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Internet communication and language dynamics and norm

Summary. The purpose of the research the results of which are presented in the article is to show the language dynamics taking place under the influence of internet communication and in internet communication, on the example of selected syntax structures representing two mechanisms contributing to language dynamization, namely substitution and multiplication. In the article, based on quantitative corpus research in a diachronic approach, impact of internet communication, with observable distortion of the language standard, on the general standard Polish language is proven. An example of that impact is variability of the syntax structures selected for the research in scientific texts, that is in texts representing the highest correctness standards, subject to multiple linguistic corrections.

Keywords: internet communication, language dynamics, language variability, multiplication, Polish language standard, substitution

Komunikacja internetowa a dynamika języka i norma

Streszczenie. Celem badań, których wyniki są przedstawione w artykule, jest pokazanie dynamiki języka, jaka dokonuje się pod wpływem komunikacji internetowej i w komunikacji internetowej na przykładzie wybranych konstrukcji składniowych reprezentujących dwa mechanizmy dynamizujące język: substytucję i multiplikację. Na podstawie kwantytatywnych badań korpusowych w ujęciu diachronicznym w artykule dowodzi się wpływu komunikacji internetowej, w której widoczne jest rozchwianie normy, na standardową polszczyznę ogólną, czego przykładem jest wariantywność wybranych do badań konstrukcji składniowych w tekstach naukowych, a więc w tekstach o najwyższych standardach poprawnościowych, poddanych wielokrotnej korekcie językowej.

Słowa kluczowe: komunikacja internetowa, dynamika języka, wariantywność języka, multiplikacja, norma języka polskiego, substytucja

Introduction

It is an obvious statement that modern new media affect communication behaviours or the conceptualisation of reality within the society. In scientific works dealing with the modern Polish language, researchers note, among others, linguistic phenomena influenced by new media, such as: punctuation, spelling and syntactic characteristics of the spoken language infiltrating the written language, spontaneous enrichment of vocabulary (cf. e.g. other publications in this volume). Changes taking place in the grammatical system under the influence of the sudden social, cultural and communication transformations we have been facing for more than two decades now, are slower, therefore less tangible and less often studied (Graliński, Liberek, Wierzchoń 2018). On the other hand, well described in linguistic literature is the evolution of vocabulary, which is happening at a rapid pace and so, in a way, allows researchers to register and describe the dynamics of lexical changes on an ongoing basis (Jadacka 2001, 2005; Kleszczowa 2012; Waszakowa 2017).

In the next part of the article — as a reference basis for the study of the general standard Polish language - results of an analysis performed based on corpus data are presented, focusing on a quantitative analysis of two syntactic structures and their usage variants: odnośnie do (kogo/ czego) [concerning, relating to (whom/what)] and dedykowany (komu/czemu) [dedicated (to whom/what)]. The purpose of referring to previous studies is to show the impact of internet communication on the distortion of the language standard as regards both those structures¹. Data shows that the frequency of model forms in internet discourses is decreasing to the benefit of non-standard structures. The main purpose of the article, however, is to present the consequences of such language standard distortion under the influence of internet communication, that is to present results of research concerning occurrence of the same syntactic structures as analysed earlier (odnośnie do vs. odnośnie czego and dedykowany vs. dedykowany/ dedykowany dla/ dedykowany do), in scientific discourse, that is in a communication type in which very rigorous criteria of linguistic correctness apply and a text is subjected to detailed linguistic correction both by the author and the editor. Presence of a given structure in this type of Polish language proves that the innovation is already deeply rooted in the common language usage and — perhaps — that the language standard is beginning to change.

¹ This refers to results of quantitative research, presented and discussed in detail in: Szkudlarek-Śmiechowicz 2021.

Co-dependency of terms: internet communication — language dynamics — language standard

One of the most significant characteristics of online communication — in the context of research conducted on language dynamics and the language standard — is spontaneity of created statements, previously present only in live speech. A spontaneously created internet message, however, is recorded, written down, published, but rarely - contrary to printed works - undergoes professional proofreading. Publishing on the internet does not involve procedures applicable to publishing of texts in printed form (Grzenia 2006: 105). The written language — in the traditional, printed version — unifies standards, gives them a trans-regional reach, introduces a codification which stops spontaneous language development (Wilkoń 2000: 36), however, written texts on the internet are characterized by the spontaneity of the spoken language and distortion of the language standard on one hand with simultaneous dissemination and recording of that distorted state on the other hand, which results from characteristics of internet communication, such as interactivity, hypertextuality, multimediality and multimodality (e.g.: Grzenia 2006; Jarosz, Opiłowski, Staniewski 2015; Kita 2016a, 2016b; Maćkiewicz 2016; Pedzisz 2017). A distortion of the language rule is one of the reasons for the process of changes taking place within the language². The basic mechanisms of language dynamization are substitution, multiplication and reduction (Kralčák 2010: 460–462; Sojda 2016: 159–160). The mechanism of substitution, that is replacement of original forms with new equivalents or forms existing earlier within the system (or a mechanism of a function change of a linguistic measure with simultaneous maintenance of its form and widening of its meaning) can be observed in the process of gradual displacement — as shown by the research results presented in the following part of the article - of the analytical expression odnośnie do by the syntactic structure odnośnie czego³. Substitution and then multiplication, that is reproduction of formal and functional elements in the language, can be observed with regard to multiplication of variants of the non-normative structure dedykowany, meaning 'assigned to', and development of other, also non-normative, analytical (prepositional) syntactic combinations such as: dedykowany dla/ dedykowany do4.

² Excessive standard distortion results in emergence of "forces bringing order to the state of chaos" (Kleszczowa 2012: 174), since the language system has the ability to accommodate: it undergoes changes but it does not allow so many variants that they would weaken its functionality (Sojda 2016: 158).

³ Notes on correctness of both those structures: *odnośnie do* and *odnośnie czego* can be found, among others, in: Bańko, Krajewska 1995; Markowski 1999, 2005a; Bańko 2009.

⁴ The first statements by linguists on the new unit in the Polish language were made more than ten years ago. Since then, a number of studies discussing the new meaning and collocations of the verb <code>dedykować</code> [dedicate] have been published, among others by: Malinowski

Variability of linguistic phenomena, which is a result and a direct expression of the language dynamics in a synchronic approach (Sojda 2016: 166), leads to — in the contemporary language reality, mainly under the influence of online communication — a "state of chaos" in usage (Kleszczowa 2012) on one hand, and to the functioning of multiple communication standards on the other hand, corresponding to different community groups established on the Internet (Kłosińska 2017: 85), so-called neo-tribes, "the main purpose of which is to be »together without purpose«" (Maffesoli 2008: 126, as cited in Kłosińska 2017: 85). For this new communication reality, it has proven necessary to take a slightly different view of the standard than so far⁵. The concept of normative invariant, besides which multiple communication standards of various groups⁶ can function, as proposed by Katarzyna Kłosińska (Kłosińska 2017), combines the initial concept of a non-diversified standard (a model standard in Andrzej Markowski's approach) with the "state of chaos" in usage, as reflected by online communication and in which the most distinctive

2009; Kłosińska 2014; Miodek 2014; Zbróg 2014; Biesaga 2016; Kołodziejek 2018a; Markowski 2021. The new usage of the verb <code>dedykować</code> 'assign something specially to, direct at..., allocate for..., be created with... in mind, recommend' is considered by researchers a semantic loan: external (from the English language) and internal (from IT jargon). The new meaning, acceptable in technical and IT jargon, but outside of it perceived quite negatively (while the prepositional accommodation is viewed as completely not approvable), emerged in the Polish language under the influence of the meaning of the English verb <code>to dedicate</code> and the adjective form <code>dedicated</code> (only in front of a noun) '1. believing that an activity or idea is important and giving a lot of energy and time to it; 2. used only for one particular purpose or job' (<code>Cambridge Dictionary</code>). The change in the meaning resulted in a change on the syntactic level (Szkudlarek-Śmiechowicz 2021).

- ⁵ Cf. concept of a real standard by Danuta Buttler (Buttler 1986), a two-level standard: normative and common by A. Markowski (Markowski 1999, 2005b), a multi-point standard by Mirosław Bańko (Bańko 2009). For more on language standard concepts in Polish normative studies from the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, see: Kołodziejek 2018b, as well as in: Zdunkiewicz-Jedynak, Liberek 2019; Hącia, Kłosińska, Zbróg 2020.
- "[In those groups] not so much different standards apply, but the perception of moral obligations towards members of the group is different, which leads to a different range of criteria of evaluating behaviours, including linguistic behaviours (for example, in some communities on the Internet, lucidity of linguistic behaviour is autotelized and the criterion of conformity of a unit with the system is completely abandoned). Axiologies of neo-tribes are different from the system of values of a society as such" (Kłosińska 2017: 85).
- ⁷ Stanisław Gajda writes about a "dynamic chaos" which is "a rule in the world and constitutes a strange form of order. It is actually of a deterministic nature [...] a hidden and sophisticated form of order stands behind it, which allows to understand how order can emerge from chaos" (Gajda 2001: 34). Although the author presents his deliberations as a general reflection on the world, in their background, they are accompanied by the main thought on the "future of the language" (which is also the title of the volume in which the study by S. Gajda is featured) and the possibility of making predictions concerning the language by linguists.

(since recorded, documented) manifestations of language dynamics should be sought; that dynamic refers both to changes observed in a given time and the variability of linguistic phenomena (Dolník 2010: 67; Kleszczowa 2012).

Comparative data: impact of internet communication on distortion of the language standard

Development of new media and the universality of online communication have caused significant changes in the usage and characteristics of odnośnie czego structure, which in the model standard is considered incorrect (Markowski 1999, 2005). Research conducted by me (Szkudlarek-Śmiechowicz 20218), based, among others, on NKJP corpus [National Corpus of Polish] (Przepiórkowski et. al 2012) and Monco PL corpus of online news (Pezik 2020), has proven that the expression consistent with the established standard (odnośnie do) is two and a half times more common than the non-normative structure (odnośnie kogo/czego) in texts collected in NKJP until the year 2000, that is in texts from the period before general access to new media was established. However, in texts from the years 2001–2010, the expression odnośnie czego is five times more common. NKJP internet corpora prove beyond doubt which of those two expressions is dominating in online Polish language, both in its interactive and non-interactive version — the usage ratio of both those structures in internet corpora is 1 to 30 (that is one use of the expression odnośnie do versus thirty uses of the structure odnośnie czego). The difference increases in the sub-corpus of interactive online texts, where it is 1 to 36. The figures obtained through Monco PL search engine show that the use of the structure odnośnie czego in online news is six times more common, whereas research of discussion boards (forumowisko.pl) proves complete lack of the standard structure (odnośnie do) in statements made on those boards. Therefore, internet communication is obviously the main place where the synthetic form (odnośnie kogo/czego) is being disseminated. In internet communication, it is also an extremely popular structure — almost 65% of occurrences of the expression in the whole NKIP come from the sub-corpus of online texts. The popularity of both those structures on the internet results from their metatextual and intertextual properties (referring to statements of other online users), with which two other constitutive characteristics of new media are coupled: interactivity and hypertextuality. Instead of colloquial or unmarked equivalents, e.g. co do [as to], jeśli chodzi o [when it comes to], or complete omission of the often redundant structure, users choose the officially and formally marked structure, although in a syntactically slightly simplified variant.

⁸ In the research, considered was both the ratio of standard structures to non-standard structures and data obtained from various types of texts, including those from the Polish language used online in its interactive and non-interactive variant (Szkudlarek-Śmiechowicz 2021).

The research of corpus data concerning the use of odnośnie do/ odnośnie czego structure has also shown an important dependency between the language dynamics and the standard-forming activity. In the NKJP sub-corpus obtained from books published until the year 2000 ("book" channel of NKJP), a fifty percent domination of the use of odnośnie czego structure can be observed (form ratio 1:1.5), but in the same sub-corpus from a later period, that is from the years 2001–2010, the model form *odnośnie do* is present twice as often (form ratio 2:1). This — seemingly — surprising result is undoubtedly related to normative recommendations stopping the language dynamics. In 1999, Nowy słownik poprawnej polszczyzny [New Dictionary of Correct Polish] by A. Markowski was published, being the first such extensive study since the publication of the correctness dictionary by Witold Doroszewski. Proof--readers working at publishing houses finally had at their disposal a new source to resolve normative doubts, which — as proven by NKIP data — were significant also in the circles of publishers, as indicated by the aforementioned ratio of odnośnie do / odnośnie czego structures in "NKJP kanał książka" [NKJP book channel] up to 2000 and in the years 2001–2010.

The phenomenon of multiplication of the non-standard use of the adjective/participle dedykowany [dedicated], such as: dedykowana łączność [dedicated connectivity], dedykowana sieć bezprzewodowa [a dedicated wireless network], dedykowana linia komunikacyjna [a dedicated communication line], dedykowana lampa [a dedicated lamp], dedykowana soczewka [a dedicated lens], dedykowana ładowarka [a dedicated charger], dedykowana platforma trackingowa [a dedicated tracking platform], dedykowana drukarka [a dedicated printer], is confirmed mainly by corpora of internet texts. In the whole NKJP (that is in texts until the year 2010), a relatively small number of the non-standard use of the word is recorded — for 100 occurrences of the *dedykowany* lexeme, only one is of non-normative nature, e.g. nowa wersja Google Maps for Mobile dedykowana użytkownikom urządzeń mobilnych [a new version of Google Maps for Mobile dedicated to users of mobile devices]; Cyborg – mysz dedykowana graczom [Cyborg – a mouse dedicated to players]; wyszukiwarka dedykowana dzieciom [a search engine dedicated to children]; drukarka laserowa A4 dedykowana małym i średnim przedsiębiorstwom [a A4 laser printer dedicated to small and medium enterprises]; system operacyjny dedykowany netbookom [an operating system dedicated to netbooks]; nawigacja dedykowana kierowcom [navigation dedicated to drivers]; witryna internetowa dedykowana usłudze Simpuls [a website dedicated to Simpuls service]9. The version which is normative in formal terms (Nominativus + dedykowany + Dativus), but not normative in terms of meaning

⁹ The structures cited according to NKJP corpus are absolutely redundant analytical expressions, replacing shorter and simpler forms which — most importantly — do not raise any normative doubts: system operacyjny do netbooków [an operating system for netbooks]; nawigacja dla kierowców [navigation for drivers]; mysz dla graczy [a mouse for players]; Google Maps dla użytkowników [Google Maps for users]; wyszukiwarka dla dzieci [a search engine for children] etc.

and semantic collocability, replicates the meaning of expressions *przeznaczony* do czegoś or dla kogoś [intended for something or someone] and kierowany do kogoś [directed at someone]. Syntactic variants of the semantically non-normative expression are, in turn, new syntactic collocations, which are non-normative in formal and semantic terms: dedykowany dla and dedykowany do in the meaning 'intended for something or someone'. Both formal and semantic variants multiply the non-normative meaning of the structure coś dedykowane komuś, czemuś [something dedicated to someone, something] – 'something designed for something or someone'. The usage ratio of the prepositional structures to the prepositionless structure in NKJP is 1 to 28 in the "book" channel, and 1 to 6 in the internet channel. So the new syntactic collocations are more common in the internet language and the context of uses is indicative of mainly their topical connection to new technologies. Worth noticing is also the multiplication of the non-normative prepositional structures in online forums. Apart from analytical structures dedykowany dla and dedykowany do, other collocations can also be found — sporadically, although they are not single occurrences: dedykowany pod (dedykowane pod program Photoshop [dedicated to Photoshop software]; serwery dedykowane pod gry typu Tibia [servers dedicated to games such as Tibia]), dedykowany od (pakiety hostingu dedykowanego od Statnet.pl [dedicated hosting packages from Statnet.pl]), dedykowany na (oprogramowanie dedykowane na systemy Linux/Windows [software dedicated to Linux/Windows systems]). And so, this documents the "state of chaos" in usage, which accompanies the occurrence of new language units, as well as preference given by online users to extended analytical structures, replacing simple collocations which do not raise any doubts in terms of their correctness.

Non-normative structures in scientific discourse

The dominance of the non-normative structure *odnośnie czego* in contemporary Polish language is supported by data obtained from Google Scholar search engine¹⁰: in 100 titles of scientific publications indexed in the search engine, the structure *odnośnie do* is present 42 times, *odnośnie czego* — 58 times. The structure *odnośnie do* occurs in 23 publication titles representing humanities (history, philology, religion, philosophy) and in 19 titles representing other disciplines (cf. Table 1). The structure *odnośnie czego* occurs in 10 titles of texts belonging to humanities (philology, philosophy, religion), e.g. *odnośnie neolatynistyki* [concerning neo-Latin studies]; odnośnie idei eklezjologicznej Ciała Chrystusowego [concerning the ecclesiological idea of Corpus Christi]; and in 48 titles of publications belonging to other sciences, including disciplines from the area of social studies, e.g. *odnośnie strony podmiotowej czynu zabronionego* [concerning

 $^{^{\}rm 10}~$ As a side note, young users of the Polish language often find a model structure to be incorrect (Rosińska-Mamej 2018: 213).

the subject of a prohibited act]; odnośnie regulacji umów deweloperskich [concerning regulation of developer agreements]; odnośnie dochodów i inwestycji [concerning income and investments]; odnośnie jakości gazów [concerning gas quality]; odnośnie systematyki gleb [concerning soil systematics].

Table 1. Data on presence of *odnośnie do, *odnośnie czego* structures in titles of scientific publications indexed in Google Scholar search engine (access: 20.05.2021)

| Occurrence in titles of scientific publications available in Google Scholar search engine | odnośnie do | *odnośnie czego | |
|---|-------------|-----------------|--|
| per 100 titles of scientific publications, including: | 42 (42%) | 58 (58%) | |
| ♦ humanities | 23 (70%) | 10 (30%) | |
| ◊ other disciplines (than humanities) | 19 (28%) | 48 (72%) | |

Source: own study

The units dedykowany/ dedykowany do/ dedykowany dla, new in formal and semantic terms, in the meaning '(specially) dedicated to someone or something' have come into the public Polish language of "advertising and media", cf. krem dedykowany szyi [cream dedicated to the neck]; krem dedykowany do rodzaju cery [cream dedicated to all skin types]; sukienka dedykowana kobietom młodym [a dress dedicated to young women]; sukienka dedykowana kobietom, które pragną manifestować swoją kobiecość [a dress dedicated to women who wish to manifest their femininity] etc., and they have also become part of the language of science. Figures concerning the use of non-normative structures, collected through Google Scholar search engine, are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Figures concerning the presence of *dedykowany*, *dedykowany dla/czemuś/do structures in titles of scientific publications indexed in Google Scholar search engine (access: 20.05.2021)

| | | *dedykowany: | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Occurrence in titles of scientific publications available in Google Scholar search engine | dedykowany (traditional use) | (adjective in the preposition) | dla | czemuś | do |
| per 100 titles of scientific publica- tions, including: | 60 | 40 | | | |
| ♦ humanities | 47 | _ | _ | _ | _ |
| other disciplines (than humanities) | 13 | 14 (35%) | 12 (30%) | 9 (22.5%) | 5 (12.5%) |

Source: own study

Per 100 titles of scientific publications, traditional uses (*utwór*, *dzieło dedy-kowane komuś* [*a piece of work dedicated to someone*]) constitute only 60% of them, while new uses represent 40%, including:

- adjective in the preposition (e.g. dedykowany storytelling [dedicated storytelling]) occurring 14 times, which is 35% of all non-normative structures;
- the structure dedykowany dla (e.g. generator dedykowany dla systemów pomiarowo-sterujących [a generator dedicated to measurement and control systems]) occurring 12 times, which is 30% of all non-normative uses;
- *dedykowany czemuś* (e.g. *instrument wsparcia dedykowany małym gospo-darstwom* [a support instrument dedicated to small households]) 9 times, that is 22.5%;
- dedykowany do (e.g. system wizualizacji dedykowany do krytych pływalni
 [a visualisation system dedicated to indoor swimming pools]) 5 times,
 that is 12.5%.

Although non-normative structures dominate in titles of texts in the area of science, they can also be found in titles of works from the field of social studies, cf. also: dedykowany system edukacyjny [a dedicated education system]; dedykowany coaching [dedicated coaching]; model emocji dedykowany dla inteligentnych systemów [a model of emotions dedicated to intelligent systems]; instrument prawny dedykowany rozwojowi regionalnemu [a legal instrument dedicated to regional development]; stepper dedykowany do prób wysiłkowych [a stepper dedicated to exercise tests].

The question whether the Polish humanities will follow this trend cannot be answered, since this development cannot be predicted¹¹, however, one can speculate, unfortunately, that it is only a question of time.

Conclusion

The corpus research concerning both non-normative structures: <code>odnośnie czego</code> and <code>dedykowany/ dedykowany dla/ dedykowany do</code> provides figures which document the impact of internet communication on the language dynamics and the distortion of the standard within the scope of usage of the analysed structures. Both of them also reflect specific preferences of authors of written

¹¹ Cf. "In historical language studies, when discussing linguistic changes, we usually focus on the course of a selected process, trying to investigate its beginnings. But when it comes to its end, that is the result of the process, it is already given. Such a view on the dynamics of the contemporary language is not possible. One can talk about the beginnings, one can show its course, if only from the perspective of decades, or even several years, but we do not know what the result will be of what is currently happening. At the very most, we can predict, foresee, but we cannot verify our predictions" (Kleszczowa 2012: 173). On the probabilistic linguistic and the prognostic (in)ability of linguists, cf. Dubisz 2001 and Gajda 2001.

online texts: Internet users choose descriptive, analytical structures, instead of simple ones, characteristic for the spoken Polish language (co do [as to], jeśli chodzi o [when it comes to] or do/dla [for]). Although in the context of the specifics of the Internet language and the expansion of colloquiality, this conclusion might be surprising, it was already formulated earlier with regard to media communication, among others, in the 1960s in reference to press language (Kniagininowa 1963), and half a century later, in reference to the Polish language on TV (Loewe 2010).

As concerns predictions for the development of the Polish language in terms of syntax, Stanisław Dubisz lists, among others, the impact of the English language on that particular grammatic subsystem, for example in connection with replication of English syntactic and lexical structures. It seems that both those development tendencies of the Polish syntax — documented by corpus research and predicted by S. Dubisz — are strictly connected: the English language as a positional and analytical language affects the Polish language in terms of not only semantics (cf. dedykowany in the meaning 'dedicated to') but also syntax, meaning that language users, having a choice between two forms: an analytical and a synthetical one, choose (or create but also borrow) the more complex structure (cf. dedykowany/ dedykowany dla/ dedykowany do instead of do/dla or przeznaczony do/dla; odnośnie do/ odnośnie czego instead of co do; often, it would be best to omit the structure completely), although stylistically, it is awkward, lengthy and often fails to precisely express the thought (Kniagininowa 1963: 149; Burska 2016: 15); cf. also examples offered by Dubisz: umówić na spotkanie (Eng. to make an appointment) instead of umówić spotkanie; oglądać na telewizji (Eng. to watch on the television) instead of oglądać telewizję, mówić do kogoś (Eng. to speak to somebody) instead of mówić z kimś (Dubisz 2001: 54).

Further research — conducted with the use of Google Scholar search engine — shows the process of a slow change of the language standard — the approval in the usage for non-normative structures in texts of the highest rank, that is in scientific texts, subject to proofreading by the author and the publisher. If one assumes that the language standard is a "set of linguistic units approved by the given society" (Buttler, Kurkowska, Satkiewicz 1971: 18), which are "in some period considered by a community (usually by the whole society, and mainly its educated layers) to be model, correct or at least admissible" (Markowski 2018: 21), one should simultaneously state that both those structures, so far not normative, have already become an innovative (non-invariant) element of the actual standard.

Based on corpus research, we are able to, much better than even 20 years ago, study the language uses as well as the process of standard changes without being accused of subjective decision-making on what is and what is not "considered by a community (usually by the whole society, and mainly its educated layers)" to be correct.

The corpus research has provided one more important piece of empirical evidence: the stopping influence of standard-forming activities on the dynamic (and chaotic) development of the Polish language. The overwhelming power of Internet communication, we have now been facing for more than twenty years, is also changing that influence at a rapid pace, as proven by the structures found in titles of scientific studies — odnośnie czego, dedykowany (in the meaning 'assigned to'), or even dedykowany dla and dedykowany do.

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