital in their everyday lives. Here we encounter a kind of circularity, as to whether the voters choose the party as the one that suits their views most or the party during the elections tries to produce an image that would 'sell' best to the target voters. It is certainly is not an easy task to solve, but it is not an ambition of the paper to do so.

One of the strategies used quite broadly is juxtaposing negative information with positive. The juxtaposition is immediate or may be slightly postponed. In the first case the negative information or problem is immediately followed with something positive. In the second case the problem is followed by another and another, so that the negative feelings of the viewer are almost driven to a climax, and then several positive pieces of information follow. In 2005 the same strategy was already in use; however, the contrast was rather weak or gentle, whereas in 2007 the contrast is sharp but conveyed mainly through strong implicatures. It is often used to criticize the opponent by showing first their incompetence and then the speakers' own solutions or only promises.

Another of the strategies is showing the party's origin, remembering the first years after the change of the system in Poland, so that the voters are assured that the party has its history and its share in the fight for freedom. Still another strategy already used in 2005 is morale-boosting:, representing one target group of voters (e.g. farmers) and then referring to their needs and ambitions.

In 2007 there is a shift from showing candidates representing their regions to party leaders representing the whole party's main aims. This is a result of the election system in Poland in which voters actually vote for a party which then decides who is actually to represent a region, and may even choose a member from a different region. What is more, the candidates often have their own PPBs broadcast on local TV.

Each broadcast program is ended with a short summary repeating the main issues already mentioned in the program and encouragement by the party leader to vote for the party.

3.1.4 *The 2011 election campaign*

The material coming from the election campaign in 2011 contains whole series of clips devoted to one theme, usually the main theme of the campaign (e.g. gaining 300 billion PLN from the EU). The entire campaigns of the parties have one general slogan (e.g. *We'll do more* or *It's time for a change; The Poles deserve more*). Organizing the whole campaign under one general slogan makes particular themes easier to recognize and remember for the target voters, as a result of which it should be more persuasive and therefore effective. The slogans provide a mutual cognitive environment and lower the processing effort, increasing the relevance of the material presented in the PPBs.

A new strategy appears in the campaign, here the short clips are accompanied by pictures or text displayed on the screen; the information is conveyed simultaneously in spoken and written form. The spoken part (1) is more general while the written (2) is slightly more specific.

(1)   *Poland is shown as a model in Europe* (spoken)

(2)   *ECONOMIC GROWTH IN SPITE OF THE SECOND WAVE OF CRISIS* (written)

When the pictures are used they simultaneously visualize, for example, the number of new hospitals that can potentially be built with the help of EU subsidies. The effect of such a strategy is two-fold; on the one hand the pictures effectively visualize the benefits of the subsidies, on the other hand it is naturally eye-catching. Any additional movement on the screen grabs the attention of the viewers. It is a similar story with the written text, which relates to what is said. It may seem to demand effort but actually, again, it is eye-catching and makes the viewers process it longer, and therefore the message becomes more persuasive, and possibly stays in the memory longer.

Another change in the strategy is concentrating more on building the party's own image, by mainly speaking about themselves, than on presenting future solutions or on convincing the viewers about their policies. Obviously this is contrasted with a negative image of the opponent and together accounts for the main means of running the campaign. The parties criticize the main opponent, by threatening (yet another strategy) the public with

a picture of the disastrous prospect of the other party taking power. What is new in the criticizing is that one party criticizes the very campaign strategy of the other. While, on the whole, criticism is implied, mainly implied strongly, occasionally the criticism is expressed openly. The openness and directness is pushed to its limits when one party, in order to show the broken promises of the other, not only uses its material from the previous campaign, but also carries on further by employing the same actress or actor who is now disillusioned with the current situation. Such a strategy brings benefits that would not be otherwise available; generally the viewers would have great difficulty in recalling all the necessary encyclopaedic entries to complete the explicature describing the previous campaign, and even if it were possible it would not be as suggestive as presenting the material itself. In this way the party provides the necessary mutual cognitive environment and achieves its goal very effectively, and with no additional processing effort, making the utterances maximally relevant.

3.2 *Style of the party political broadcasts*

The main trend in the style that can be noticed is the shift from the realism of the world to the idealism of a cartoon. The material discussion, which was more demanding for the audience in processing effort, has been gradually replaced with quick and easy information requiring low processing effort. On one hand, the style may simply reflect the expectations of the target audience who are used to easy-to-process content on TV or in tabloids. On the other, however, it might be the result of the parties' need to increase the relevance of the utterances by lowering the processing effort. Since the stylistic features described below increase in form and in intensity from one election campaign to the next, all the analyzed campaigns are presented in one section of the paper.

From one election campaign to the next the problems and the solutions are presented in more and more general form. The language used is more and more colloquial, everyday-like. They no longer concentrate on the technicalities of the solutions to be introduced, but vaguely promise to solve the current problems in the country's public life. The parties' attention is shifted, however, to building images and with each election the images are more elaborate and more intense. The picture and the text are chosen carefully, first to refer to the expectations of the target voters and secondly to be compatible with the party's preferences. Invoking emotions seems to be the main goal of the images produced; first negative then positive emotions are evoked. The negative emotions (often referring to the opposing party) are driven to a climax only to show the party's policy as a natural solution, accompanied by very positive images; in all the PPBs the final scenes are always positive. From one campaign to the next the means of evoking emotions become stronger and stronger. This may suggest that the stimulus needs to be stronger to be effective and bring enough cognitive effects to be relevant; the audience seems to be less and less sensitive in this respect. The negative one becomes drastic while the positive images are almost idyllic, creating a cartoon version of life. The fragment below is a good illustration of the mechanisms used; the party is even implying that the opposing party's negligence in failing to construct roads quickly enough makes them responsible for the deaths on the roads.

> For the last two years the situation of the public sector has <u>worsened drastically</u>. Doctors and nurses <u>to earn a living</u> have to take up several jobs. Teachers <u>cannot make ends meet</u>, patients cannot afford their medicines, hospitals go bankrupt. This year <u>less</u>

than 8 km of motorways were opened, over the last two years almost 11000 died on the roads, during the last two years nearly 2 million Poles left the country to find better jobs. Soon they will come back as work will pay off here, we will be treated by well paid doctors and nurses, well paid teachers will teach our children; and well paid policemen will care about our safety. Along the safe roads there will be new stations and swimming pools. (2007 campaign)

The repeating reference to the past two year period is a reference to the time of the opposing party's government; in this way one party implies the opponent's responsibility for the problems presented. The contrasting part starting with *soon* naturally refers to the time after the elections when the party wins, and the covert message (Kitis 1999) is that the voters responsibility is to choose the party if that idyllic picture is to come to life.

3.3 *Content of the party political broadcasts*

In the section devoted to the content of the PPBs Relevance Theory is applied to the amount and type of information conveyed. Here we look at the type of encyclopaedic knowledge the voter needs to access to form explicature of the utterances used. The distinction of political, strict political and general knowledge is used as presented above. What is more, a less specific distinction of general and specific information is also made to grasp the changes in the discourse analyzed.

In 1998 the audience often needs to access strictly political knowledge in the encyclopaedic entry to interpret the PPBs; however, the ratio systematically drops making the message easy to process for the average viewer, but less informative. Political knowledge is more difficult to access since normally it is not often used by the average viewer increasing the processing effort and automatically reducing the relevance of the utterance. As the high processing effort is not balanced with additional cognitive effects, it seems that the majority of viewers are not able to access entries for strictly political concepts. Therefore politicians try to present complex matters using simple terminology, but still they do not even try to come close to the merits of the problem. Therefore, not surprisingly, the parties shy away from using concepts that are rooted in strictly political knowledge to lower the processing effort and increase the relevance of the PPBs. What takes over are the catchphrases used notoriously by the news media (e.g. *Lower taxes, simplify taxes*, *create new jobs, EU subsidies*), they are not developed into even a very general presentation of the problems and solutions. Therefore the majority of concepts used are rooted in general political knowledge or, recently even more often, in general non-political knowledge, where the main issues are of rather social and economic character.

3.4 *The implicated content of the party political broadcasts*

The content that is not expressed openly is conveyed by implicatures which are either strong, middle or weak. Strong implicature is always speaker intended and the relevance of an utterance is gained by virtue of the strong implicature. Middle implicatures are partially intended by the speaker, there is some responsibility of the hearer for recovering them and the relevance of an utterance comes from both the implicature and from the explicature. In weak implicatures the hearer is solely responsible for deriving them (even though the hearer treats them as intended by the speaker) and the relevance of an utterance is obtained with hardly any help from the weak implicature.

It is vital to realize the kind of target audience such PPBs have; the parties aim the messages at an audience who are either their (strong) supporters or a group of voters who have not yet decided who to vote for. The PPBs are intended to make the first group stronger (and even equip them for private discussions) and to convince the second to possibly vote for the party. The PPBs are not aimed at the opponents as they would not possibly arrive at the interpretations intended by the party (but the opposite). Another important aspect implicatures bring is the fact that what is implied is not so readily questioned, allowing them to communicate some content while avoiding responsibility for an open statement and making possible a denial of the party having the intention to communicate some content. Finally it also requires reasoning, so attention is held longer and the statements are potentially more persuasive.

3.4.1 *The 1998 election campaign*
In the implicature analysis we also look at the political content brought by the context; that is the knowledge that needs to be activated in order to derive implicatures. In the materials coming from 1998 the implicatures are numerous, which is explained by the format of the PPBs: there is a studio and 2-4 interlocutors having a conversation. Therefore the implicatures arise in the course of the conversation between the hosts and the guests; the Implicatures are mainly political but there are cases of completely non political implicatures that indicate some irony and sense of humour of the speaker. However, below there is an example (3) of a political implicature.

(3)   This means that all those unfavourable phenomena broke out in a way in '98 which   caused such great discontent.
[3a]   The previous government is responsible for the bad situation in Polish agriculture now.
[3b]   The present government is not responsible for the present situation in Polish agriculture.

To be able to formulate the implicatures [3a] and [3b] one has to have the basic knowledge of the political situation in Poland in 1998.

3.4.2 *The 2005 election campaign*
Interpretation of the PPBs coming from 2005 required a smaller number of implicatures: that is, less of the content is implied. Such a change is mainly due to the change of the structure of the PPBs themselves, which no longer had the format of a meeting in a studio. Therefore there was no interaction between hosts and guests that would need this kind of interpretation. Another result of the change in format is the increase in the political content implied, as the typically non-political interactions among the hosts and guests have been replaced with typically political content of the PPBs. There are cases when strict political knowledge is activated for interpretation of the PPBs. However, at that point there are no strong implicatures necessary to interpret the political content. The example (4) below illustrates the type of political knowledge activated for implicature formation.

(4)   I was talking about a 40% unemployment rate among 20-year olds which is a visible sign of a failure.
[4a]   Whose failure? – the previous government
[4b]   The party criticizes the previous government

The implicature [4a] requires finding in the encyclopaedic knowledge the entry for *the previous government*, witch is in fact the same as the main rival of the party producing the program. In this way the party strongly implies that the previous government is to be held responsible for the high rate of unemployment.

3.4.3 *The 2007 election campaign*

The PPBs coming from 2007 show a further increase of the implied content compared with PPBs coming from 2005; the number of implicatures increases. More of the general political content is implied while the strict political content is less and less implied. The evident drop in the implicatures involving strict political knowledge is the result of their high processing effort leading to lowering of the relevance of the utterance. Naturally the place is taken by the implicatures which need only the premises rooted in general political knowledge. The implied content is also occasionally non-political (social, economic). However, there is a slight decrease in implicatures involving non-political knowledge, as the politicians prefer to use their time to the full, and even when they talk about economics it is still used for political ends. The content implied is mainly concentrated on everyday problems but the implications refer to plans or future decisions which are essentially political. So the problems are presented in such a way that the viewers' attention is attracted by the everyday problems, which only later lead to political decisions; never vice versa. The example (5) below shows an apparent reference to the condition of the public sector, which in its essence affects the everyday lives of the citizens but the implication is rather to criticize the opponent.

(5)   For the last two years the situation of the public sector has worsened drastically...
[5a]   'the last two years' – the time when the other party was in power
[5b]   the party criticizes the previous government

What is more, what follows the criticism is a rather idyllic picture of the future when the party takes over government; little is said about the ways of achieving the ideal situation (see example in section 2.3). Instead the party uses the strong implicature [6a], [6b] to encourage the viewers to vote.

(6)   We just have to win the elections
[6a]   you have to vote for us,
[6b]   you are responsible for the result of the elections

The statement (6) is also a case of covert communication (Tanaka 1994, Durán Martínez 2005) defined as persuading the hearer that the implicature is true without asserting the fact. It is a very forceful means of persuasion as the content implied may be easily denied by the party.

3.4.4 *The 2011 election campaign*

The political content is implied strongly and more often in 2011 than in the 2007 PPBs. The increase (from 2007) in the intensity of both the quality and the quantity of implicatures is a sign of the ever fiercer nature of these PPBs. Though the number of implicatures increases slightly, the majority of the strong implicatures involve general political knowledge. They express strong criticism of the other party, which clearly shows that the battle between the parties is predominantly fought by implicatures. A great number of middle implicatures are used to build a positive picture of the party. In the example below the first sentence (7) is

uttered by the Prime Minister (the leader of the party) and the second (8) sentence is simultaneously displayed on the screen. There is a kind of double input simultaneously through the audio and visual channels of two closely related explicatures; they are joined and strengthen one another when the implicatures are formed.

(7)   If we can further work in peace and harmony.

(8)   COOPERATION WITH THE PRESIDENT

[7a]   the government was not able to work in peace and harmony before
[8a]   the government is able to cooperate with the president
[7b]   we hope/ want to stay in power
[8b]   the government will not cooperate with the president if the rival party wins
[7c]   there will be no peace and harmony if the rival party wins

Another aspect of such double input is that the viewers input system is forced to be more active and in this way the attention is held more strongly. The importance of this fact cannot be overestimated, as typically watching TV at home is not free from distractions, so possibly if one channel is momentary blocked it can always be supported by the other one. It may certainly increase the processing effort but it is balanced with the greater cognitive effects, and importantly for the parties it has the advantage of arresting the attention stronger than one-channel input. We can also notice here a case of covert communication (Tanaka 1994, Durán Martínez 2005) of an assumption that the responsibility for the peaceful situation in Polish political life is partly laid on the audience, who should then vote for the party.

4. Conclusion

This overall, however brief, analysis points to several concluding remarks. It seems valid to claim that the Theory of Relevance proves successful in analyzing political discourse and, more importantly, explains the practical choices of the producers of PPBs. In the period analyzed there are several prominent changes in the PPBs, all supporting two main trends. On one hand, the PPBs become simpler in the form and content, lowering the processing effort, and on the other, they become more intense, increasing the strength of the stimulus reaching the viewer, and to further enhance the effect the stimulus is often changed from positive to negative. The latter change increases the cognitive effects. Both of the trends maximize the relevance of the utterances.

The simplification of the content takes several forms. The most evident is the shift from specialized concepts to very general concepts; that is, from concepts rooted in strict political knowledge to those rooted in general political knowledge or even rooted in general knowledge with no political content activated. However, in order to convey more complex (strictly) political notions the PPBs provide the necessary background knowledge quite explicitly in order to ensure the mutual cognitive environment for the intended interpretation of the utterance, in this way increasing the relevance of the utterance. The shortening of the length of an average utterance is also taken as a simplification of the form as in this way the processing effort is lowered.

The intensification of the content is also realized in several ways. The stimulus that is sent is made stronger either by using vivid, emotional images, very positive or very negative

(contrast being the most effective intensifying element) or by using stronger implicatures. In both cases the stimulus is strengthened to achieve greater cognitive effects and ensure maximization of relevance. Using stronger implicatures (mainly middle and strong implicatures) certainly evokes stronger emotions in the viewers but is also a powerful tool of persuasion, especially when the implicatures are part of the covert communication.

Finally the battle between parties from one election campaign to the next becomes fiercer. Technology enables them to react quickly to the opponent's PPBs, making the reactions stronger, more open (e.g. showing broken promises of the opponent's previous campaign or attacking the very campaign strategy of the opponent). Once more it seems that the parties use stronger stimuli to achieve greater cognitive effects which lead to maximization of relevance.

To conclude, it seems that the politicians have replaced specialized political debate with building images (of their own party), creating climax and evoking emotions and filled PPBs with more direct persuasive methods. However, the general experience, at least of a section of the electorate in Poland, is that the battle has gone too far and the methods are too strong, which in effect lowers the relevance and discourages them from voting at all.

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