

Łukasz Kumięga / Magdalena Nowicka-Franczak (eds.)

# **Analysing Discourse, Analysing Poland**

The Case of a Political Interview



**unipress**

# Interdisziplinäre Verortungen der Angewandten Linguistik

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Magdalena Nowicka-Franczak / Łukasz Kumiega

## **Introduction: Single case, multiple interpretations. Methodological challenges of discourse studies**

The present volume has been inspired by an online methodological workshop called “Homogeneous research subject, heterogeneous research process, and inquisitive meta-reflection. An interdisciplinary approach to studying discourse” (24–25 June 2021), organized jointly by the Silesian University of Technology and the University of Łódź. The very cooperation between two centres of such distinct characteristics may pose certain methodological dilemmas, which come down to the questions of the status, relevance, and scope of quantitative and qualitative modes of research, although some preferences in modern academia (regardless of its particular institutional embodiments) are rather evident. Consequently, the workshop and the texts included in the present volume essentially offer insights of methodological nature, which are discussed at greater length in the latter part of this introduction. Our intention has been for this collection to provide an added value by way of exploring a number of methodological perspectives which arise from the appreciation of the qualitative approach and its potential.

We also hope to be offering observations of cognitive and critical character that will reach out to a wider audience thanks to the language of publication. The authors of the texts collected in this volume chose as their research subject – or as the point of departure for the study proper – a televised interview, which at the time of its broadcast was hotly debated by all those invested in Poland’s political life. This interview was granted by Jarosław Kaczyński, leader of the rightist-conservative party Law and Justice [Pol. PiS], to Tomasz Lis, back then Poland’s most recognizable and influential political journalist, during the latter’s show “Tomasz Lis na żywo” [Tomasz Lis live], which aired on Channel 2 of the Polish public broadcaster (TVP 2) on 3 October 2011<sup>1</sup>.

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1 The show is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0jKUuSgvx0I>.

Ten years on, from a present-day perspective, it is easier to notice the significance of this interview and its dual character. On the one hand, this conversation stands out against Polish political discourse, both contemporarily and at present. It owes its uniqueness to the very fact that Jarosław Kaczyński, leader of the rightist-conservative wing of Polish politics, agreed to an interview with a liberal journalist, who was openly critical of him. After the heavy defeat of PiS in the 2007 general election, and especially after the 10 April 2010 plane crash which killed, among others, his brother Lech, the sitting president, Jarosław Kaczyński was increasingly reluctant to appear in the media which were not in sympathy with his political party. The 3 October 2011 interview is his final conversation with Lis to date. It immediately preceded the still ongoing period of political and media polarization, which ushered in a tradition of refusing to speak to unfriendly media outlets in an effort to create the impression that Poland is split in half by an unbridgeable rift. The politicians' model of "speaking to our very own" was soon adopted by the media, which have since rarely invited proponents of political beliefs that are out of keeping with the outlet's leanings, and do not even profess impartiality. Such avoidance of pluralistic public debate is presently characteristic of the majority of the actors of Poland's political life.

The uniqueness of the 2011 interview also follows from its association with the strategic goals of both interlocutors. Just a few days later, on 9 October, parliamentary election was held. Kaczyński's party was bidding to return to power, having ruled the country between 2005 and 2007. Kaczyński served as Prime Minister between 2006 and 2007 and was ousted following the snap election of 21 October 2007. Kaczyński was hoping that PiS would form a majority government, without having to again forge problematic coalitions. However, the 41.51% of the vote went to his main rival, the centrist Civic Platform [Platforma Obywatelska, PO], with PiS scoring just 32.11%. PO president Donald Tusk formed a coalition government with the conservative Polish People's Party [Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe, PSL], while PiS moved to the opposition. Many factors contributed to that defeat: from scandals and frictions in the PiS coalition government, to ignoring social and professional groups' demands for improved standard of living, to popular concerns about the international perception of Poland under the rule of parties holding ultra-conservative views on ethical issues. Kaczyński did himself no favours with a televised debate with Donald Tusk on 12 October 2007, having performed considerably worse than his opponent. In 2011, Kaczyński refused to take part in another debate with Tusk, but during the election campaign, he avoided radical antagonism toward PO. By speaking to Lis, he was hoping to sway the undecided voters of centrist persuasion. Lis, in turn, through his criticism of PiS, was trying to shatter Kaczyński's persona of a moderate politician, which the latter had created for the purpose of the campaign.

Yet another argument testifying to the uniqueness of this interview is its polyvocality. It is a consequence of the aforesaid strategic goals which the interlocutors hoped to achieve by its means. During the conversation, its participants refer to each other and to what was said by third parties (political allies and opponents), assume the roles of spokespersons for antagonistic social groups, and on two occasions, Lis quotes Kaczyński's past statements to prove that his guest is being dishonest. This property of communication between Lis and Kaczyński has little to do with Mikhail Bakhtin's polyphony, since the voices invoked in the course of the interview are neither autonomous nor independent. These voices – referring to a variety of issues and axioms – are being constantly validated, invalidated, decontextualized, recontextualized, and then, crucially, instrumentalized. This polyphonous interview touches upon multiple aspects of social, cultural, and economic conflicts, and encourages attempts to review the dynamics of Poland's political conflict and to make predictions as to its future shape.

On the other hand, this is an interview typical of Polish political discourse. We are looking at two flamboyant speakers standing on the opposite sides of the barricade. They are not interested in exchanging substantive arguments, but in claiming a rhetorical victory and publicly discrediting the other interlocutor. Another reason to analyse this interview ten years on is its relevance. The topics raised and the dividing lines drawn were, are, and will long be crucial for Polish political discourse – this is particularly true about the conflicting views on Poland's European relations: do we go hand in hand with the West, or do we go alone? Thus, looking at this interview, one can – as suggested by the title of this volume – research a variety of topics, from the discursive picture of Poland, the Poles, or Polishness, to political and national interests, diverging paths of modernization of a post-socialist state, to the condition of Polish elites.

## The social and political context of the interview

It is 2011 again. Poland has been a member of the European Union for six years and the country's modernization is mostly subsidized through EU funds. Two thirds of Polish households have internet access (GUS 2012), but the primary source of information for middle-aged and elderly Poles is still television. Since 2007, the country has been ruled by the PO-PSL coalition, which is implementing neoliberal economic and social policies, and in foreign relations, the government favours close cooperation with the European Union and the United States. The authorities take pride in the fact that Polish economy has been largely unscathed by the economic crisis, which has been ravaging the EU, and the eurozone in

particular, since 2008. Following the tragic death of Lech Kaczyński, the new president is Bronisław Komorowski, supported by PO.

However, large sections of the political and social stage are sceptical of the pro-European and neoliberal reforms of the country. The public discourse of the post-transition period has rekindled the dissensus concerning the proper axiological order and the preferable modernization path, a controversy which goes back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century (see Jedlicki 1988, Krasnodębski 2003). On top of that, the discourse-manifested social antagonism has set in. In the course of the political transition period, three main narratives concerning Poland's modernization developed: the neoliberal model, the conservative model, and the social-democratic model (Anioł 2015). In the discourse of the proponents of a particular narrative, those who did not espouse it appeared as the (a)moral civilizational enemies, or even an inferior human "race" (see Buchowski 2006, Bobako 2010, Kubiak 2017).

This "civilizational" antagonism came in multiple installments. In 2005, in the context of the election rivalry between PiS and PO, the notion of the "solidary Poland" was pitted against that of the "liberal Poland". By means of the nomenclature promoted by PiS, the rhetorical division into the bourgeois, market-oriented Poland and the provincial, prosocial Poland – or into the so-called "Poland A" and "Poland B" – acquired a political dimension (Popielarz 2011, Obacz 2018). Polish public discourse and social rifts were also greatly affected by *the Smolensk tragedy*, that is, the 10 April 2010 crash of the presidential plane carrying Lech Kaczyński, his wife Maria, and a few dozen representatives of Polish political and military elites. The Polish delegation was traveling to commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Katyn massacre. The tragic aviation incident was promptly mythologized by the rightist political camp, providing foundations for the so-called Smolensk myth and the conspiracy theory of a political assassination, allegedly carried out by the Russian Federation in collusion with Polish liberals. This legend channelled a number of other divisions running in Polish society, including the distinction between the *victims* and the *beneficiaries* of the political transition (mostly in its economic dimension), and between the advocates of Catholic traditionalism and lay progressiveness, giving political subjectivity to the former (see Jaskułowski 2012). Moving to the forefront of the conflict was the issue of aligning oneself with a particular political camp. According to sociologist Jacek Raciborski (2019), since 2011, Polish politics and its discourse have been revolving around the binary division into PiS and its loyal supporters, and anti-PiS, that is, the opposition parties and vocal critics of PiS. Since 2015, when PiS reclaimed power and won the election again in 2019, its government has introduced a number of systemic changes which infringe the Polish constitution of 1997. The PiS vs. anti-PiS division is no longer a mere partisan antagonism, having transformed into a civilizational-axiological divi-

sion along the lines of who is right about the institutional framework of the Polish state, what the condition of Polish society is, and which direction it should take.

## Dramatis personae

But in 2011, Jarosław Kaczyński's party was facing an uphill struggle, trying to reclaim power, and his participation in Tomasz Lis' popular show was one of many elements of the election campaign. Kaczyński is a symbolic figure and the grey eminence of modern Polish politics. He was already a notable figure in the 1990s, serving as editor-in-chief of "Tygodnik Solidarność" [Solidarity Weekly] and then as chairman of the Christian-democratic party Porozumienie Centrum [Centre Agreement]. His career accelerated in 2001, when he co-founded Law and Justice with his twin brother Lech Kaczyński. In 2006, he went on to become Prime Minister of the coalition government of PiS, the national-Catholic Liga Polskich Rodzin [League of Polish Families], and national-popular Samoobrona [Self-Defence]. It was then that words such as 'the network' ['układ' in Polish, an alleged conspiracy of post-communist political, economic, and media elites toward taking control of the state affairs] or 'the Fourth Republic' ['Czwarta Rzeczpospolita', the project of a new state, free from 'the network', based on conservative republicanism and the West-independent modernization strategy] became part of public discourse. Linguists argued that Poland was witnessing the re-emergence of the magical language of communist propaganda, i.e., new-speech (Głowiński 2009, Polkowska 2015). After the coalition collapsed in 2007, PiS lost the snap election, but the narrative promoting the suspiciousness of the democratic Third Polish Republic became a fixture of the mainstream debate.

After Lech Kaczyński and his wife were killed in a crash involving the presidential aircraft in Smolensk, Russia, Jarosław's political stature grew as he went into public mourning and legitimized a conspiracy theory about the Smolensk political assassination. In 2011, the year of a parliamentary election, he would repeatedly accuse the ruling liberals of "annihilating the opposition", that is, of resorting to institutionally-supported oppressive measures and curbing political freedom. His party came in second, having garnered just shy of 30% of the vote. Kaczyński's outlook on the government-opposition relations shifted when a second PiS government was formed in 2015, its focus being on the institutional solidification of its own power and replacing the liberal elites with those loyal to the new rulers. In the general election of fall 2015, PiS ran in a coalition with lesser right-wing and Christian-conservative parties, won almost 38% of the ballot, and formed a coalition government under the brand of the United Right (Zjednoczona Prawica). Jarosław Kaczyński opted against becoming prime minister. The job went to PiS vice-chairwoman Beata Szydło, in office between 2015 and 2017,

who was replaced by Mateusz Morawiecki in December 2017. Kaczyński still had the casting vote in shaping the government policies and appointing top officials in public administration. What is more, he holds major sway over the cabinet and policies of president Andrzej Duda, who was elected thanks to the backing of PiS in May 2015, and won his second term five years later (this influence was particularly strong during Duda's inaugural term). Kaczyński is clearly the gray eminence of the post-2015 Polish politics.

The year 2015 also marked a change in the ideological and strategic aspects informing Kaczyński's political activity. Between 2005 and 2007, when PiS was Poland's ruling party for the first time, Kaczyński already started to be perceived as a right-wing populist, rather than a conservatist or Christian democrat. In today's Central-Eastern Europe, Kaczyński, aside from Victor Orbán, is the chief proponent of the so-called non-liberal democracy, which means an evolution toward authoritarianism based on Euroscepticism and moral conservatism (see e.g. Lewandowski / Polakowski 2018, Krastev / Holmes 2019, Kim 2021). The backseat driver of the government and the parliamentary majority, Kaczyński authorized a number of systemic reforms violating the constitutional rule of law (e.g. with regard to appointing judges to the Constitutional Tribunal and the Supreme Court). His party has also made frequent (albeit so far unsuccessful) attempts to muzzle the media outlets unfavorably disposed to PiS. Since 2016, the activities of the party have drawn criticism from the European Union, which has issued formal reminders to the Polish government concerning the restoration of the rule of law.

Additionally, Kaczyński's party has stirred up the existing axiological conflicts surrounding human and civil rights. In particular, it has targeted sexual minorities, transgender persons, refugees, and women. On 22 October 2020, the Polish constitutional court, *de facto* controlled by PiS, ruled on the invalidity of one of the three scenarios permitting abortion, i.e. the severe and irreversible fetal defect. As a result, Polish abortion law has become one of the strictest such laws in the world. The ruling sparked mass demonstrations in Warsaw and other Polish cities. Protesters had camped in front of Kaczyński's Warsaw residence for many days. According to a poll conducted two years after the ruling, 27% of the respondents believe that Kaczyński is directly responsible for curbing women's rights (arb 2022).

The discourse of the leader of PiS has often been the subject of critical analysis (see: e.g. Jakubowska 2011, Dziekan 2018, Paluchowski / Podemski 2019). Kaczyński has repeatedly spoken about ideological subjects, perpetuating a patriarchal, anti-emancipatory, and discriminatory discourse, which has radicalized over the years. It introduces a basic social division into "us" (i.e. the Poles supporting PiS and the traditional values anchored in Catholic ethics) and the cultural aliens, "them" (i.e. the opposition parties, their supporters, feminists,

and sexual, religious, and ethnic minorities). This volume's release date coincides with Polish general election. Given the increased opprobrium heaped upon PiS, Kaczyński's party seems unlikely to command the support of the 2015 and 2019 levels, but it is still polling relatively strong (between 32 and 38%, according to various polls of August 2023).

\* \* \*

During the 2011 interview with Lis, some of Kaczyński's contemporary associates and allies are mentioned. At that time, a figure of considerable influence was Antoni Macierewicz. In communist Poland, he was a notable activist of the democratic opposition and one of the founders of the Workers' Defence Committee (KOR). In post-communist Poland, he was a member of a number of national-Christian parties and a tireless denunciator of former informants of the communist secret service. Many of his accusations were completely unfounded. He had served on Kaczyński's government as a Deputy Minister of National Defence and was subsequently appointed head of the Military Counterintelligence Service. He presided over a parliamentary subcommittee for ascertaining the facts surrounding the crash of the government Tu-154 aircraft in Smolensk and made a major contribution to popularizing the conspiracy theory as to the assassination of President Lech Kaczyński. For the liberals and the leftists, Macierewicz stands for right-wing dogmatism and the conspiracy-tainted perception of the world. An equally controversial figure, also mentioned during the interview, is Zbigniew Ziobro, back then a vice-chairman of PiS, who served in the dual role of Minister of Justice and Public Prosecutor General between 2005 and 2007 and used his office for political struggle (he was expelled from PiS in November 2007, and has been a coalition partner of PiS since 2015, as leader of the Solidary Poland [Solidarna Polska] party). Anna Fotyga, Kaczyński's Foreign Minister, was a symbol of incompetence for the opponents of PiS. Enjoying somewhat more favourable perception was Zyta Gilowska, who served as a Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance on the first government of PiS. During the interview, Lis also asks Kaczyński about father Tadeusz Rydzyk, a Catholic media mogul and a clergyman-businessman, who openly supported PiS, but at the same time publicly admonished the party. Lis mentions a situation from 2007, when Rydzyk called First Lady Maria Kaczyńska "a witch" after she spoke against the tightening of Poland's abortion law (which was already very stringent). Toward the end of the interview, mention is also made of "Staruch" [old man], which is the nickname of Piotr Staruchowicz, the leader of the supporters of Legia Warsaw football club. He embodied the problem of radical and aggressive football hooligans. In 2011, Donald Tusk publicly accused him of

inciting physical and verbal violence among supporters and of acts of criminal damage, and promised that his government would crack down on hooligans.

\* \* \*

Let us now have a closer look at the host of the show. Tomasz Lis became a professional journalist for TVP, the state-owned television company, at the inception of the democratic Poland in 1990. His career was synonymous with success in the new capitalistic meritocracy. He interviewed top politicians and was a US correspondent before transferring to the commercial liberal outlet, TVN, where he was a leading opinion journalist. In 2004, following media speculation concerning his candidacy in a presidential election, which he did not dismiss, TVN terminated his contract. He became channel executive at Polsat, TVN's fiercest competitor. In 2008, he returned to TVP and for eight years hosted the program "Tomasz Lis na żywo", as part of which he interviewed Kaczyński in 2011. "Tomasz Lis na żywo" is a chronicle of the eight years of Civic Platform's rule. Even though Lis did not openly support Donald Tusk's administration, his program was consistent with the agenda of the liberals.

For many years, he was the embodiment of information media's mainstream and its political and class profile: the pro-European inhabitants of big cities who adopted a paternalistic approach to the lower classes and the countryside, but at the same time, they held rather traditional moral values. Although Lis has received numerous accolades, he sparks negative emotions among the right- and left-leaning audiences alike. In 2019, he suffered a stroke and returned to the media after completing rehabilitation, but his stature has diminished. This trend was already visible in his losing ground among the young generations of Poles: toward the end of its lifespan, "Tomasz Lis na żywo" was the preferred choice of one in ten spectators between 16 and 49 years of age (eight years before, this figure stood at one in seven, see Pallus 2016). Since 2015, Lis has supported the citizens protesting against PiS, the women demonstrating after the tightening of the abortion law, and the LGBT+ movement; however, all these groups perceive his stance as overly cautious.

Around the time when we were editing this volume, a scandal erupted with Tomasz Lis at its centre. On 24 May 2022, without any previous indication and to the surprise of his closest associates, he stepped down as editor-in-chief of the "Newsweek Polska" weekly, owned by the Ringier Axel Springer company. A month later, the Wirtualna Polska online news service published an article by Szymon Jadczak (2022). Based on documents, mails, and anonymous statements from the employees of the weekly, he claimed that Lis had repeatedly mobbed his subordinates, and that these cases were reported to the owners of "Newsweek Polska" from 2018. Soon afterward, rumours started to circulate in media circles

that the efficient cause of Lis' dismissal was his texts to a female employee of Ringier Axel Springer, which potentially amounted to sexual harassment (Głuchowski 2022). Lis has denied all accusations. He has not been officially charged on either count. Under Polish law, the case of Lis – who is no longer a “Newsweek” employee – can be decided in court only if he himself brings a suit, citing his baseless dismissal or libel (Orliński 2022). However, he has not taken this step, which provokes even more questions about his integrity. Some of the media outlets for which he worked as a political commentator have put their cooperation on hold. In August 2022, the Society of Journalists (Towarzystwo Dziennikarskie), one of the associations of Poland's media people, published an open letter to all the parties involved, calling for both ascertaining the reasons behind Lis' dismissal and explaining why he was subsequently suspended by the outlets he had cooperated with, even though the accusations he faces have not been officially reviewed or proven (Blumsztajn 2022).

In the autumn, it was reported that Lis might return to TOK FM radio as a political commentator, but this was hampered by the journalist's subsequent stroke. Leaving aside the state of Lis' health (despite his stroke, he is active on social media, especially on Twitter), it seems that his time as Poland's most influential journalist is perhaps coming to an end, the interview analysed pre-saging this demise. The 2011 show still belongs to the era of the profoundly patriarchal public discourse, whose centre stage was taken by dominant and irreconcilable men, for whom the strategic end justified the means. This is even more evident from the perspective of the year 2022, when this sort of discourse is countenanced increasingly less often by the public.

What about the political significance of the 2011 interview? It is difficult to prove the direct impact of media interviews and political debates on citizens' electoral choices. According to some theories, John Fitzgerald Kennedy defeated Republican candidate Richard Nixon in the 1960 presidential election, because he had a “way” with television and took full account of the character of this medium before appearing in a series of televised preelection debates, which for the first time in US history preceded the vote (see e.g. McLuhan 1964).

The Polish TV debate of 1988 between Alfred Miodowicz, chairman of the communists-dependent All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions (OPZZ), and Lech Wałęsa, representing the Independent Self-Governing Trade Union “Solidarity”, is seen by scholars not just as a symbol of the ultimate delegitimization of the communist rule in Poland, but also as one of a number of events which brought together representatives of the Polish United Workers' Party and “Solidarity” for the Round Table talks a few months later. Fast forward to 1995: Wałęsa, the sitting president running for the second term in office, offered a fierce *ad personam* argumentation in a debate with Aleksander Kwaśniewski, the candidate of the post-communist left. This performance, which was received unfavourably by the

commentators and the audience alike, may have contributed to the electoral defeat of the former leader of “Solidarity” (see Budzyńska-Daca 2015, pp. 163–177).

After 2001, the gap between reality and its media representations started to grow rapidly. The 9/11 attacks put violence at the central stage of the media spectacle, and politicians all over the world gave themselves the right to ignore facts and to adopt cynical criteria for telling the truth from the lies. The watershed moment for Polish political discourse was the aforesaid Smolensk crash. This aviation accident not only altered Poland’s political life, but also sanctioned the practice of replacing discussions on objective causes of unforeseen events with conspiracy theories (Czech 2015, 2019).

In this context, the social significance of the interview which the chairman of PiS granted to Lis five days before the parliamentary election is uncertain. Media outlets sympathizing with PiS announced that Kaczyński had “thrashed” Lis, while the latter argued that he managed to reveal the “true colours” of his interlocutor. On parting ways with the state-owned broadcaster a few years later, Lis pointed to this interview as one of the most important moments of his journalistic career, implying that this conversation won Donald Tusk and his Civic Platform an additional few percentage points at the ballot thanks to the votes of the previously hesitant electorate (Lis 2016). In all likelihood, the significance of this interview is overestimated by both sides. It is impossible to rule out that there were indeed some viewers whose choice at the ballot was in some way informed by this TV program. However, it appears that the majority of the audience had formed their opinions about Kaczyński and Lis – and especially about their personalities – before they tuned in to watch the interview, and this was an outcome of the increasing personalization of politics. The 3 October 2011 interview likely solidified the viewers’ previously held beliefs, rather than changing them.

## Methodological challenges

Methodology-wise, the chapters of the present volume share the discourse study approach, characterized by inter- and trans-disciplinary potential, while the common ground they cover topic-wise is the interview on the “Tomasz Lis na żywo” show, which may direct researchers toward the theoretically and methodologically capacious category of discourse. The obvious starting point for this discussion is the unique cognitive and social added value of discursive approaches, which may concern at least three aspects:

- reconstruction and uncovering of ostensibly obvious discourses, scholarly included (critical analyses of extremist far-right and far-left discourses, as well

as those which attempt to somewhat shift this perspective and point to the excluding nature of some elements within neoliberal or left-wing discourses),

- identification of those elements and meanings which are not explicitly articulated in discourses,
- theoretical and methodological integration of diverse research perspectives, courtesy of the multidimensionality of the very category of discourse.

These aspects may be further dissected in search for various research practices of discursive nature (cf. Nowicka-Franczak, Kumiega 2020). Following Hans-Christoph Koller (1999), we shall adopt as the ordering categories the concepts of homogeneity and heterogeneity, which may apply to both the object of study and the research process. With regard to the former, heterogeneity and homogeneity will be seen in genre, thematic, and ideological terms. The latter are about the labelling of particular discourse as e.g. extreme-right, extreme-left, or neoliberal. Meanwhile, the research process may take a specialized turn, and its value is then considered in terms of homogeneous, highly-specialized theories, methods, and tools characteristic of a particular academic field. This tendency dominates in research practice.

On the other hand, there are calls to appreciate and embrace the special significance of multi-, inter-, or even trans-disciplinary approaches. Multi-disciplinarity is the literal concurrence of theoretical and methodological perspectives. Inter-disciplinarity is a slightly more complex procedure, which stresses the dialog between these perspectives. Finally, trans-disciplinarity – being a somewhat idealistic approach which is often disfavoured on grounds of field-specific limitations – postulates a possibility of supra-genre transference and transformation of the theory and methods of one or multiple research fields from the perspective of another or multiple fields. In the present volume, we go for inter-disciplinarity and encourage the intensification of the dialog it promotes, which may open up an opportunity to cross into the most complex and cognitively compelling perspective of trans-disciplinarity.

Theo van Leeuwen identifies three models of inter-disciplinarity: centralistic, pluralistic, and integrational. The first one captures the relations between diverse and autonomous perspectives, with each assuming the central position from which it arranges its relations with the remaining disciplines. While the centralistic model is oriented to capitalizing on methods of other disciplines, the pluralistic model is focused on a research problem thought to be shared by multiple disciplines, but these are still seen as separate, independent fields. The integrational model, which served as the beacon during our workshop, recognizes that no discipline can solve research problems on its own: rather, disciplines are interconnected, and it is only under a project integrating various

field-specific approaches that these problems can be successfully addressed (Van Leeuwen 2005: pp. 3ff).

Koller (1999: 195), referring to qualitative studies, writes about two strategies of facing challenges posed by research procedures: 1) the maximalization of interpretations with a view to their critical verification and gradual reduction in the spirit of objective hermeneutics, 2) triangulation, seen as the juxtaposition of various interpretations to enable their mutual complementation. In the context of discourse studies, both approaches seem problematic because of the aforesaid interpretive reduction or the concurrence of various perspectives, which are often brought together in a cumulative and simplistic manner.

But Koller (1999) goes one step further and looks for a third, and even fourth way, which would take account of, and crucially, provide support to, the added value of interpretive variegation. He refers to linguistic theory and the concepts of Jean-François Lyotard, where discourse is treated as one whole composed of different sentences combined with each other according to specific rules, which means that particular kinds of discourses are incommensurable. This incommensurability may assume two forms: along the lines of conflict in the legal sense (Ger. *Rechtsstreit*) or along the lines of conflict in the sense of contradiction (*Widerstreit*). The latter is seen as a controversy which cannot be resolved. This controversy is particularly interesting in the context of a research process, because it activates two of the latter's dimensions, referred to as sceptical and innovative. The former consists in accepting and recognizing incommensurability in the sense of contradiction, and leaves the controversy running. This is reminiscent of the triangulation approach, where different interpretations co-exist on equal footing. Meanwhile, the innovative way is about analysing the incommensurable discourses (which are seen as interpretations under a research process) in search for that which could not be expressed through them, and strives for finding an "idiom" which would enable articulating the unsaid. This approach broadens cognition and as such is more theoretically and methodologically stimulating, even if it requires adopting a panoramic and, first and foremost, thoughtful perspective.

An attempt to follow the latter approach was the "Migration and intercultural communication" conference, held in Hamburg in 1994. The participants discussed the case of a conversation between African doctoral student Kalu and German reviser Bert, which concerned Kalu's doctoral dissertation. The main idea of the conference was to study a single empirical material – a transcript of Kalu and Bert's conversation – from various theoretical and methodological perspectives. Koller (1999) offered two interpretations, in line with the aforesaid approach grounded in linguistic theory and Lyotard's discourse. The first referred to ethnomethodology and conversation analysis (Czyżewski 1996), while the other was theoretically couched in the ethnological, historical, and linguistic

debate on orality and literacy (Hartung 1996). Following Lyotard, Koller juxtaposes these two interpretations and points to three options: one where they complement each other, one where they are in conflict in the sense of contradiction, and a third one, which is about identifying the interpretive moment which can be sensed in both interpretations, but was not explicitly stated. Thus, the genre homogeneity of the study object and the homogeneity of the research process may be productively enlisted in the service of identifying heterogeneity which applies to meta-reflection on the research procedure.

A similar approach was taken by “Workshops in Discourse Analysis”, started by Marek Czyżewski. Their goal was to enhance cooperation between various research centres in Poland and between representatives of various disciplines which are concerned with discourse (<http://analizadyskursu.pl/o-konsorcjum>). A return to this model – which broadens the sociological and linguistic perspective and is additionally reinforced by the Hamburg approach – was precisely the interdisciplinary path we wanted to follow during this workshop, especially in light of the current challenges of social and political nature. We were hoping that it would see the interview in question analysed from various research perspectives and thus – in line with Koller (1999) – offer interdisciplinary insights, which would contribute to identifying at least three paths of conducting an in-depth meta-research and meta-interpretive procedure:

- the path of mutual complementation,
- the path of conflict in the sense of contradiction,
- the path of identifying the interpretation’s unuttered underlying assumptions.

The workshop has clearly demonstrated the complexity of the methodological postulates put forward and thus opened up opportunities for further methodological exploration. Still, it has captured a number of essential issues, which were: meta-methodological (see the text by Marek Czyżewski), trans-disciplinary (Magdalena Nowicka-Franczak), (para-)critical (Jerzy Stachowiak), strategic-communicative (Artur Lipiński), meta-discursive (Waldemar Czachur & Marta Wójcicka), genre-rhetorical (Agnieszka Budzyńska-Daca & Marcin Kosman), metalinguistic (Magdalena Steciąg & Kaja Rostkowska-Biszczyk), constructivist-educational (Łukasz Kumiega & Przemysław Gębał), interdisciplinary (Violetta Kopińska), and multimodal (Agnieszka Kampka).

## The contents of the volume

The volume opens with the text by Marek Czyżewski (Łódź), entitled “Single case as an object of analysis. In defence of a species threatened with extinction”. It starts a general, meta-methodological discussion on the added value provided by

single case analysis and demonstrates its potential and limitations in the field of discourse studies. This discussion takes place against the background of a broader methodological challenge arising from the primacy of the quantitative approach, and the resulting reductionism, in current scholarly discourse.

In her “The elite and their privilege to speak about themselves and others in public. Post-Foucauldian discourse analysis meets post-Marxist studies”, Magdalena Nowicka-Franczak (Łódź) takes one of the directions pointed to by the workshop, which was devoted to thorough methodological reflection. It may be seen as a first step toward trans-disciplinarity. Her attempt at straddling the post-Foucauldian discourse analysis with post-Marxist research approaches results in a special interpretation of the Lis-Kaczyński interview in the context of a discussion on social and discursive divisions into the elites and the common people.

Jerzy Stachowiak’s (Łódź) “Media performance. Remarks on the possibility of its analysis and critique” takes on the old but still relevant dilemmas and challenges pertaining to the suitability of a critical analysis in social studies (including in the field of discourse analysis) and to the ways in which it is performed. In the spirit of a reflective scholarly dialog, the author details and combines various contributions to this research field.

The volume’s social-sciences section concludes with “Interactional strategies of journalistic neutralism and political equivocation. The case of ‘Tomasz Lis na żywo’ TV show” by Artur Lipiński (Poznań), who looks at various types of journalistic communicative strategies listed by Peter Bull, Steven Clayman, and John Heritage. The author’s analysis demonstrates their distinctive instantiations in the Lis-Kaczyński interview.

The section focusing chiefly on the linguistic perspective opens with Waldemar Czachur (Warszawa) and Marta Wójcicka’s (Lublin) “Analysis of one text from the perspective of discourse linguistics”. In partial reference to Marek Czyżewski’s, this text defends the single case analysis, adducing cognitive and ontic arguments. It describes discourse linguistics as an integrative research program, whose methodology covers four levels of analysis: institutional, substantive, thematic, and ideological/modal.

Invoking the rhetorical perspective, Agnieszki Budzyńska-Daca (Warszawa) and Marcin Kosman’s (Warszawa) “Political interview or debate – the clash of ethoses from the perspective of rhetorical genre studies” adopts the approach of critical genre studies. Importantly, the authors take genre as the departure point for the identification of methodological aspects which structure the debate surrounding the linguistic creation of the reality of the political interview. The analysis centres on a comparison between the Lis-Kaczyński interview and the Lis-Tusk interview, which also took place in 2011.

In “*You can’t speak Polish?* The disintegration of the idea of natural language in public debate (based on the material from an interview of Tomasz Lis with

Jarosław Kaczyński)", Magdalena Steciąg (Zielona Góra) and Kaja Rostkowska-Biszczyńska (Zielona Góra), following the meta-reflective and – to an extent – the metalinguistic tradition, point to three ways toward a linguistic interpretation of the Lis-Kaczyński interview, invoking the notions of *lingua nativa* – *lingua materna* – *lingua fracta*. This is done with a view to identifying symptoms of communicational crisis in the course of a linguistic analysis.

In "From autonomy to inclusion. Discourse studies and constructivist teaching of Polish as a second language in the 'pretext' of Tomasz Lis's interview with Jarosław Kaczyński", Łukasz Kumięga (Gdańsk) and Przemysław Gębał (Gdańsk) look at the Lis-Kaczyński political interview in terms of its educational implications for the constructivist teaching of foreign languages, intercultural and transcultural education, and particularly the teaching of Polish as a second language. Thus, they step outside conventional cognitive models, framing the interview in a context in which it would not be normally studied.

In "The potential of interdisciplinarity in Discourse-Historical Approach. The example of the interview of Tomasz Lis with Jarosław Kaczyński in educational perspective", Violetta Kosińska (Toruń) sees the Lis-Kaczyński interview as a departure point for analyses on two levels. First – somewhat in line with Stachowiak's discussion – she adopts a moderately critical perspective on the interdisciplinary character of the variant of critical discourse analysis proposed by Ruth Wodak. Second, her analysis points to those aspects of the interview under scrutiny which address the explicitly educational perspective.

Agnieszka Kampka's (Warszawa) "The eyes, the smile, the audience – a multimodal analysis from a rhetorical perspective" deliberately serves as the volume's concluding chapter. First, it departs from the prevalent textual-centric approach to the interview and its analyses. It is an account of the verbal, paraverbal, and nonverbal context of the conversation between Lis and Kaczyński and emphasizes its multimodality from a rhetorical angle. The analysis considers the comments of online users posted under the video recording of the interview available on YouTube. The author thus offers another innovative perspective on the research object.

## Conclusions and acknowledgements

To sum up, the Lis-Kaczyński interview analysed in this volume inspired at least three research perspectives, which can be characterized as follows:

- one is purely epistemic, and follows from the multiplicity of interpretations of the text of the interview and of its paraverbal and nonverbal elements; these interpretations come in abundance in each of the analyses included in this volume;

- another relates to field-specificity, since the authors, arguing from their field-specific angles (such as sociology, linguistics, political science, or teaching methodology), attempted to offer a broader analytical perspective and find interdisciplinary solutions;
- finally, a trans-disciplinary perspective was adopted, as the authors, bringing together different approaches, looked for a third interpretive way, or tried to follow paths running outside the frames traditionally imposed by the scenario of a political interview.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude, in the first place to all those who accepted our invitation to test their research expertise against a particular product of linguistic, social, and political reality: this was a tall order, and required considerable academic courage and responsibility. We treat the contributions to this volume as the point of departure for facing similar research and methodological challenges in the future. The workshop itself and the present volume would not have materialized without necessary institutional background and support. We would like to thank Prof. Eng. Wojciech Szkliniarz, Vice-President for Students Affairs and Education of the Silesian Technical University, for the official opening of the workshop and the warm reception of strictly qualitative studies which he gave as a representative of technical sciences. We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Prof. Eng. Arkadiusz Mężyk, President of the Silesian Technical University, dr. hab. Ewa Kusideł, Vice-Dean for Science at the Faculty of Economics and Sociology, University of Łódź, Prof. Kaja Kaźmierska, Head of the Department of Sociology of Culture, Prof. Piotr Stepnowski, President of the University of Gdańsk, and Prof. Urszula Patocka-Sigłowy, Dean of Faculty of Languages, for the financial support granted to this publication, a contribution which will be hopefully offset by this book's import, place of publication, and outreach.

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Marek Czyżewski

## The single case as an object of analysis: In defence of a species threatened with extinction<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

The text at hand has two objectives. The first of these is an attempt to substantiate and validate single case analysis – a type of analysis discredited not only in terms of quantitative research, but also in currently dominant qualitative research trends. It would seem particularly necessary, therefore, to advance a methodological argumentation in light of which it would be possible not only to demonstrate the soundness of single case analyses, but also to reveal the advantages stemming from such an approach. Addressing this aspect, I will refer to ethnomethodological conversation analysis as well as the interpretatively-oriented biographical method. The second objective is served by the presentation of a microanalysis delving into a conversation from the opening to Franz Kafka's novel, *The Trial*. This analysis will generate a conceptualization pertaining especially to the local interconnections between the sequential and categorial orders found within a single conversation. Taking any and all differences into account, it becomes apparent that similar conversational phenomena can be discerned in an interview by the journalist, Tomasz Lis with the politician, Jarosław Kaczyński. Moreover, in all probability, such phenomena can be observed in many other cases of a dialogic tug-of-war.

Keywords: single case analysis, conversation analysis, sequential order, categorial order, Franz Kafka

### Introduction

The chief methodological goal of this article is hinted at in the subtitle: it is to provide arguments in support of the validity of the single case analysis, a research procedure unanimously criticized under the dominant tendencies of quantitative and qualitative models of analysis. Throughout, I will be drawing on the conversation analytic perspective. The methodological argumentation offered is

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