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***Tribe of slaves versus do whatever you please, or on freedom in Polish
weekly magazines***

KEY WORDS

freedom, liberty, value, slave, persuasion, weekly magazines

ABSTRACT

This sketch is dedicated to analysing the linguistic picture of *wolność* (freedom, liberty, independence) in Polish weekly magazines. The paper discusses the differences between how liberals (the “Polityka” and “Newsweek” weeklies) and conservatives (the “Do Rzeczy” and “wSieci” magazines) view *wolność*. In both ideological systems, it is one of the most important values, and thus worthy of protection, but its meaning and denotation are different. Besides, the perception of the state of freedom / liberty in Polish reality is not the same.

Freedom is an ambiguous, broad notion which touches upon many different spheres of life. The problem of freedom has often been explored by language and culture researchers, philosophers, sociologists and psychologists. Over the centuries, numerous philosophical concepts of freedom have been created: Plato associated the notion of freedom with the good, Aristotle - with an act of will, Kant - with dignity. Philosophers contemplated the relationship between freedom and morality, freedom and human awareness, freedom and law. Since the time of Isaiah Berlin, distinction has been made between negative freedom, i.e. “freedom from”, understood as the lack of compulsion, and positive freedom (“freedom to”) involving the human right to make unconstrained decisions. *Uniwersalny słownik języka polskiego* [A universal dictionary of the Polish language - *USJP*] provides four meanings of the lexeme *wolność*:

1. independence, autonomy of one state from other states with respect to internal affairs and external relations; sovereignty;

2. the ability to make decisions in accordance with one's own will, to undertake unhindered activity, determined by social and ethical factors; personal autonomy, liberty;

3. living, being out of prison, confinement (as opposed to arrest, compulsory isolation, confinement);

4. citizen rights defined by the common good, national interest and legal order¹.

More profound linguistic studies on freedom have shown that it undoubtedly represents one of the supreme positive values, highly appreciated by Polish people². It greatly surpasses all other values, even life which is seen as a universal value³, and the positive connotation it carries is often transferred into a wider context and adjacent notions (even those originally negative)⁴. The list of twenty banner words which, according to Walery Pisarek, represent the highest, most beautiful and precious values puts freedom in the fourth place (after love, family and accord, and before justice, tolerance, health, faith or the truth)⁵.

This sketch aims to describe the notion of *wolność* on the basis of the texts published in Polish opinion weeklies. The analysis covered four most popular periodicals, based on their sales figures – “Polityka”, “Newsweek”, “Do Rzeczy” and “wSieci” - published from August 2013 to July 2014. The research material was derived from the most important sections of the magazines, such as “Temat tygodnia” (Topic of the week), “Kraj/Polska” (Country/Poland), “Społeczeństwo” (Society) and “Polityka” (Politics). The corpus of texts thus created consisted of nearly 3,000,000 words.

The traditionally established definitions of many values - due to their high generality and conventionality - often undergo profound transformations in the social discourse, so that the modified terms can be used for persuasive purposes, such as self-creation and discrediting the opponent. Frequently, attempts are made to deny the right to a specific value to groups following a different ideology and accuse them of misunderstanding or distorting that value. As already mentioned, freedom is an ambiguous notion. It is therefore not surprising that the lexeme *wolność*, its synonyms and derivatives tend to be used intuitively, and those uses often

¹ *Uniwersalny słownik języka polskiego (USJP)* [Universal dictionary of the Polish language], ed. S. Dubisz, Warszawa 2003.

² See A. Wierzbicka, *Słowa klucze. Różne języki – różne kultury* [Key words. Different languages - different cultures], Warszawa 2007, pp. 239–294; M. Abramowicz, *Wolność* [Freedom] [in:] *Nazwy wartości* [Names of values], eds. J. Bartmiński, M. Mazurkiewicz-Brzozowska, Lublin 1993, pp. 147–155; M. Abramowicz, I. Karolak, *'Wolność' i 'liberté' w języku polskim i francuskim* [“Wolność” and “liberte” in the Polish and French language] [in:] *Język a kultura* [Language and culture], vol. 3: *Wartości w języku i tekście* [Values in language and text], eds. J. Puzynina, J. Anusiewicz, Wrocław 1991, pp. 51–59.

³ M. Abramowicz, I. Karolak, *'Wolność'...*, op. cit., p. 58.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ W. Pisarek, *Polskie słowa sztandarowe i ich publiczność* [Polish banner words and their audience], Kraków 2002.

stand in opposition to each other, or at least do not fully overlap. This may hinder the understanding between the social groups that hold different views and, consequently, perceive freedom in a different way, and may also value freedom differently⁶.

Since the weekly magazines under examination include both liberal (“Polityka”, “Newsweek”) and conservative ones (“Do Rzeczy”, “wSieci”), the reflections on the notion of freedom based on the analysis of specific contexts may additionally shed light on the problem of its ideologisation and help to answer the question about the influence of specific political views on the perception of freedom. This article will therefore attempt to answer at least several questions: What is the place of the value of freedom in contemporary social life? How is this value understood by conservatives and liberals? Is it defined arbitrarily and used instrumentally?

Due to the limited size of this sketch, the reconstruction of the linguistic picture of freedom will be confined to the analysis of the contexts in which the lexeme *wolność* appears. It will not, however, cover the uses of the words belonging to the lexeme’s semantic field or those morphologically related with it.

During the period covered by the study, the noun *wolność* appeared a total of 882 times in all periodicals, including 328 times in liberal weeklies and 554 times in conservative ones⁷. Thus, despite freedom being the central notion of liberal ideology, it is more often invoked by conservative journalists, which is probably due to the de-axiologisation of liberal discourse, referred to as pragmatic discourse by Katarzyna Kłosińska⁸. In the vast majority of contexts, *wolność* is used with a positive axiological load in both types of press. The exceptions include the uses restricted to a specific sphere of life or social group, such as those presenting (usually in an unobjective or even manipulative manner) the meaning of *wolność* which is allegedly ascribed to the lexeme by political opponents, as well as ironic uses. All those types of uses will be looked at more closely in further sections of this article.

The analysis will exclude the instances of the lexeme *wolność* with the meaning of “living outside prison” (meaning 3 of the noun according to the *USJP*), and its collocations such as *wyjść na wolność* ‘be freed from prison’, *osoby pozbawione wolności* ‘persons deprived of liberty’ or *kara ograniczenia wolności* ‘imprisonment, deprivation of liberty’.

⁶ Cf. A. Cegięła, *Patriotyzm: odświętny czy codzienny, sztandarowy czy zbędny?* [Patriotism: festive or daily, conspicuous or superfluous?] [in:] A. Cegięła et al, *Studia z etyki słowa* [Studies on the ethics of words], Warszawa 2014, pp. 141–142.

⁷ See. L. Polkowska, *Analiza ilościowa wartości i wartościowań w tygodnikach opinii* [A quantitative analysis of values and valuations in opinion magazines] [in:] A. Cegięła et al, *Studia* op.cit., p. 31.

⁸ K. Kłosińska, *Etyczny i pragmatyczny. Polskie dyskursy polityczne po 1989 roku* [Ethical and pragmatic. Polish political discourses after 1989], Warszawa 2012.

Those uses do not seem to contribute much to further analysis. Moreover, no separate discussion will be devoted to meaning 4 (“citizen rights”) which is signalled by means of the plural form (*wolności* ‘freedoms’; *swobody obywatelskie* ‘civic liberties’). Such uses of the lexeme are extremely uncommon - they only appeared several times in all four magazines during the period under study.

***Wolność* in liberal weekly magazines**

The picture of freedom in liberal weekly magazines is quite homogeneous and internally coherent. In “Polityka”, leaving aside the lexeme’s meaning associated with justice apparatus, the noun mainly appears in a very general sense (close to meaning 2 of the *USJP*, e.g.: “[...] the essence of liberal philosophy is to ensure a greater freedom to an individual, put emphasis on individual rights; in the generation of freedom, few understand what happened back then and what Poland owes to Mr Mazowiecki”). The noun *wolność* is rarely accompanied by additional modifiers restricting its scope. The most frequent adjectives are: *osobista* ‘personal’ and *obyczajowa* ‘moral’. Phrases such as *wolność sumienia/wyznania* ‘freedom of conscience/religion’ are less common. Freedom is one of the supreme values, often placed above other values (such as, e.g., safety or tax honesty), and its subject is usually an individual rather than a society. It is often put in opposition to *radykalizm* ‘radicalism’ and *fundamentalizm* ‘fundamentalism’, as well as *przemoc* ‘violence’ and *dyskryminacja* ‘discrimination’. Liberal press hardly ever uses the noun *wolność* in an ironic or negative sense. The only exception are the texts which present the opinions of other social groups or specific individuals regarded by the sender as political or ideological opponents. They sometimes contain a direct, faithful quotation, and sometimes are limited to free indirect speech:

Already in 1930, Pius XI called all contraception “criminal freedom”. (PL⁹, 43/2013)

Pius VI condemned the freedom of speech, thought and religion as monstrous. “What could be more senseless than to establish among men equality and this unbridled freedom which seems to quench reason”, he asked. Gregory XVI was most outraged by “that absurd and erroneous claim, or rather this folly, that it is necessary to grant everyone the freedom of conscience”. He also found the “abominable freedom of print” to be unacceptable. (PL, 43/2013)

⁹ The following abbreviations are employed in the article: PL - „Polityka”; NS - „Newsweek”; DR - „Do Rzeczy”; WS - „wSieci”.

At the basic level, the lexeme *wolność* bears a negative load (this is reflected by the adjectives that go with it, which contain a negatively valuing definitional component, such as “criminal” (Pol. *zbrodnicza*), “unbridled” (Pol. *wyuzdana*), “abominable” (Pol. *przebrzydła*), “monstrous” (Pol. *monstrualna*) (*wolność*). However, as the recipients know the sender’s attitude to the quoted opinions (both on the basis of their own extralinguistic knowledge and the way in which the quotation is introduced), they are able to reconstruct the sender’s actual attitude to freedom and read the positive load of the lexeme at a higher level.

Even the two fragments quoted above indicate that “Polityka” sees the Church and the related circles as the main opponent of freedom and the greatest threat to it, although that issue appears less frequently and is merely hinted at.

[...] the Church in our country is strongly militant, although under decidedly antileftist slogans, and it stands in sharp opposition to modern culture which is based on the idea of freedom (of an individual and a society) [...]. In a Catholic-conservative perspective, relativism is evil because it rejects the absolute truth revealed by God and, along with it, the clear distinction between good and evil. Such an interpretation ignores the fundamental social fact that people have different views on faith, God, truth, Church, morality and freedom. (PL, 12/2014)

In addition to the texts which in general terms talk about the negative influence of the Church on the state of freedom in Poland, there are also examples of specific actions of its representatives which are evaluated as showing the lack of respect for the freedom of particular individuals (“administering the sacrament of anointing to an unconscious patient without their consent constitutes an infringement of the freedom of conscience”; if a citizen sufficiently clearly expressed his or her intention concerning the membership in a religious organisation, their freedom of conscience and religion cannot be restricted by the internal regulations of that organisation”). Interestingly, the magazine does not point to any other groups that would be described as having a negative attitude to freedom. In particular, there are no contexts which would refer to the threats from the right-wing political opposition, or its specific representatives. The following passage is the only exception:

It is nothing other than banishing from the consciousness the realities of political life in Poland, where the freedom-seeking, centralist, liberal, conservative, oppressive, rational and conspiratorial, Radio Maryja-related, or European issues, even the assassination attempt or the crash, were divided in some manner between the two major parties. (PL, 44/2013)

The above opinion does not express an explicit evaluation of the opposition, but rather suggests it in an allusive manner. Its interpretation in line with the sender's intention is only possible when the reader has a wider knowledge of the world and the magazine's political orientation. The knowledge allows the sequentially listed adjectives to be divided between the two political forces mentioned in the passage, attributing them unequivocally to either one or the other party as their inherent characteristics. Ascribing the "freedom-seeking" (Pol. *wolnościowy*) quality to the ruling party, i.e. the Civic Platform, logically entails denying that characteristic to the opposition, i.e. the Law and Justice party (which, in turn, is branded with *opresyjność* 'being oppressive' and *spiskowość* 'being conspiratorial'). The quoted fragment is the only example of the technique often referred to as the appropriation of values, which appears in "Polityka", although obviously not in an explicit manner. The use of an allusion devoid of linguistic exponents is intended to imply that the political opponents negate the value of freedom, at the same time accusing another entity - Radio Maryja - of the unwillingness to respect that value. This is achieved by both the serial structure and the phenomenon known as infectious neighbourhood when the evaluation of one element of a text is transferred to another that accompanies the first one.

Another interesting problem is the acceptance for the limitations on freedom. The limitations which are viewed positively are extremely rarely mentioned in "Polityka" and the problem itself is approached in a restrictive manner. The only limitation that is not merely accepted, but also promoted is - in accordance with the basic principle of liberalism - the freedom and welfare of other people:

Denying a person the right to choose what they want to intoxicate themselves with, as long as their behaviour poses no threat to the safety and health of other people, is contrary to the constitutional precept to respect the essence and core of freedom and rights. (PL, 34/2013)

The advocates of "the freedom of choice" completely ignore the fact that vaccinations protect not only an individual, but primarily the society, and that the statutory requirement of vaccination and epidemiological inspection was introduced in order to protect the healthy against infectious diseases. (PL, 39/2013)

The last fragment is one of the few examples in which *wolność* has a contextual negative connotation. It is, however, not unequivocal. The inverted commas accompanying the phrase "freedom of choice" (Pol. *wolność wyboru*) indicate that the sender distances itself

from this term which was in a sense invalidated, or at least questioned in this way. Thus, it is not freedom as such that is evaluated negatively, but rather the attitude of the people referred to in this fragment, which they themselves call *wolność*. This phenomenon will be discussed more fully in further parts of this text.

A similar, though not identical picture of freedom emerges from the texts published in “Newsweek”. Although the magazine offers few examples of the noun *wolność* with a negative axiological load, the value itself is not that glorified and uncontested. It occupies a slightly lower position in the hierarchy - it should be subordinated to, e.g. safety and be accompanied by responsibility (“there is no freedom without responsibility”), there are also attempts to define the boundaries of freedom, so it does not turn into *chamstwo* ‘boorishness’ and *samowola* ‘arbitrariness’.

Mature people can respect norms and rules, also those concerning safety, even when they enjoy summertime freedom. Those who are less mature tend to forget about such rules. NS, 34/2013)

[...] if we have private property and freedom understood as arbitrariness, but we lack many centuries of civic traditions, sense of community and supra-individual responsibility, the things are the way they are. NS, 20/2014)

In “Newsweek”, the noun *wolność* is less frequently used in such a broad sense as in “Polityka”. The vast majority of phrases contain a modifier which restricts the meaning of the noun and the reference group (*wolność słowa* ‘freedom of expression’, *wolność ekonomiczna* ‘economic freedom’, *cygańska wolność* ‘Bohemian freedom’, *wolność seksualna* ‘sexual freedom’), Those definitions primarily emphasise its strong relationship with tolerance and respect for otherness:

The essence of freedom, democracy, free market, also free market of ideas, lies in the fact that it encompasses people with different worldviews that clash and produce sparks. NS, 25/2014)

On the other hand, religion is placed in opposition to freedom:

[...] Today’s youth is different. For many, the access to drugs or free sex is not freedom, but evil. I know 20-year-olds who reprimand their parents: “Behave yourselves, put that weed away, you should go to church”. NS, 31/2013)

Both the emphasis placed on the necessary restrictions of freedom which are its inherent part *ex definitione* and arise from the principles of social coexistence, and the attempts to define freedom independently are linked to another problem - how freedom is perceived by other groups, including ideological opponents. "Newsweek" stresses the fact that freedom tends to be treated instrumentally and manipulatively used as a slogan. Under the pretence of concern, and sometimes even fight for freedom, the right wing commits unethical acts which have little to do with genuine pursuit of freedom, and sometimes may even be used to cover up the violations of freedom:

This is manipulation and abuse. They [the journalists of the "Wprost" weekly magazine, the comment refers to the magazine's cover which, during the so-called tape scandal, featured the words *wolność słowa* 'freedom of expression' written in *solidaryca* font - LP] have no right to do it. Because this is no great defence of freedom of expression, the next issue of the magazine with recordings leaves us with no illusions. At that point, media turn into a blackmailer. NS, 27/2014)

[...] a real attack on the freedom of expression took place in Poznań in the form of cancelling the performance "Golgota Picinic" and was covered up by an unreal threat to the freedom of expression in Warsaw in the form of the prosecutor's raid of the editorial office. NS, 27/2014)

Ideological opponents, especially the representatives of Law and Justice and the Church, are presented as the opponents of freedom, a threat to freedom, and simultaneously a group which unlawfully assumes the role of defenders of freedom. "Newsweek" introduces this view into its texts in two ways: The sender either expresses its opinion directly (sometimes supporting it with a suitable *exemplum*), or uses the persuasively elaborated free indirect speech to reconstruct the style of expression and views of its opponents.

It is hard to organise a good political debate in Poland today without the risk of it being smashed up by the extreme right-wing militia. Such an activity is not incidental, but systemic. It affects the public debate and the state of freedom of expression. NS, 27/2013)

For a long time, the Church in Poland was the ally of people fighting for freedom, it was a sanctuary of freedom. This, however, has begun to change lately. NS, 33/2013)

The justified outrage at the prosecutor's activities was efficiently silenced by doubts, creating a clear division into the demoralised power that tramples on the freedom of expression, and the brave defenders of that freedom. Let alone the fact that nobody tramples on the freedom of expression, whereas the reputation and intentions of the "defenders" are somewhat dubious. NS, 26/2014)

In the last fragment, the sender first used the technique of ironic quotation of somebody else's evaluations, and then - also using irony, understood in a classic way as "false pretence", i.e. the contrast between the literal and nonliteral level¹⁰ - commented on those evaluations, thus revealing its own view. The sender's distance from the axiological perspective ascribed to the political opponents is additionally enhanced by the inverted commas accompanying the noun "defenders" (Pol. *obrońcy*) which refers to them.

Irony is a popular technique with "Newsweek's" journalists who use it to devalue their opponents and describe their attitude to freedom:

Good Catholics (since the bad ones are in favour of *in vitro* and the freedom of choice), give us a true testimony of your faith. What does a sticker with a fish on your car mean, a fish wholesaler? Be radical like your views, have blue fish tattooed on your forehead! NS, 28/2013)

The above passage uses the phrase "freedom of choice" (Pol. *wolność wyboru*) as a synonym of abortion (this is additionally confirmed by placing it next to *in vitro* in the sequential structure). However, it seems that the use of that term is intended not only to introduce a positive valuation of the practice of abortion (by means of a hidden *petitio principii*), but primarily to additionally discredit the social group at whom that comment is addressed, i.e. the Catholics. Since those (ironically called "good") people oppose the freedom of choice, which bears unequivocally positive characteristics, they themselves are negatively evaluated. The choice of the hyperonymic, periphrastic phrase allows the sender to introduce a favourable axiological perspective by ascribing to ideological opponents the lack of respect for one of the main values. The very wording of the phrase, which contains a positively charged noun, performs an important persuasive function. *Wolność* behaves here like a magic word - it reinforces the whole message in line with the sender's intentions.

The conviction held by "Newsweek's" journalists about the deliberate distortion of the sense of freedom by the right wing of the political scene results in the individual uses of the

¹⁰ Cf. D. S. Muecke, *Ironia: Podstawowe kwalifikacje* [Irony. Basic qualifications], "Pamiętnik Literacki" [Literary memoir], 1986, vol. 1, p. 252.

noun *wolność* with a negative axiological load. Obviously, the contexts where freedom is negatively charged do not invalidate the positive valuation of that lexeme in its basic, dictionary meaning. The negative loading is intended to direct the recipient towards the modified version of that value pursued by political opponents, and, more precisely, towards the variant of the value which is ascribed by the sender to the opposing party. This use of the noun *wolność* can therefore be called metatextual or mediated, since it becomes an element of the foreign worldview and way of thinking, as reconstructed by the sender, of the people referred to in this comment.

It is apparent that while the journalists of “Polityka” focus primarily on the value of freedom as such, “Newsweek” devotes an equal amount of attention to those who pose threat to freedom or manipulate it in a dishonest way. The society is clearly divided into two groups: those who are genuinely attached to freedom (“the admiration of the Gdansk aesthetes for the idea of freedom was authentic”), and those who are denied the right to invoke freedom because - according to the journalists - they distort its meaning.

On the other hand, the two liberal weeklies clearly share fact that among the numerous examples of positively valued freedom one can also find those where the sender speaks of “the freedom from”. Sometimes it is mentioned literally, e.g.:

The constitution guarantees not only the freedom of religion, but also the right to freedom from religion. This is confirmed by the recent decisions issued by the Polish courts: state institutions should not automatically assume that every Polish person is a Catholic. (PL, 6/2014)

Sometimes it is expressed implicitly:

We do not need freedom as a field of creation, free expression. We need it so that everybody leaves us in peace. NS, 46/2013)

Although the positive charging of freedom in the first example is beyond any doubt, the second case is much more complicated. We are dealing here with a quotation of somebody else’s judgement - freedom understood as “being left in peace” (Pol. *święty spokój*) is definitely positively valued by the people who are the subject of the comment. The sender’s evaluation appears at a higher level. As the sender juxtaposes “being left in peace” with “freedom of creation” (Pol. *wolność twórcza*), and the nouns “creation” (Pol. *tworzenie*) and “expression” (Pol. *ekspresja*) have a stable positive connotation, it should be assumed that

the first part of the expression represents a negative element of the juxtaposition. The outcome is additionally complicated by the grammatical form of the text. Although it was written in the first person plural, the sender does not belong to the community defined in this way.

Finally, another characteristic feature of the picture of freedom in liberal press should be mentioned. The picture is not composed of, on the one hand, historical contexts (which appear incidentally and are mainly limited to reflections on the restrictions of freedom in communist Poland) and, on the other hand, the uses where the noun *wolność* is synonymous to *niepodległość* 'independence' or *suwerenność* 'sovereignty' (meaning 1 according to *USJP*). Collocations such as *walczyć o wolność* 'to fight for freedom' or *walka o wolność* 'the fight for freedom' are extremely rarely used. In "Polityka", the phrase is used only once, and it is negatively charged - which is clearly indicated by means of inverted commas - to refer to political opponents:

One of the "rebellious" journalists wrote on a right-wing website that disgrace is the price paid by the West for the lack of victims in the Crimean conflict. This reasoning reveals a distinctive longing for something "big", for a genuine "fight for freedom" which would involve real victims who could later be commemorated with monuments. (PL, 12/2014)

In this way, the sender points to the significant difference in the perception of freedom by liberals and conservatives, the latter being shown as permanently adhering to the liberation tradition.

***Wolność* in conservative weekly magazines**

A completely different picture of freedom can be found in the right-wing press. Although freedom continues to be one of the major values and therefore deserves protection, its interpretation, the semantic scope ascribed to it, as well as the perception of its status in Polish reality are completely different. Moreover, the picture is neither so homogeneous nor that coherent as was the case in liberal periodicals. Conservative press primarily accentuates the close, inseparable link between freedom and dignity, and suggests that freedom was given by God, is inalienable and sacred. On the other hand, there is an equally frequent view that freedom cannot be received for free, it can only be gained through fight, and its value exceeds the value of life. Poland - in accordance with the tradition of Romantic Messianism - plays a particularly important role in that fight ("the conviction about carrying the torch of freedom, the vocation to fulfil a spiritual mission among other nations is the essence of Polishness, the core of our collective thinking"). We will return to this interesting issue later in this article.

In both those conservative weeklies, the majority of contexts which contain the noun *wolność* refer to the sphere of independence. They include both the comments on historic events (often concerning the recent reality of communist Poland and more distant times of fight for independence) and on the present-day situation. Another characteristic feature is the fact that at least half of the occurrences of the lexeme *wolność* can be found in the texts concerning the threats to freedom and attempts to annihilate freedom by forces which are more or less defined at the level of the text. Consequently, the following collocations appear with a very high frequency: *zamach na wolność* ‘attempt to limit freedom’, *atak na wolność* ‘attack on freedom’, *dławić wolność* ‘to suppress freedom’, *zabijać wolność* ‘to kill freedom’ or *wróg wolności* ‘enemy of freedom’. This negativist perspective is typical of right-wing discourse as such¹¹. It is therefore not surprising that it also appears as part of the discourse about freedom.

The historical texts which speak of freedom are in line with the Polish martyrological and liberation tradition. They are written in a highly pompous style, emphasise the heroic fight of particular individuals and entire groups (“mines, steel works, shipyards and universities saw the strikes of young workers and students who fought for what Polish people considered to be the most precious - the freedom of their country and human dignity”). Among the (more or less contemporary) heroes, the following are mentioned: Cavalry Captain Pilecki, Cardinal Wyszyński and President Lech Kaczyński - the icons of the right-wing discourse about freedom. The emphasis placed by the sender on the positively valued acts of the people belonging to its reference group is an element of the rhetoric of positive self-creation. It corresponds with the two-valued perception of extralinguistic reality where everybody who is not with us is against us. The fight for freedom - which lies at the foundation of a group identity - fulfils the role of a community-forming element. For this reason, “Do Rzeczy” exposes all manifestations of unjustified claiming of credit for that fight. The right to invoke the fight for freedom is often denied to people representing other political or social circles. Sometimes the “Do Rzeczy” journalists explicitly mention the names of people who, in their opinion, unlawfully “hook up” to the great liberation movement from the period of communist Poland. This is an extreme example of unethical misappropriation of values:

¹¹ Cf. M. Czyżewski, “‘Język wrogości’ oraz spór o III i IV RP w perspektywie analizy dyskursu publicznego. Wybrane rezultaty projektu badawczego oraz uwagi metodologiczne [“The language of hostility” and the dispute about the 3rd and 4th Republic in the perspective of public discourse analysis. Selected results of the research project and methodological remarks] [[in:] *Język IV Rzeczypospolitej* [Language of the 4th Republic] , eds. M. Czerwiński, P. Nowak, R. Przybylska, Lublin 2010, p. 57; K. Kłosińska, *Etyczny...*, op. cit., p. 37; L. Polkowska, *Język prawicy* [The right-wing language], Warszawa 2015, pp. 78, 254-259.

Young people [...] above all wanted freedom, although they obviously understood it in different ways. But was that really what everybody wanted? During the debate, an interview with Jerzy Owskiak was presented, which was filmed for the purposes of the programme. To my bewilderment, he portrayed himself as an independent youth activist of the 1980s and one of the pioneers of youth rebellion. “I took out the leaflets from my suitcase and threw them around”, he said when speaking of a Voo concert. I couldn’t believe my ears and I protested immediately. The fact is that Jerzy Owskiak appeared in Jarocin in 1988, accompanied by the enigmatic Society of Friends of Chinese Towels (Pol. *Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Chińskich Ręczników*). His “rallies”, however, were by no means devoted to the cause of freedom. (DR, 2/2014)

In the veteran memories of the generation who experienced their first intoxication with alcohol and love to the rhythms of the Jarocin festival, rock music emerges as a purposely anti-state and anti-communist activity, an oasis of freedom and independence - anyone who merely arranged the stands on a stage now feels they contributed to “smashing the system” [...]. The legend of the “anti-system rebellion” represented by the “rhythms of freedom” should be supplemented with the history of controlling and taming that rebellion [...]. It seems noteworthy that future minister Andrzej Olechowski was recruited as a disc jockey by the Polish Radio Programme 3. (DR, 2/2014)

Conservative journalists have set themselves the goal of dispelling the false myth concerning the political transformation of 1989. In particular, they question the positive assessment of the Round Table and the achievements of Lech Wałęsa. To this end, the sender sometimes limits itself to irony.

WAŁĘSA’S ALPHABET He embarrassed Chuck Norris and single-handedly smashed the communism in Europe, thus bringing welfare and freedom to millions. His advice was sought by crowned heads, presidents, the Pope and pop stars. Let us recall that living legend. (WS, 12/2014)

The devotion to the Polish independence tradition also gives rise to the belief - often verbalised in both weeklies - that genuine freedom can only be accomplished by fighting:

He [Lech Kaczyński - LP] wanted Poland to be strong and independent. He wanted the people in Poland to be free and decide about their own fate. He knew that freedom is not given for free. You either fight for it and then cherish it dearly, or you lose it. (DR, 37/2013)

This is a very symbolic ending of Zbigniew Romaszewski's life. The life of a guardian of law who knew that freedom is not given for free, that you have to fight for it and sometimes pay a high price for it. (DR, 8/2014)

The contexts where the lexeme *wolność*, or the words morphologically related to it, refer to the present day are primarily concerned with emphasising threats. The threats are numerous and of varied nature. On the one hand, the danger may come from the outside (“even weakened Russia is dangerous to Poland, and even a partial implementation of Putin's plans poses a threat to our freedom”), and, on the one hand, the freedom of Polish people is jeopardised by various social groups existing in Poland. Typically, their activities are presented as an element of a deliberate, carefully planned, wide-ranging strategy aiming to destroy freedom and subjugate all Polish people who represent a different worldview. One of the greatest threats to freedom, according to conservative press, is gender ideology (“gender attack on freedom”, also called “the cultural totalitarianism”), supported by the authorities:

Gender ideology goes much further than the equal rights of women and men [...]. It is a path leading to totalitarianism. [...] If someone does not draw a clear line for interference with culture, politics, family and religious life, we will have to worry about our own freedom. (DR, 45/2013)

[...] they [parents - LP] will be forced to submit themselves to the will of the state in matters concerning the upbringing of their own children. The process aims to destroy our freedom, turn us into passive consumers who are obedient to the ideological line set by the state. The family based on stable marriage [...] is the main obstacle on the way to constructing such a system. (DR, 1/2014)

In both passages quoted above, the sender uses an *ad metum* argument. By appealing to recipients' fear, evoked through the created vision of the future, the sender depreciates the ideological opponents, including the ruling party to which it attributes the intention to promote, or even impose, gender ideology. As a result of the eristic argumentation, the Civic Platform emerges as the main destructor of civil liberties. This role is attributed to the party in many comments which refer to “interference with civil right and liberties”, “persecution of people who defend the freedom of conscience”, “tyranny which does not allow a doctor to make his own decisions”, or “totalitarian tendencies”. Conservative journalists frequently employ *ad consequentiam* arguments to create a persuasively elaborated vision of the future in which another victory of the Civic Platform is tantamount to complete loss of freedom.

The day after the possibly won election, the media lever will be shifted again. The country will once more begin to be disturbed, disunited and divided, and the government will be incompetent, scheming, and preparing attempts against particular social groups and citizens' freedom. (WS, 33/2013)

The freedom of Polish people is not defended by any state structures, including the judiciary (which is obviously dependent on the government), and Polish people are presented with "Lukaszenko-style shows" instead of protection. All this has led the journalists of "Do Rzeczy" and "wSieci" - although the latter mention the problem more frequently and directly - to the pessimistic conclusion that freedom (often described by means of the extended phrase *prawdziwa wolność* 'genuine freedom', as opposed to *pozór wolności* 'semblance of freedom') does not exist in Poland. Freedom is understood both as Poland's independence of other countries (meaning 1: "now Poland's fate is decided by the Russian and German secret services, Russian and German agents"), and the citizens' ability to make independent decisions (meaning 2). Fighting seems to be the only way in which freedom can be regained and the country protected from "self-destruction". While the "Do Rzeczy" journalists merely warn us against the imminent necessity of such a fight, the "wSieci" weekly directly calls for fighting. Those calls are dominated by vocabulary belonging to elevated style and pompous tone, and the entire text - as exemplified by the following passage - can be additionally structured as an expressive rhetorical period:

[...] everyone who loves freedom and wants to be free, every Polish nobleman - and each of us is a Polish nobleman - can become a soldier of the Polish Commonwealth. Everyone - all you only need is a little bit of madness. A bit of madness is indispensable in this case. (WS, 31-32/2013)

The diagnosis of the state of Polish freedom is sometimes extremely negative, and the enemy to this freedom - although not always named, but even more dangerous due to the undefined reference - is described by means of highly aggressive language, containing numerous hyperboles and strongly emotional vocabulary.

[...] we cannot willingly give up our Polish existence - that is to say, Polish freedom which is not our invention, our intellectual concept, our illusion, but which was granted to us a long time ago, before time began. This fierce, savage anti-Polish propaganda which we are experiencing at the moment is aimed at persuading and forcing Polish people to

annihilate themselves, stop being Polish, give up their Polishness - that is, to give up their freedom. (WS, 31-32/2013)

Just like the blood of the Katyń officers, after many years of being lied about and washed out with a hose, became the building block of free Poland, in the same way the blood of the 96 Poles who flew to pay their tribute to the Katyń officers is becoming the building block of Polish freedom. As a consequence of spilling that blood, the degenerate, degraded, intimidated and weary nation with a broken backbone still has a chance - thanks to that blood". (WS, 47/2013)

Both those passages were written in elevated style. The pathos of expression is achieved by means of numerous repetitions ("a long time ago, before time began"), clusters ("degenerate, degraded, intimidated and weary nation") and climaxes ("persuading and forcing", "to annihilate themselves, stop being Polish, give up Polishness"). The second example is particularly symptomatic and probably the most shocking of all the material collected as it contains an element of creation of the founding myth of free Poland. It makes clear reference to the mythical meaning of blood¹² and the mythical understanding of sacrifice according to the principle *do ut des* ("I give so you may give"). Once again, it appears that in order to achieve freedom, the nation has to make a human blood sacrifice, that is to sacrifice to God that which we hold dearest. The sacrifice - like the Christian ritual of offering gifts to God - sanctifies both the gift itself - the Polish representatives who died at Smoleńsk - and the giver, i.e. the Polish nation¹³ and consequently, as noted by René Girard, "restores harmony and strengthens the social bond"¹⁴. We are also dealing here with a repetition, which is extremely important from a ritualistic point of view. Generally speaking, the sacrifice at Smolensk is a repetition of that at Katyń, as a result of which the boundary between the past and the present becomes blurred. They merge into one, eternally valid, mythical time¹⁵. The Smolensk crash becomes a symbol that is consistent with the mythology of the Polish nation - a symbol of the beginning. This time, it is not only the beginning of free Poland in the sense of independence of other states (as was the case with the Katyń sacrifice), but also of Poland where freedom - the genuine freedom - will become reality¹⁶.

¹² Cf. J.P. Roux, *Krew: mity, symbole, rzeczywistość* [Blood: myths, symbols, reality], Kraków 1994, p. 269.

¹³ Cf. C.G. Jung, *Ofiara mszalna* [Sacrifice of the Mass] [in:] *Antropologia widowisk* [Anthropology of spectacles], eds. A. Chałupnik et al., Warszawa 2005, p. 288.

¹⁴ R. Girard, *Kryzys ofiarniczy* [Sacrificial crisis] [in] *ibidem*, p. 299.

¹⁵ Cf. M. Eliade, *Sacrum, mit, historia. Wybór esejów* [Sacrum, myth, history. A selection of essays], ed. M. Czerwiński, Warszawa 1974, p. 86.

¹⁶ Cf. M. Eliade, *Aspekty mitu* [Aspects of myth], Warszawa 1998, pp. 39–43.

The victim narration is additionally augmented by the narration of hatred which is, on the one hand, directed against those who - by analogy - “wash the blood of the Smolensk victims with a hose”, and on the other hand against today’s Polish nation which is “degenerate, degraded and with a broken backbone”. Despite the rhetoric of national liberation, the quoted comment reveals contempt for contemporary Poles, because the idealised, venerated nation it refers to is the nation of the future which will only be reborn through sacrifice.

As has already been demonstrated, the opponents of Polish freedom are not only explicitly mentioned, but also stigmatised. In order to discredit them, conservative weeklies use three slightly different persuasive techniques. The first and basic one was used in the passages quoted above and involves the explicit formulation of opinions about the threat posed to freedom in Poland by specific groups. In those contexts, the lexeme *wolność* becomes a magical word that puts end to any debate. The second technique involves those texts where the sender comments on the rhetoric of freedom employed by the ideological opponents, pointing to its dishonesty and insincerity. The persuasive function is fulfilled here by the vocabulary belonging to the semantic field of *obluda* ‘hypocrisy’ and phrases such as *pod pozorem* ‘under the pretence’, *pod przykrywką* ‘under the cover’ or *pod płaszczykiem* ‘under the guise’, e.g.:

He [Adam Michnik - LP] represents the type of fanaticism which I abhor most, because under the pretence of concern for people, freedom and democracy he promotes the hard-line anti-Catholic and anti-Polish political option. (WS, 6/2014)

Piotr Rogowski, Agora’s legal counsel, gained a sort of renowned in this regard when he started to sue Adam Michnik’s critics. At that time, the journalists of *Gazeta* claimed rather hypocritically that the newspaper from Czerna Street supported the freedom of expression, but not the freedom of insulting. (DR, 37/2013)

The third depreciation technique is to accuse the opponents of distorting the meaning of freedom. They are often accused of understanding freedom too broadly or incorrectly, applying it to the wrong spheres of life, or deliberate deformation of that value in the name of their own, narrow interests. Those comments often use both irony (usually indicated by means of inverted commas) and vocabulary containing a negative definitional component, e.g. nouns such as *dyktat* ‘diktat’, *tyrania* ‘tyranny’ or *zamordyzm* ‘despotism’:

If those who flee from this “savage country” think that real freedom can be found in the pubs of London, they certainly represent a pool of potential left-wing voters. (DR, 24/2014)

The motto *Róbta co chceta* (Do whatever you please) which accompanies Owsiak’s activity is often interpreted by young people as encouragement to use freedom without any constraints. (WS, 30/2013)

Today, when the representatives of the 1968 generation came to power in nearly all important European institutions, it turns out that they understand freedom as the diktat of leftist utopias. (WS, 34/2013)

The use of any of those techniques means denying the opponents the right to invoke the value of freedom, while the first technique additionally represents an example of the mechanism which Anna Cegiela called exclusion¹⁷.

While “Polityka” and “Newsweek” hardly ever use the lexeme *wolność* with a negative load, conservative magazines contain many examples of such usage. They mainly appear in contexts devoted to particular spheres of life and include collocations such as *wolność seksualna* ‘sexual freedom’, *wolność artystyczna* ‘artistic freedom’ or *wolność wyboru* ‘freedom of choice’. Sometimes, in order to minimise the negative reception connected with the negative assessment of a basic positive value, ironic inverted commas are used (“authors of pornography act legally, and what is more, find many zealous advocates among the ‘defenders of the freedom of expression’”) or the noun *wolność* is provided with modifiers that change the axiological sign of the entire context (“the absolutized sexual freedom is to be the only determinant of human action; the consent to unrestrained artistic freedom triggers off perverted fantasies in lunatics”).

Do we want the freedom to kill the unborn? The freedom to take children away from their parents because they did not agree to immoral instruction that goes against their conscience? The freedom to kill the old and the ill, because health care is too expensive? We shouldn’t take over such standards from Europe. (WS, 44/2013)

A certain culture is emerging before our very eyes, the representatives of that group [i.e. homosexual persons - LP] have their own clubs, restaurants, and are growing ever

¹⁷ A. Cegiela, *Słowa i ludzie. Wprowadzenie do etyki słowa* [Words and people. An introduction to the ethics of words], Warszawa 2014, p. 114.

stronger as a community. In my opinion, this is indulgence in freedom and liberty. Until recently, we had a ghetto mentality. (WS, 1/2014)

The last example, in addition to containing the negatively charged nouns “freedom” (Pol. *wolność*) and “liberty” (Pol. *swoboda*), implicitly expresses the view that not all social groups should be entitled to freedom.

As can be seen, the picture of freedom in conservative weekly magazines is complex and multilayered. On the one hand, *wolność* appears as the highest sanctity, inherently inscribed in Polishness, won through heroic fighting and paid for in blood of thousands of Poles. On the other hand, there are many variants of *wolność* which are perceived in a highly negative manner and equated with a great threat to all that constitutes the essence of Polishness¹⁸. On the one hand, freedom was granted to Polish people by God centuries ago; on the other hand, freedom cannot be received for free, one has to fight for it and make suitable sacrifices. Particularly strong ambivalence can be seen in the assessment of freedom of expression. Emphasis is placed on the view that “freedom of expression is the basis of democracy” and everybody should be equally entitled to that freedom. Sharp criticism is directed at the actions of ideological opponents, such as the protests against hate speech and attempts to sue for libel which - according to the journalists of “wSieci” and “Do Rzeczy” - seek to create a situation where “some are more equal than others, some are permitted to say everything, all kinds of insults, while others are sentenced for simple criticism or defence” as a result of which the “very fear of being put to trial begins to increasingly stifle the freedom of expression” and “the courage to defend the freedom of expression disappears, and is defeated by opportunism”. On the other hand, the right to freedom of expression does not cover certain social groups (e.g. sexual minorities) and topics (criticism of the Church or religion is seen as profanation of the *sacrum*). This duality is explained by citing an authority:

[...] the spokesman of the Episcopate of France, Bernard Podvin, said that if freedom of expression wants to be sacred, it should respect that which is sacred. In Poland, the protests against the type of art that will be presented at the Malta Festival on 27 and 28 June were initiated by the Youth Crusade. (DR, 23/2014)

¹⁸ Cf. E. Hauser, *Zwolennik 'politycznej poprawności' odwiedza Polskę* [An advocate of “political correctness” visits Poland] [in:] *Cudze problemy. O ważności tego, co nieważne. Analiza dyskursu publicznego w Polsce* [The problems of others. On the importance of the unimportant. An analysis of public discourse in Poland], eds. M. Czyżewski, K. Dunin, A. Piotrowski, Warszawa 2010, p. 43.

Such a huge disparity between the picture of *wolność* in liberal and conservative weeklies can, to a certain extent, be attributable to the oppositional character of the latter, which affects the highly critical tone of the comments referring to the current situation in Poland. This, however, does not seem to be the main reason. The systems of values - liberal and conservative - play a greater role here. Although freedom occupies an important position in both those systems, it is entangled in totally different axiological contexts. The language used by the representatives of both sides is not insignificant either - it is rationalised, pragmatically oriented on the one hand, and pompous, strongly emotional on the other hand¹⁹. Nevertheless, it is beyond any doubt that such a different perception of one of the basic social notions considerably impedes mutual understanding or even a dialogue, and the focus on discrediting, ridiculing or compromising the reputation of the opponent renders understanding practically impossible.

¹⁹ Cf. K. Kłosińska, *Etyczny i pragmatyczny*.