

**Jagoda Bloch**

## **Intonation of Polish Public Appearances – from Press Conference to Sejm Rostrum**

### **KEY WORDS**

public appearance, vocal behaviour, non-verbal communication, intonation, accent, meter, pause, prosody

### **ABSTRACT**

Vocal signals are very important in making the desired impression. They are the main determinants of the first impression, which influences interpersonal relations. In most public appearances broadcast in the media, the speaker has an immense influence on the interest of the receiver and maintaining his attention. The article concerns the ways of delivering public appearances by politicians, civil servants and spokespersons. Speakers were chosen so that in each dominates a different prosodic element easily distinguished by receivers. Among the most common are: frequent use of pause, excessive use of stress, not ending the sentence with a full stop, flat intonation, inadequate emotional tone of voice. This one dominating feature in the speaker's message influenced the poverty of melodic line. There was no effort to differentiate the way of presenting speeches, residing only on the most easily accessible feature. The analyzed examples are the most common media-present ways of speaking by public figures. They are an exemplification of reflections on the voice interpretation of a text: what elements of the spoken word can serve the purpose of the speaker, so that they make the desired impression on the audience.

It is widely known that the spoken word plays a significant role in the public life. Every day, we listen to many appearances, speeches, while the mass media invite guests, whose task it is to explain certain occurrences to the audience and to persuade them to share the speaker's beliefs. The skill to deliver spoken text is part of the art of the living word, with which the persons taking the floor in the public space should be well acquainted. Sound is an important aspect of non-verbal communication, as it conveys the meanings of emotional states, personality traits, and the impression being made. Moreover, vocal signals can be used to indicate extroversion or introversion, domination or subservience, sympathy or antipathy<sup>1</sup>. In the situation of delivering the messages in the public space, these properties are crucial, since they affect the relationship between the interlocutors. The prosodic elements of the message senders are the very attributes of sound which determine the unique properties of all vocal

---

<sup>1</sup> D.G. Leathers, *Komunikacja niewerbalna. Zasady i zastosowania* [Successful nonverbal communication: Principles and applications], Warszawa 2007, p. 192.

behaviour. Prosody is a scientific discipline studying the pitch of voice (intonation), accentuation, and the duration of sounds (quantity).

In many social situations, vocal behaviours contribute to indicate the roles of individual persons. Some of these roles require more involvement: for instance, to emphasize the image of someone dissatisfied with something, a speaker may employ one of the prosodic elements. In their constant care not to “fall out of the role”<sup>2</sup>, public figures strive to control their behaviour and manner of speaking. It is not uncommon for an opposition politician who wants to distance him- or herself from the decisions of the government politicians to abuse one means of expression in his or her appearance, such as lengthening the final syllables of words at the end of a sentence. By doing so, however, he or she does not attain the desired effect. Whereas lengthening of syllables is associated with reflectivity, it is of a passive kind, deprived of energy and enthusiasm for action, in this case lacking the keen edge of criticism against the ruling party policy. Even if such a politician of the opposition should aim to expound irony by lengthening the duration of syllables, it might be better to consider before the appearance if this means is going to be intelligible to the audience.

The texts subjected to sound analysis had been delivered by people serving such functions as spokespersons, state officials, and politicians. The situations in which we may usually hear these persons are statements concerning certain events (accidents, offences), press conferences, appearances in the Sejm. In each of these situations we may see speakers who deliver their texts either without or with notes; in the former case we may presume that the text has been prepared beforehand or is being composed during the conversation with a journalist; the latter case are speeches from the Sejm rostrum, where the risk of forgetting the text is high, and so the speakers addressing the auditorium try not to read the whole text but rather to look into it in order to preserve the coherency of speech and not to omit anything.

The art of the living word involves using a range of means, which according to Mieczysław Kotlarczyk<sup>3</sup> can be described as follows:

– quantity – the duration of a word, the period delimited by the points of the beginning of the word and its terminal sound. Based on quantity, words have the ability to lengthen and shorten both the vowels and the consonants. Quantity-wise, words can be pronounced in various ways: long and short, longer and shorter, by notes, half notes, and even quarter and eighth notes, etc.;

---

<sup>2</sup> E. Goffman, *Rytuał interakcyjny* [Interaction ritual], Warszawa 2006, p. 9

<sup>3</sup> M. Kotlarczyk, *Sztuka żywego słowa* [The art of the living word], Lublin 2010, p. 163–217.

- force (dynamics) – each word can be pronounced with more or less acoustic force; this phenomenon, based on the physiology of air exhaust stream, expresses the energy inherent in the text and the abilities of its interpreter. Scale: loud–quiet, half-loud–half-quiet, changes within the force involve increasing and decreasing;
- pitch – the capacity to raise and lower the sounds of speech. Each word may be pronounced higher or lower. The differences between individual levels of spoken pitch are referred to as intervals, of which the living word has an innumerable amount at its disposal;
  - the art of the living word distinguishes two general directions of intonation and melodic line: ascending and descending. The intonational lowering of voice is usually considered an ending (cadence), and the raising of pitch as something not finished yet (anticadence). Lowering the voice divides and separates words, whereas raising binds them together;
- some of the most frequent melody-related errors in the living word include not using cadence, i.e., turning one’s speech into a single unending sentence; identical rises and falls of spoken pitch at the beginning and end of each sentence – isotony; or using one’s voice monotonously at the same pitch with no intonational differentiation whatsoever – monotony;
- it is the ability to gradate that protects the living word from these threats, determining the melody;
- the timbre of voice may serve interpretative functions: depending on the use of its sundry variants, sentences and words may acquire new meanings and make different impressions;
- phrase clarity – dismemberment and segmentation of text; phrases are delimited by pauses, determined by logical reasons;
- pause – a space between words or sentences, free of any sound; moments of silence between sound segments are necessary, among others, to give the virtues of the text enough time to penetrate to the recipient.

Delivering a text requires a skilful use of all the elements mentioned above in the appropriate proportion. In the public space, which can be registered in the media, there are appearances in which one of these elements predominates, which may attest to a decreased interest in the form of delivering presentations or – should we allow ourselves such a thesis – may indicate the lack of respect for the recipients, if we consider the fact that the signs of respect include the non-verbal signals of interpersonal communication as well<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>4</sup> I. Kamińska-Radomska, *Etykieta biznesu czyli międzynarodowy język kurtuazji* [Business etiquette, or the international language of courtesies], Warszawa 2003, p. 41–42.

Presented below, there are fragments of appearances, in which the senders of messages use limited means of expression; these are the manners of delivering texts which are most frequently found in the media.

### Timbre of voice

[1] Appearance after an accident in which children were electrocuted:

*Doszło do śmiertelnego porażenia prądem / dwóch dziewczynek, które znajdowały się w rzece / i pora... [A fatal electric shock occurred / involving two girls who were in the river / and were...]*

Journalist: *Siedziały na barierce?* [They were sitting on the railing?]

*...Nie, nie siedziały na barierce, / natomiast na pewno doszło do porażenia prądem, gdy były w wodzie. / yyy Kabel, który yyy energetyczny zasilający, który zwisiał, został chwycony przez jedną z dziewczynek, z ofiar. [...No, they weren't sitting on the railing / but certainly the electric shock occurred when they were in water. / Er...a cable which...er...electric supply cable which was hanging was grabbed by one of the girls, the victims]<sup>5</sup>.*

Slashes in the text mark the pauses made by the interlocutor, while the underlined syllables in some of the words mark tonal accents, i.e., realised by raising the pitch.

Emotional changes revealed by the speaker cause the timbre of voice to change. The message above, due to the frequent use of tonal accents in some of the words (which brighten up the message), became almost cheerful in its form. Such a large discrepancy between the form and content puts the sender at a disadvantage, weakens the image of a person who is competent and aware of the event being discussed.

The predominance of tonal accents in a message is particularly well-suited to the content, for instance, meant to convey the well-being of the sender to the recipients, to encourage them to act together, or even to make them act. A large concentration of accents of this type can be found, for once, in the appearances of Jerzy Owsiak describing the results of The Grand Orchestra of Christmas Charity (Pol. *Wielka Orkiestra Świątecznej Pomocy – WOŚP*). While the involvement and cheerful tone of the sender certainly ensue from the content being conveyed, the form of the address is not insignificant either, as its tone encourages to join the charitable action. In this case, one is entirely justified to make use of this kind of accent. In other messages it is better not to abuse it, as it may bring a result contrary to the one intended.

---

<sup>5</sup> Appearance by prosecutor Ewa Szumińska, *Dzień na żywo* [Day live], TVN 24. 21 Aug 2012.

### Pitch of the tone

[2] Flat intonation, no changes in tone within the statement about the death of a soldier in Afghanistan:

*Do ataku doszło we wschodniej części prowincji Ghazni, we wczesnych godzinach popołudniowych. Na miejsce zdarzenia natychmiast został wysłany ewakuacyjny śmigłowiec medyczny medevac, a także grupy szybkiego reagowania QRF lądowe, a także powietrzne. Ranni żołnierze zostali podjęci, a następnie przetransportowani do szpitala w Ghazni, gdzie udzielono im pomocy. Pomimo szybkiej reakcji lekarzy, starszy szeregowy Mariusz Deptuła zmarł. Drugi żołnierz, który został ranny, jego stan jest stabilny i jego życiu nie zagroza niebezpieczeństwo.* [The attack occurred in the eastern part of the Ghazni province in the early afternoon. A medical evacuation (medevac) helicopter was sent to the site, as well as the quick reaction forces (QRF), both land and airborne. The wounded soldiers were picked up and subsequently transported to a hospital in Ghazni, where they received medical aid. In spite of the fast response of the physicians, Private 1st Class Mariusz Deptuła died. The other soldier who was wounded, his condition is stable and his life is not in danger]<sup>6</sup>.

Portions of the text were underlined to mark places, in which the clarity of the text would be served better by pauses or a slight changes in tone than by joined intonation. Even the inhalation serves the speaker only to replenish the supply of air in order to continue speaking. The appearance lacks any accents whatsoever, and the monotony of sound may be used by a sender to distance him- or herself from the message. At the same time, however, it makes understanding the message more difficult. Obviously, excessively varied intonation line could be interpreted as lack of professionalism of the spokesperson of the Armed Forces Military Command (Pol. *Dowództwo Operacyjne Sił Zbrojnych – DOSZ*). However, using a moderate way of accentuation would make the text more understandable and work in favour of the speaker. The death of one of the soldiers is a dramatic occurrence. Nonetheless, it cannot lead to the lack of any form of logical accentuation for fear of diminishing the tragedy of the event.

---

<sup>6</sup> Statement of the spokesperson of the Armed Forces Military Command (DOSZ) Mjr Julita Mirowska, *Dzień na żywo*, TVN 24, 24 Oct 2011.

The recording of a part of the statement showing the flatness of the intonation is presented in figures 1 and 2<sup>7</sup>. The blue curve in the lower part of the windows indicates the change of tone: a level line with infrequent tilts indicating slight lowering of the tone.

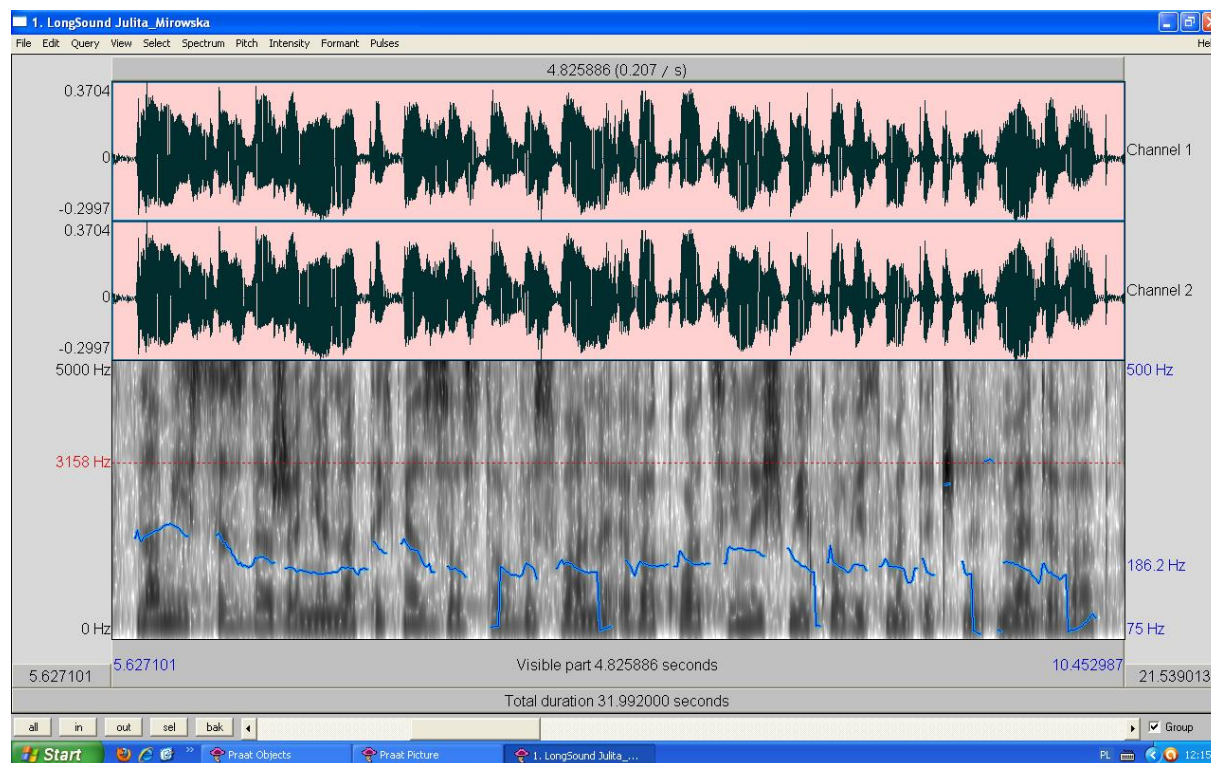


Figure 1. Recording of the words: *Na miejsce zdarzenia natychmiast został wysłany ewakuacyjny śmigłowiec medyczny medevac* [A medical evacuation (medevac) helicopter was sent to the site]

<sup>7</sup> The recordings shown in the figures were created using the acoustic-phonetic PRAAT software, used for the sound analysis of speech. This software was developed by Prof. Paul Boersma and Dr David Weenink of the Institute of Phonetics Sciences, Amsterdam University. This software is an invaluable tool to analyse the speech signals. See: P. Boersma, D. Weenink, *Praat: doing phonetics by computer*, [www.fon.hum.uva.nl/praat/](http://www.fon.hum.uva.nl/praat/) [accessed: 24.06.2013].

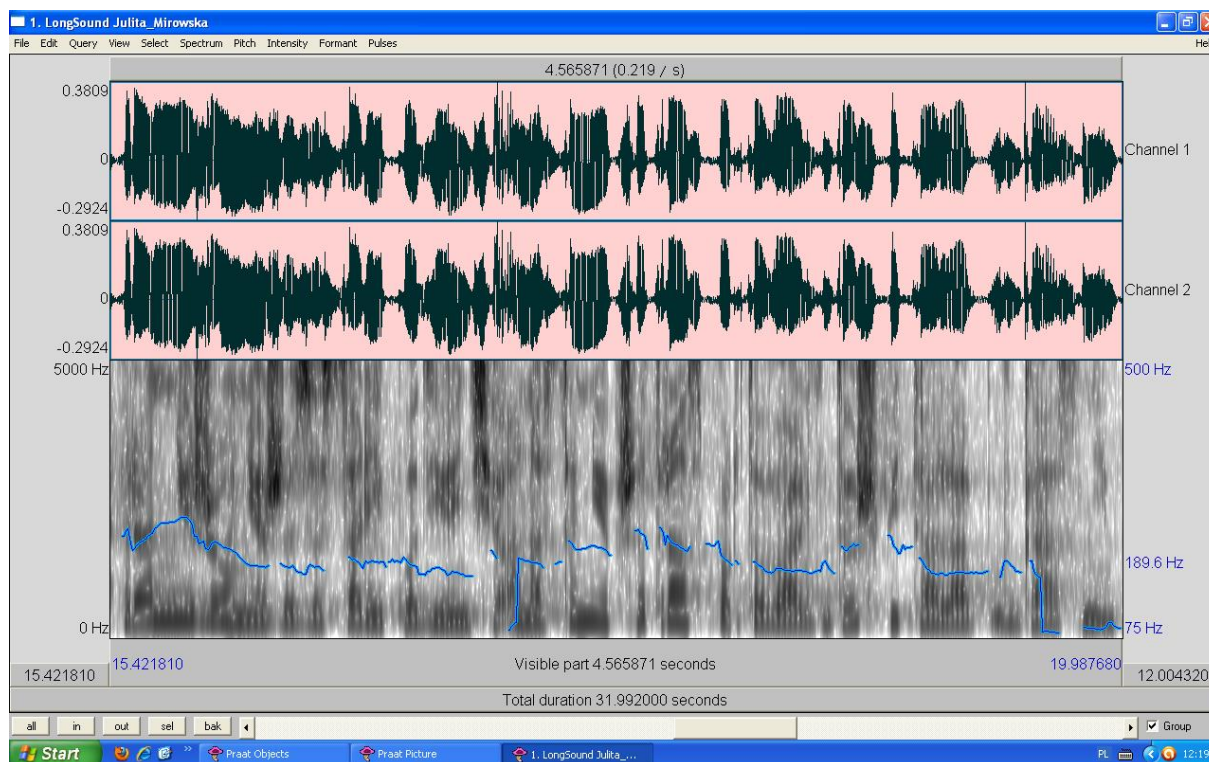


Figure 2. Recording of the words: *Ranni żołnierze zostali podjęci, a następnie przetransportowani do szpitala w Ghazni* [The wounded soldiers were picked up and subsequently transported to a hospital in Ghazni]

The flatness of the intonation is related to the lack of shift of voice within the phrases, as well as the lack of accents. An accent is an emphasis on a certain segment. Using the term accentuation, we mean accents of two kinds: 1) word accent, given to a particular syllable (of a one- or two-syllable word) or syllables (in words of three or more syllables), and 2) logical accent, given to a word or phonological word within a phrase, where phrase is a segment of speech delimited by pauses. Accentuation is realised by increased articulation and acoustic energy, raising the tone of the accentuated syllable, or lengthening the accentuated syllable<sup>8</sup>. When done appropriately, accents make it easier for the recipients to follow the message and facilitate its understanding. The sender does not have to excessively accentuate selected parts of a sentence for it to be understood by the recipient – a slight raising or lowering of the voice is enough, attesting to the desire to reach the recipients with the message. For, as proven by other examples in this paper, all exaggeration is detrimental. To achieve the best results in the attractiveness of message, the elements of the art of the living word should be used in moderation.

<sup>8</sup> *Język polski: Kompendium* [Polish language: Compendium], ed. by M. Derwojedowa, H. Karaś, D. Kopcińska, Warszawa 2005, p. 101.

### [3] Anticadences – the death of a child in Sosnowiec

*Witam państwa / na konferencji prasowej / połączonej Prokuratury Okręgowej w Katowicach oraz Komendy Wojewódzkiej w Katowicach / Nazywam się Mariusz Łączny / jestem prokuratorem tutejszej prokuratury / reprezentuję biuro prasowe rzecznika prasowego Prokuratury Okręgowej / Jestem jednocześnie współreferentem śledztwa / Witam mojego gościa, pana inspektora Andrzeja Gąskę, / reprezentującego Komendę Wojewódzką Policji w Katowicach. Dzień dobry.*

*W związku z informacjami, iż mają państwo dodatkowe pytania, / proszę o nie, / postaramy się odpowiedzieć, jak tylko będziemy mogli najpełniej<sup>9</sup>.*

[Welcome, Ladies and Gentlemen, / to a joint press conference / of the Regional Prosecutor's Office in Katowice and the Voivodeship Headquarters in Katowice. / My name is Mariusz łączny / I am a prosecutor from the local prosecutor's office / I represent the press office of the Spokesman of the Regional Prosecutor's Office. / At the same time, I am a co-referent of the investigation. / Please, welcome my guest, Inspector Andrzej Gaska, / who represents the Voivodeship Police Headquarters in Katowice. Good afternoon.

Since we have been informed that you have additional questions, / please ask them, / we shall attempt to answer them as fully as we can.]

Slashes in the text mark the places where the speaker used the rising intonation line, or anticadence. It was obviously used very frequently in such a short text, one could even say too often, particularly so that the rising line appears even in places where the falling line, or cadence, would be more appropriate.

Anticadences used in the place of cadences may weaken the following of the message and the credibility of the speaker, whose task it is to speak in such a manner that the recipient does not have to put too much effort into listening. The latter occurs when the speaker does not conclude his or her thoughts and the recipient has to do it instead, and thus loses contact with the phrases pronounced by the speaker, which leads to not understanding the message. What is more, the opening of the line of intonation is usually associated with expressing doubt and seeking answers to questions. Therefore, it is counterproductive in statements meant to express strong opinions, as it tends to undermine an opinion instead of consolidating it.

---

<sup>9</sup> Press conference by the prosecutor Mariusz Łączny, *Dzień na żywo*, TVN 24. 4 Feb 2012.



## Quantity and slow tempo

[4] Debate on the conclusion of the Polish Presidency in the EU:

*Myślę, że wszyscy mamy poczucie wyjątkowości dzisiejszej debaty. Rozmawiamy bowiem o przyszłości Europy, a przyszłość Europy to przyszłość świata. Pytanie o kierunek, w jakim zmierza Europa, jest w swej istocie pytaniem o przyszłość człowieka i naszej cywilizacji. Niezależnie bowiem od potęgi Stanów Zjednoczonych, Chin, Rosji, czy rosnących dopiero wielkich mocarstw gospodarczych, znaczenie Europy nie maleje i nie będzie malało, jeżeli nie popełnimy istotnego błędu, który sprowadzi rolę naszego kontynentu do światowych peryferii. W tych pytaniach o przyszłość Europy jest także pytanie o przyszłość Polski. Martwimy się o przyszłość Europy, bo martwimy się o przyszłość Polski, o poziom życia naszych obywateli, o możliwości bezpiecznego życia i możliwości dostatniego życia i wysokiego rozwoju<sup>10</sup>.*

[I believe that we can all feel the uniqueness of the today's debate. For we are talking about the future of Europe, and the future of Europe is the future of the world. Asking about the direction where Europe is headed is in its essence asking about the the future of man and of our civilisation. Regardless of the power of the United States, China, Russia, or of the still growing great economic powers, the importance of Europe does not and will not diminish unless we make some significant error, which will reduce the role of our continent to the periphery of the world. Among the questions about the future of Europe, there is a question about the future of Poland. We are worrying about the future of Europe because we are worrying about the future of Poland, about the standard of living of our citizens, about the perspectives of living in safety and the perspectives of wealthy life and high development.]

The underlined portions of the text show the use of quantitative accentuation by the speaker, i.e., lengthening the duration of vowels in the highlighted syllables. As one can see, there is a fairly large number of underlines in such a short text. The initial accents, on the other hand, are highlighted by using bold font. They may be seen as evidence that the speaker is aware that he is speaking monotonously and wants to make his message more dynamic. It seems that the slow tempo of delivery and quantitative accentuation are meant to increase the significance of the text. The speaker wants the audience to pause by each word he delivers. However, using just one means of expression – the quantity which is visible in almost every word pronounced by the speaker – is an example of isotony (or the flatness of intonation, which hampers the understanding of the message). The repetitiveness of melodic line also

---

<sup>10</sup> Appearance by Leszek Miller, *Dzień na żywo*, TVN 24. 15 Dec 2011.

lulls the alertness of the recipient, who is made to hear the melody of the appearance, while the words and, of course, their meaning do not reach him or her.

## Volume

[5] Debate on the conclusion of the Polish Presidency in the EU:

*Otóż ta nieco inna, mniej premierowska, bardziej doradcza, zausznikowska rola, w której pan premier występuje i w Brukseli i z tej trybuny, wiąże się z dwiema koncepcjami Europy, ale także dwiema koncepcjami Polski. I to jest podział rzeczywisty, dlatego ten spór będzie tak yyy tak yyy gorący, ale mam nadzieję przynajmniej na to, że dojdzie do bolesnego, ale jednak wytyczenia pewnego minimum punktów wspólnych. No na czym polegają te dwie zakorzenione w społeczeństwie polskim, dwie różne koncepcje Unii i koncepcje Polski. No jest koncepcja Polski lokalno-tubylczej i jest koncepcja Polski narodowej. Jeśli mówię o koncepcji Polski lokalno-tubylczej, to nie po to by kogokolwiek obrażać, nie odmawiam zwolennikom tej Polski patriotyzmu, przywiązania do ziemi ojczystej, przywiązania do kultury, nie formułuję zarzutu zdrady czy renegactwa. Niemniej to są koncepcje no w sposób przepaścisty różne, najkrócej można je scharakteryzować tak, że Polska lokalno-tubylcza przywiązana jest do tożsamości kulturowej, no bardziej na poziomie sentymalno-folklorystycznym, natomiast Polska narodowa, Solidarna Polska, Prawo i Sprawiedliwość są jakby z tej Polski narodowej, podtrzymuje ideę Polski jako bytu politycznego, jako jednostki politycznej, także jako wspólnoty i jako zobowiązania członków tej wspólnoty wobec niej<sup>11</sup>.*

[Now that somewhat different, less Prime-Minister, more counselling, sycophant role which Mr Prime Minister plays both in Brussels and from this rostrum, is tied to two ideas of Europe, as well as with two ideas of Poland. And this is a real division, therefore this dispute will be er so er heated, but I hope that at least a painful minimum of common items can be successfully established. Well, what are these two, rooted in the Polish society, two different ideas of the Union and ideas of Poland. Well, there is an idea of local-indigenous Poland, and there is an idea of national Poland. If I am talking about the idea of local-indigenous Poland, I do so not to offend anybody, I do not deny the advocates of such Poland their patriotism, attachment to the homeland, to the culture, I do not charge them as traitors or renegades. Nevertheless, these are ideas which are different, well, in a precipitous way, the shortest way to characterize them is that the local-indigenous Poland is connected with cultural identity, well, more at the sentimental and folkloristic level, while the national Poland, United Poland,

---

<sup>11</sup> Appearance by Ludwik Dorn, *Dzień na żywo*, TVN 24. 15 Dec 2011.

Law and Justice are more like from that national Poland, they maintain the idea of Poland as a political entity, a political unit, and also as a community and the obligation of the members of this community towards it.]

The underlines in the fragment above serve to emphasise the places where the sender used tonal accents (raised the tone). The speaker stresses some syllables, words, parts of sentences. The concentration of this single means may strengthen the impression of a demanding attitude of the speaker's appearance.

The figures 3 and 4 present the recording of a fragment of the speech showing the volume. It is visible in the lower part as a significant rise of the intonation line.

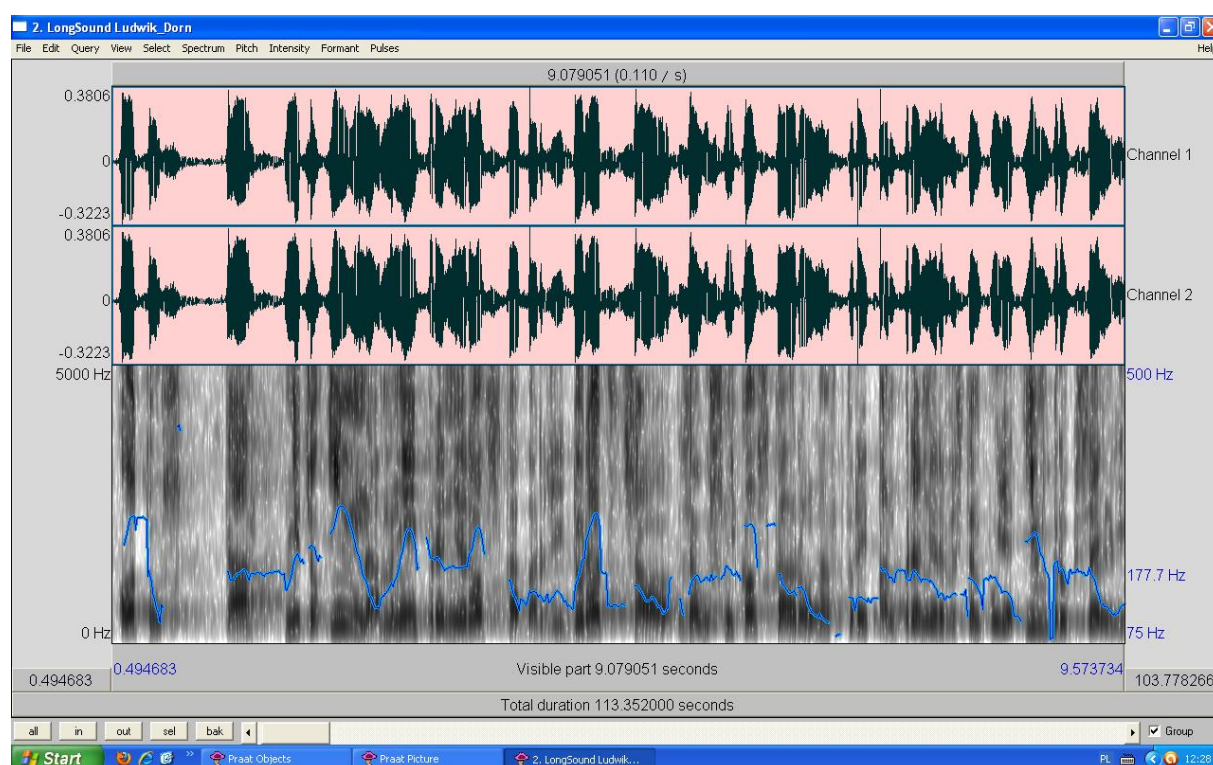


Figure 3. Recording of the words: *Otóż ta nieco inna, mniej premierowska, bardziej doradczą, zausznikowską rolę, w której pan premier występuje i w Brukseli* [Now that somewhat different, less Prime-Minister, more counselling, sycophant role which Mr Prime Minister plays both in Brussels]

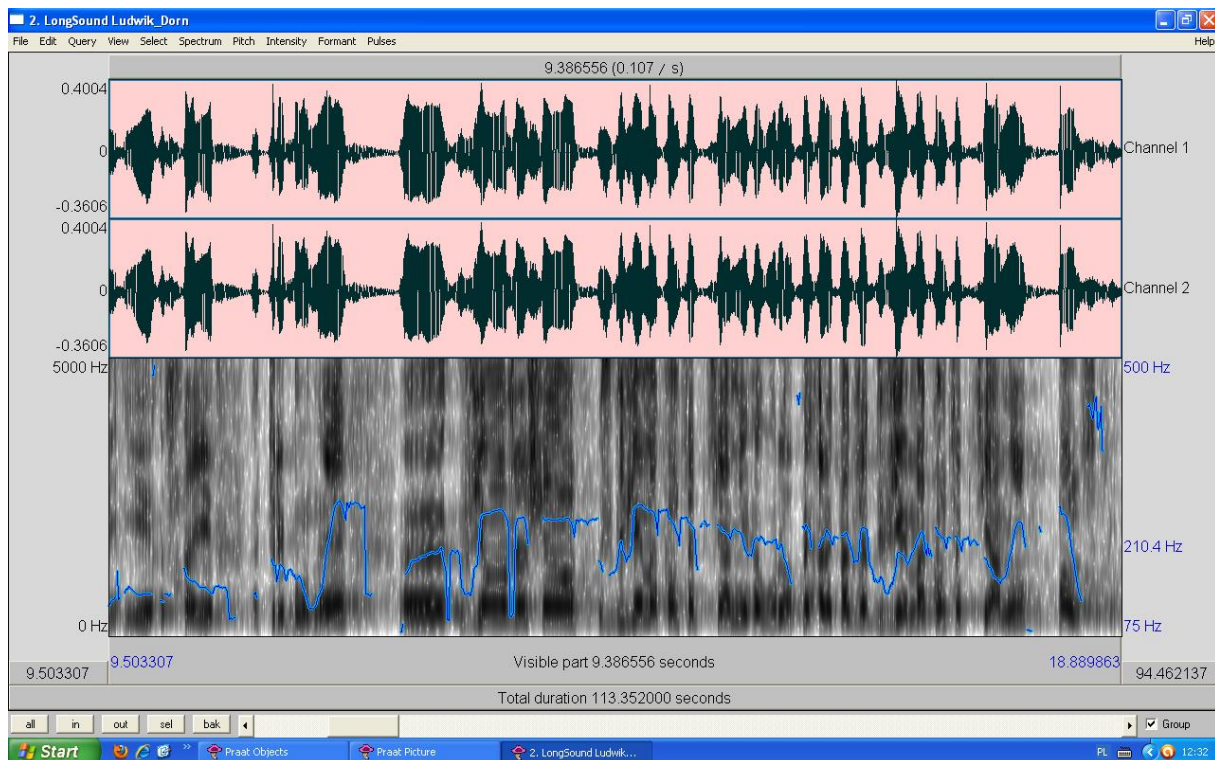


Figure 4. Recording of the words: (...) *i z tej trybuny, wiąże się z dwiema koncepcjami Europy, ale także dwiema koncepcjami Polski* [and from this rostrum, is tied to two ideas of Europe, as well as with two ideas of Poland]

The force of accentuation instils a mood of firmness, and stresses the resolve of the speaker, his or her positiveness in stating opinions. The accent is also used willingly to stress the self-confidence of the sender, the conviction that the beliefs he or she propagates are right. Using the force of accentuation more often contributes to the sense of involvement of the speaker. Used in moderation, it serves its intended role; however, if used to excess, just like any abused means of expression, it can lull the awareness of the recipients, who will become lost in the message. Due to the repetitive way of delivering tests, the listeners stop registering the content and do not listen but to the tone. The attention level of the recipients drops, the monotonous melody almost hypnotises them and relieves them from the necessity to follow the message. They will certainly not miss the end, when the loud voice of the speaker stops.

### Segmentation of the text and volume

[6] On the wire-tapping at the Agency of Agricultural Industry (Pol. *Agencja Przemysłu Rolnego*):

*Ja wierzę, że premier Tusk, / nowy nasz minister rolnictwa, / spotka się w trybie pilnym z nami, nas wysłucha. / I dowie się od nas, / a nie od ekspertów, / zapłacanych przez państwowe*

*pieniądze, jak to jest dobrze w rolnictwie. / Chciałem jednocześnie przeprosić kolegę Łukasika za to całe zdarzenie, ale myślę Władku, że trzymaj się, bo to nie jest wszystko takie łatwe i proste / polska wieś wymaga wielkiej opieki, / wielkiej reformy, / my o tym ciągle mówimy, / tylko bardzo mało nas wszyscy słuchają. / Jak państwo medialnie zajmujecie się problemami rolnictwa, to wtedy jak koń na Gubałówce zdechnie, / jak jakieś taśmy ktoś gdzieś zaimprovizuje, / być może / dzisiaj jest chwila prawdy, / i powiedzmy o tej prawdzie<sup>12</sup>.*

[I believe that Prime Minister Tusk, / our new Minister of Agriculture, / will meet us on urgent terms, listen to us. / And he will learn from us, / not from the experts, / payed by state money, how well it is going in the agriculture. / At the same time, I would like to apologise to my colleague Łukasik for all that situation, but I think, Władek, hang on, for it is not all so easy and simple / Polish country needs a lot of care, / a great reform, / we are always talking about it / but everyone is listening to us very little. / If you, as the media, pay attention to the problems of agriculture, you do so when a horse dies in Gubałówka, / when someone improvises some tapes somewhere, / perhaps / today it is a moment of truth, / and let us speak about that truth.]

The slashes in the text mark pauses, the limits of the phrases introduced by the speaker. In many cases these are random pauses which serve the speaker, it seems, to gather his thoughts, to make a decision what else to add to the sentence already going on or how to formulate the next one. The underlines, in turn, mark the places where the speaker used greater volume.

It flows from the markings in the text that it was delivered almost completely in a raised voice. One sentence, which seems to be a private interjection, was spoken at a moderate volume, which attest to a conscious effort of the speaker using increased volume. The aim could be showing an outrage at the behaviour of journalists, interested in matters of little importance, according to the speaker, and an attempt to break through the media noise to the audience with the speaker's own evaluation of the case of wire-tapping presented by the media. Increasing the volume combined with random segmentation of the text, however, may reveal the helplessness ensuing from irritation, lack of control over the situation, and inability to hide one's own emotions. In such a case, it is detrimental to the image of the speaker, bringing to mind the situations in which someone tries to divert the attention from his or her behaviour by attacking others. An attack, especially on journalists, who are still seen as the

---

<sup>12</sup> Press conference of Władysław Serafin, *Dzień na żywo*, TVN 24. 23 Jul 2012.

defenders of the public order, usually ends badly for the attacker. It presents him or her more often as someone who tries to hide the truth than to reveal it.

### **Pauses and slow tempo of delivery**

[7] Debate on the impeachment of the Marshal of the Sejm Ewa Kopacz:

*Jest [pauza] troska o bezpieczeństwo [pauza] naszych obywateli [kadencja, pauza]. To bezpieczeństwo [pauza] oczywiście rozgrywa się na [pauza] szeregu polach [kadencja, pauza]. Jest to bezpieczeństwo [pauza] zewnętrzne [pauza] – Bogu dzięki [pauza] granice mamy od dawna spokojne [antykadencja, pauza]. Jest to bezpieczeństwo [pauza] wewnętrzne – z tym gorzej, [pauza] ponieważ [pauza] kwestia przestępczości [pauza] jest [pauza] jak najbardziej aktualna [antykadencja, pauza], a [pauza] działania [pauza] rządu [pauza] są tutaj różne [antykadencja, pauza]. Mówię również o pewnych sprawach, które mówią o bezpieczeństwie wewnętrznym w trochę w innej [pauza] ważnej kwestii [kadencja, pauza]. To znaczy [pauza] zapewnienie, [pauza] żeby naród, żeby społeczeństwo się rozwijało [kadencja, pauza]. I po to, żeby się [pauza] społeczeństwo [pauza] i naród [pauza] i państwo rozwijało, [pauza] właśnie organa państwa, a takim niewątpliwie jest parlament i rząd [pauza], muszą zadbać o jakość [pauza] w nomenklaturze europejskiej – nazywa się to – [pauza] kapitału ludzkiego, czyli zasobów ludzkich [kadencja, pauza]. To od jakości [pauza] naszych obywateli [antykadencja, pauza], od ich zdolności [pauza] do twórczej, kreatywnej pracy [pauza] zależy pomyślność naszego państwa [kadencja, pauza]. Jednym z najistotniejszych [pauza] części tej [pauza] tej jakości [pauza] zasobów ludzkich [pauza] jest zdrowie [kadencja, pauza]. Amerykanie, którzy specjalizują się, obliczają wszystko [pauza], twierdzą w licznych opracowaniach [pauza], że 20 [pauza], 30 procent [pauza] pekabę [pauza] budowane jest w każdym państwie [pauza] w oparciu o jakość [pauza] zdrowotną [pauza] swoich [pauza] obywateli, swojego społeczeństwa [kadencja, pauza]<sup>13</sup>.*

[There is (pause) a concern about the security (pause) of our citizens (cadence, pause). This security (pause) obviously is played out in (pause) a range of fields (cadence, pause). It is an external (pause) security (pause) – thank God (pause) our borders have been calm for long (anticadence, pause). It is an internal (pause) security – this is worse, (pause) since (pause) the question of crime (pause) is (pause) quite on time (anticadence, pause), and (pause) the activities (pause) of government (pause) are varied here (anticadence, pause). I am also talking here about some issues pertaining to the internal security in another (pause) important

---

<sup>13</sup> Statement of Bolesław Piecha, *Dzień na żywo*, TVN 24. 26 May 2011.

matter (cadence, pause). It is (pause) to ensure (pause) the development of the nation, of the society (cadence, pause). And so that (pause) the society (pause) and the nation (pause) and the state could develop, (pause) it is the institutions of the state, which the parliament and the government indubitably are (pause), that must take care of the quality (pause) in European nomenclature – it is called – (pause) human capital, or human resources (cadence, pause). It is on the quality (pause) of our citizens (anticadence, pause), on their ability (pause) to work creatively (pause) that the prosperity of our country depends (cadence, pause). One of the most important (pause) parts of this (pause) this quality (pause) of human resources (pause) is health (cadence, pause). The Americans who specialize, who count everything (pause), claim in many reports (pause) that 20 (pause) 30 per cent (pause) of GNP (pause) in each country is created (pause) based on the (pause) health quality (pause) of their (pause) citizens, their society (cadence, pause).]

As one can see, there are very many pauses introduced by the speaker, following almost every word. The pauses in a text usually serve technical (allowing the sender to inhale air necessary to continue speaking) and interpretative needs: they increase the significance of the words immediately following a pause and allow the recipient to process the heard text.

Figures 5 and 6 contain the recording of a fragment of the appearance which show the pauses in the speech.

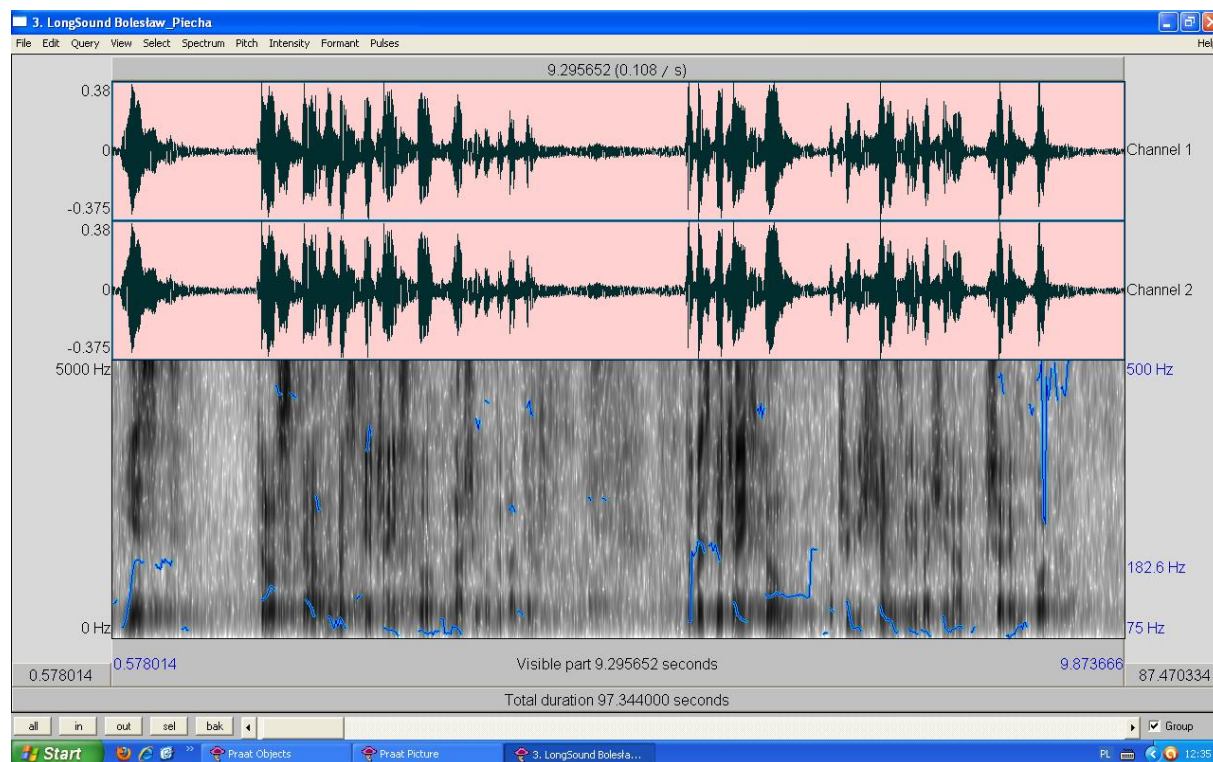


Figure 5. Recording of the words: *Jest [pauza] troska o bezpieczeństwo [pauza] naszych obywateli [kadencja, pauza]. To bezpieczeństwo [pauza] oczywiście rozgrywa się na [pauza] szeregach polach [kadencja, pauza]* [There is (pause) a concern about the security (pause) of our citizens (cadence, pause). This security (pause) obviously is played out in (pause) a range of fields (cadence, pause)]

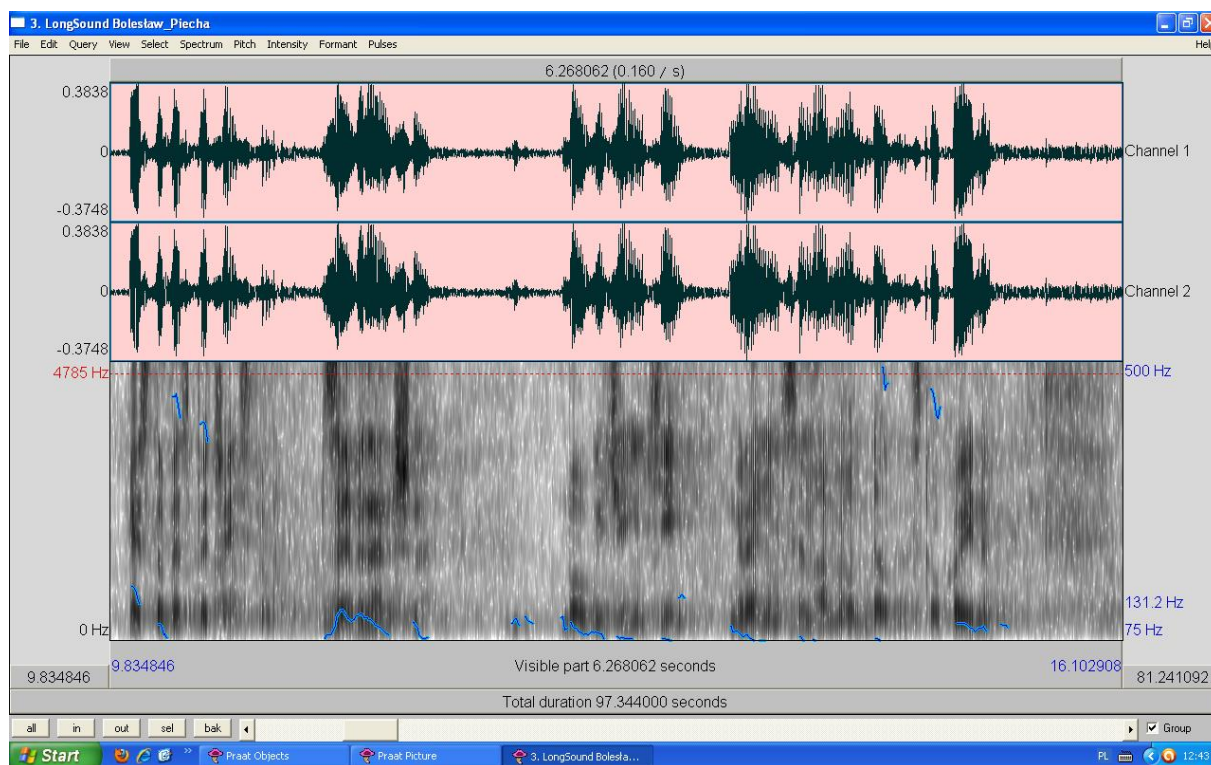


Figure 6. Recording of the words: *Jest to bezpieczeństwo [pauza] zewnętrzne [pauza] – Bogu dzięki [pauza] granice mamy od dawna spokojne [antykadencja, pauza]* [It is an external (pause) security (pause) – thank God (pause) our borders have been calm for long (anticadence, pause)]

It seems that in the latter message the excessively frequent pauses were meant to express the gravity of the words being spoken. However, using a single means to often (as we have already mentioned) leads to the monotony of the message and robs its meaning of its uniqueness. It is so in this speech fragment: too frequent pauses detract the attention of listeners. They may also indicate the speaker's lack of preparation causing the numerous pauses in order to search for more words.

The examples above are the ways of speaking most frequently used by the public figures in the media. They are an incentive to consider the vocal interpretation of text: which elements of the technique of the living word can be used by the speakers in order to make the proper impression on their recipients.



Some of the recordings presented above may also attest to the lack of interest of the speakers in the sounding of the texts they deliver, or the lack of understanding of the principles of vocal interpretation of texts. Most certainly, however, they are examples of the speakers contributing to the impoverishment of the sound layer of speech.

We can often read in the press about the preparations to perform a public function: employing stylists to care for the clothes, hairdressing, and make-up of a public functionary. Only rarely (though it happens) can we read about the vocal and intonational preparation, even though these elements are very important and affect interpersonal relations. Because of them, the way of speaking used by the sender may be perceived in the following categories:

- speaker's involvement – no involvement
- importance of the issue – no importance
- credibility – no credibility
- respect for the recipient – no respect

From a pragmatic point of view, these categories relate to the attitudes of senders of messages as well as the recipients, who either listen eagerly and with interest, or show indifference.

Sometimes people listen to a speaker with attention, regardless of the way he or she delivers the text, because his or her views and actions are entirely and uncritically accepted, e.g. by the followers of a given politician. It may also happen that the text which was delivered in the most attractive possible way (and exemplary regarding its linguistic correctness) will not be noticed and appreciated by political opponents, and may be even criticised. This should not affect, however, the speakers striving to achieve a varied way of speaking, which serves not only to increase involvement, stress the importance of the issue, its credibility and the respect for the recipient, but first and foremost increases the understanding of messages.