

Ethnically and nationally motivated hate speech in Internet communication

A comparative analysis of Polish and German

The present thesis aims to investigate linguistic performance that includes hate speech (henceforth HS) motivated by the ethnic and national identity of its addressee (operationalised as ethnically and nationally motivated HS) in Polish and German Internet-based communication.

Research on HS concentrates mainly on its legal aspects, including penalisation of HS (cf. the international perspective in Rosenfeld 2012; Bleich 2013 and Ghanea 2013¹), media studies (among others Slayden & Whillock 1995 and Bulandra, Kościółek & Zimnoch 2015²), social psychology (including Mullen & Smyth 2004 and Bilewicz et al. 2014³) and sociology (including Kowalski & Tulli 2003 and Podemski 2010). In the framework of the RADAR⁴ project (2014–2016), it was found that research in the publications in the European Union pertaining to this issue concentrated predominantly on legal and socio-economic aspects of HS. It is relevant to investigate HS from the linguistic perspective, as the frequency of crimes involving physical attacks and verbal abuse in the form of HS has increased in recent years. On the basis of (1) the RADAR project's findings, and (2) the Polish Prosecutor General's statistics⁵, it is clear that the verbal aspect is a relevant thread in the behaviours of hate crime offenders (see also Szczepaniak-Kozak & Lankiewicz 2017: 136).

In recent years (mainly from 2017), more and more publications devoted to HS have been published, including these assuming a linguistic perspective, i.e. the one adopted in the present thesis. To mention a few: Bonacchi (2017); Klinker, Scharloth & Szczęk (2018); Baider & Kopytowska (2018); Alorainy et al. (2019) and Basile et al. (2019). Despite the existence of an increasing body of literature, HS in social media is still under-researched. The study in the present thesis is the first that ap-

¹ European Union in Weber (2009) and Quintel & Ulrich (2019); Polish perspective in Bachmat (2005); Park (2006); Wieruszewski et al. (2010); Radziejewski (2012) and Malczyńska-Biały (2016).

² Also Eickelmann (2018) and Brown & Sinclair (2019).

³ Also Winiewski et al. (2017); Pettersson (2019) and Obrębska (2020).

⁴ The RADAR (Regulating Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism) project was realised with the financial support of the European Commission and comprised academic institutions, training centres and nongovernmental organisations from six countries of the EU. More detailed information in Chapter 2. The author of the present monograph was a researcher subcontracted to the project.

⁵ Department of the Prosecutor General on calling for the initiation of preparatory proceedings (2015); Report on cases initiated due to racist or xenophobic reasons in 2013, <http://isp.policja.pl/download/12/2645/Wyciagzesprawozdania2013r.docx> (access: 13.11.2019).

proaches HS in social media using a cross-linguistic approach, in German and Polish, using critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) and corpus linguistics (henceforth CL) tools.

This monograph broadly aims to contribute to a better understanding and exemplification of this phenomenon which is realised mainly through language, as well as to complement the research conducted so far. The main aim of the study was to analyse in a qualitative and quantitative manner corpus data containing ethnically and nationally motivated HS in order to present discursive practices (the names of the discursive practices are borrowed from Adamczak-Krysztofowicz & Szczepaniak-Kozak 2017; Reisigl & Wodak 2001; Reisigl 2010 and van Leeuwen 1993, 1996), and to compare them in Polish and German. The study contributed to the development of a research tool and gathering of the first corpora (comparable in two languages) of ethnically and nationally motivated HS in Polish and German Internet-based communication.

The qualitative and quantitative analysis has been carried out on research material that has not been studied in the context of HS so far, i.e. comments posted on the social network Facebook. The following research questions (henceforth RQ) were established:

1. What hateful discursive practices addressed to a given ethnic and national minority group can be found on the social network Facebook in Polish and German?
2. How often do the discursive practices and their types appear in a particular subcorpus?
3. What is the policy for moderating Facebook content?
4. To what extent is the discourse on ethnic and national minorities on Facebook moderated?
5. Are there the same rules of content moderation for Polish and German?
6. What nouns denoting representative(s) of a particular minority group concerned appear in the research material?
7. What collocations do the most frequent nouns in a particular subcorpus show?
8. What keywords does the research material reveal in comparison to the reference corpus for the Polish and German Internet?
9. What concordances in the reference corpora do the nouns denoting the representative(s) of particular minority groups show?

The research material consists of publicly available comments found on the social networking site Facebook. The public comments were stored after they were anonymised, also in accordance with the postulate of anonymisation following rules of ethical research⁶ in the CL paradigm (see Baker, Hardie & McEnery 2006: 13). The corpora and subcorpora have not been stored or made publicly available.

Hate messages may have implications for social actions on both an individual and collective level. According to van Dijk (1995: 3), such linguistic performance is not simply an innocent form of language use or a marginal type of verbal social interaction. Rather, it has a fundamental impact on the social cognition of dominant group members, on the acquisition, confirmation, and uses of opinions, attitudes, and ideologies underlying social perceptions, actions, and structures. In other words, hate driven by the target's ethnic or national origin can be socially learned, and language is

⁶ The research ethics applied is compliant with Paragraph 1 of Article 89 of the 2016/679 Regulation of the European Parliament and Council from 27th April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, titled safeguards and derogations relating to processing for archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes. More detailed information is presented in Introduction.

essential to the process of its ideological production and reproduction (see van Dijk 1995: 3). Such a perspective has been reflected in CDA's view of discourse as a form of social practice (e.g. Fairclough & Wodak 1997). The relation between discourse and social reality is, on the one hand, socially constituted and, on the other hand, socially constitutive.

The methodology developed in the present thesis combines selected assumptions of CDA and CL. The corpus techniques used in CDA primarily allow for a significant increase in the amount of data analysed, thus rejecting one of the points of criticism of CDA, regarding the lack of representativeness of the texts analysed (see Cheng 2013: 1; Kopytowska, Grabowski & Woźniak 2017: 71⁷, among other authors). Benefits resulting from the use of corpus techniques in CDA also include limiting the selectivity of researchers as regards the material analysed through the use of transparent criteria for corpus selection (see Baker 2006: 12; Breeze 2011; Kamasza 2014: 110).

The present work consists of two main parts: theoretical and empirical. The first, theoretical part, begins with a chapter on definitions of speech, hate and ethnic and national identity, resulting from the decomposition of the term ethnically and nationally motivated HS, which is the subject of the monograph. The theoretical considerations also commence by presenting a historical outline of the legal definition of HS, from the linguistic perspective, and definitions of HS formulated on the basis of the latest research from an interdisciplinary and comparative perspective. The chapter concludes with an operational definition of ethnically and nationally motivated HS.

On the basis of the available definitions⁸ of HS (including these available in Gagliardone et al. 2015; Bulandra, Kościółek & Zimnoch 2015; Dossou & Klein 2016 and Adamczak-Krysztofowicz & Szczepaniak-Kozak 2017⁹), an operational definition of ethnically and nationally motivated HS was created for the purpose of the current thesis. The potential addressees of HS have been identified as a person or group of persons of alleged or real ethnic/national identity towards which the person communicating HS is prejudiced. In order to identify a statement as an example of ethnically and nationally motivated HS, it has to comply with the following criteria:

- a) it uses a primary feature that is an element of somebody's ethnic/national identity, or it attributes such a feature to somebody,
- b) it stigmatises a community or person (as a representative of a particular ethnic or national community),
- c) it is verbalised in a pejorative way: i) in a narrower sense, it is a call for action (i.e. it incites illegal deeds against a specific minority group, or fuels hostility towards such persons), ii) in a broader sense, it insults minorities based on their pejorative nomination.

The second chapter is devoted to recent research in the interdisciplinary and international context of HS. Based on the principle of interdisciplinarity in science, this chapter aims to (a) identify the implications relevant to the present monograph, based on the conclusions from research in the various scientific disciplines dealing with HS (law, sociology, social psychology and media studies); (b) justify the need for empirical research, based on linguistic studies, contained in the thesis.

Hate discourse examined in this monograph concerns four selected nationalities and ethnic groups considered in Poland and Germany as most affected by HS. The groups were selected on the

⁷ See also Stubbs (1997: 7); Orpin (2005: 38) and Pawlikowska (2012: 111–112).

⁸ See also Adamczak-Krysztofowicz, Szczepaniak-Kozak & Jaszczyk (2016).

⁹ See also Kowalski & Tulli (2003); Łodziński (2003); Nijakowski (2008); Weber (2009); Meibauer (2013) and Stefanowitsch (2015).

basis of the research conducted by Bilewicz et al. (2014) and repeated in 2017 (see Winiewski et al. 2017), as well as on the basis of a study by Felling et al. (2019):

- the Muslim minority,
- the Roma minority,
- the Ukrainian minority,
- the Jewish minority.

The chief subject of the third chapter is the specifics of Internet communication in the paradigm of linguistics, as well as the characteristics of social media and social networks, including Facebook.

Chapter 4 describes in its initial section some theoretical and methodological assumptions, including the genesis of the research problem, research goals, research hypothesis and RQs, as well as the selection of data collection techniques. It is followed by an outline of the term discourse from a historical perspective, in the French and Anglo-Saxon tradition of discourse research and subsequently, Polish and German concepts of discourse are presented. The next part of the chapter offers a description of the Anglo-Saxon tradition of CDA, as well as a presentation of CL, including the principles of constructing a linguistic corpus, classification of linguistic corpora and, above all, CL techniques in CDA.

Chapter 5 describes the pilot study and presents the findings of the qualitative and quantitative analysis carried out in the main study conducted. In its initial section, the results of the pilot study will be presented, followed by findings of document analysis, corpus design, results of qualitative analysis, results of quantitative analysis, including the analysis of frequency lists, collocations, keyword lists and concordances. Finally, the results of the comparative qualitative and quantitative analysis are confronted with the adopted hypothesis and the research questions posed. The author presents some general findings of the research below.

A total of 1 185 posts were analysed, including several thousand comments from 2018–2019 and January 2020. From this material, 58 posts were qualified as ethnically and nationally motivated HS, according to the operational definition of HS, in the highest number for subcorpora PL_M (the Muslim minority – in Polish), PL_Z (the Jewish minority – in Polish) and DE_M (the Muslim minority – in German). After selecting the total number of available comments according to the keywords defined in the draft corpus, it appeared that the largest number of comments concerned the Muslim minority in Polish (1503), then the Jewish minority in Polish (323), followed by the Ukrainian minority (211) and the Muslim minority in German (164). The largest number of comments (as high as 22%) was removed/hidden¹⁰ in PL_M subcorpus. The subcorpus concerning the Muslim minority in Polish contains 57 099 words in total. By comparison, the second place is taken by PL_Z subcorpus with 17 377 words. In PL_M subcorpus, 62 comments were classified as examples of HS with the aspect of calling for action. The above numbers show that out of the four minority groups (Muslim, Roma, Ukrainian and Jewish), it is the Muslim minority that is most affected by the discourse in the social media studied, including hate discourse. After contrasting this conclusion with the results of Jaskułowski's (2015) analysis, which examined the attitudes of Poles towards migrants and refugees from North Africa and the Middle East during the so-called migra-

¹⁰ In the study the real picture of the moderation of the analysed content (RQ₄) was presented: in total, 463 (~16%) of the 2870 added comments were removed/hidden. The highest percentage ratio of removed/hidden comments to added comments of all subcorpora has the PL_M (22%), PL_R (9%) and DE_U (9%) subcorpus.

tion crisis in 2015, a hypothesis can be put forward about the relationship between hate discourse conducted in social media and the discursive construction of refugees presented in Jaskułowski's book, which appears in the media, politics and popular culture. This construction indicated identifying refugees with Muslims, who are also considered a threat to the Polish nation. Jaskułowski's analysis presents an Islamophobic public discourse which turns out to be reproduced, negotiated and challenged differently in the study of Polish attitudes. Cichocki and Jabkowski (2019: 33–34) quote the results of a survey conducted by Chatham House in 2016 in ten European countries (see Goodwin, Raines & Cutts 2017). It proves that in all ten European countries, the majority of respondents support the statement “all further migration from mainly Muslim countries should be stopped”, but in Poland (71%) and Hungary (64%) the percentage of those supporting this thesis was the highest (for example, in Austria it was 65%, in Germany 53%, in Italy 51%, in the UK 47% and in Spain 41% [see Figure 67]).

The comparison of both languages in the list of subcorpora referring to the same minority group seems to be justified (bearing in mind the criterion of representativeness) only in the case of the Muslim minority. Participants in the hate discourse conducted in Polish use negative labels for the Muslim minority, including most often (RQ₂) reifications, applying bias to the representatives of the Muslim minority, using somatonyms, establishing links between belonging to the Muslim minority and “dirt”. They also use relationyms, indicating a relationship between representatives of this minority and negative acts/customs and anthroponyms, referring to representatives of this minority mainly in terms of sexual habits. Tropes are also used as often as reifications in Polish hate discourse, and these include metonyms. In German hate discourse with the aspect of calling for action, false pretences appear just as often as negative labels – unlike in the Polish context – including primarily criminalisation of the Muslim minority, and thus establishing a link between violent actions and the Muslim minority.

The research confirmed that the hate in discourse on ethnic and national minorities present in the social media in both languages is explicit, not implicit. Authors of hateful comments posted on social media use direct forms of expression, including, first and foremost, expletives. Authors of hateful comments in Polish use vulgar words much more often than authors of similar comments in German. For example, in PL_M subcorpus, vulgar words appeared as many as 45 times, whereas in DE_M subcorpus, this is only the case four times. Moreover, it was confirmed that the call for action, implemented as part of the operational definition of HS, is accompanied by the proximation of potential threats and legitimisation of activities aimed at eliminating these threats, most often by exclusion of particular minority groups; both in Polish and German. The presence of militarionyms was confirmed in the comments qualified as HS only in the Polish subcorpus concerning the Ukrainian minority.

All in all, the monograph's hypothesis cannot be confirmed due to:

- a) some discrepancies presented above; in German, the significant criminalisation of the Muslim minority as false pretences, i.e. establishing a link between violent actions and the Muslim minority; in the Polish language, on the other hand, there are mainly negative labels and expletives;
- b) the fact that the comparison of both languages in the list of subcorpora referring to the same minority group seems to be justified, taking into account the criterion of representativeness, only for the Muslim minority.

Chapter 6 presents further research conclusions jointly with theoretical, methodological and pedagogical implications. The need for further research is also mentioned, which indicates directions for future studies.