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STRESZCZENIE ROZPRAWY DOKTORSKIEJ W JĘZYKU ANGIELSKIM

Dyscyplina naukowa: nauki o komunikacji społecznej i mediach

Tytuł rozprawy doktorskiej: **Dyskurs w polskich mediach internetowych na temat przeciwdziałania dezinformacji. Analiza krytyczna / Discourse in Polish Online Media on Countering Disinformation. A Critical Analysis**

Streszczenie rozprawy doktorskiej:

The problem of disinformation plays a crucial role in contemporary debates about democracy, technology, and media. This research analyzes how Polish online media discursively constructed the issue of countering disinformation in articles published from 2019 to 2022. The methodological and theoretical framework of the dissertation draws on critical discourse studies and constructivist approaches to studying technology. The main objective was to map the linguistic and rhetorical strategies in the analyzed texts and to deconstruct their political functions. The research employed a mixed-method approach combining qualitative and quantitative content analysis. The sample consisted of 192 articles from six media outlets with diverse ideological profiles: (1) *centrist* (wp.pl, onet.pl), (2) *right-wing* (niezalezna.pl, wpolityce.pl), and (3) *progressive* (krytykapolityczna.pl, oko.press).

First, the findings revealed that the discourse participants often assigned different meanings to the concept of disinformation, reflecting their ideological stances and current communication goals. Second, the analysis showed that the phenomenon was framed through several content-specific topoi: (1) *the topos of democracy in crisis*, (2) *the topos of the restoration of truth*, (3) *the topos of large scale*, (4) *the topos of strong effects*, (5) *the topos of bad media users*, and (6) *the topos of threat*. Additionally, the study identified the following metaphors used to describe disinformation: (1) *a weapon*, (2) *a cataclysm*, (3) *a plant*, and (4) *a pathogen*. These topoi and metaphors heightened the emotional tone of the discourse, potentially fostering the 'moral panic' around the issue. Third, three roles attributed to actors in the discourse were determined: (1) *senders/beneficiaries of disinformation*, (2) *actors slandered by disinformation*, (3) *defenders against disinformation*. Fourth, argumentative strategies regarding the relationship between disinformation and freedom of speech were also discussed.

The material revealed identity-driven discrepancies in the analyzed discourses. The positions formulated were influenced by the ideological slants of the media. The discourse reinforced

dichotomous 'us' versus 'them' conflicts. From the *externalist perspective*, all media types framed 'us' as the 'democratic Wes' and 'them' as the 'hostile East,' notably Russia and other authoritarian states. However, numerous competing *internalist perspectives* were also observed. They instrumentalized the concept of disinformation, entangling it in global and local political struggles related to, among other things, shaping media policies that favor specific groups or maintaining polarization among right-wing, centrist, and progressive factions.

Moreover, two approaches to power relations in anti-disinformation initiatives were identified. The expert-technocratic approach dominated across all media types, advocating for asymmetric, top-down hierarchies in the information sphere. Centrist and progressive outlets presented arguments reinforcing the symbolic power of liberal elites, while right-wing discourse favored state control over public debate by the Law and Justice party, which reflected authoritarian tendencies like discrediting government criticism or restricting media freedom. The participatory-deliberative approach, though rare (appeared only in some texts from progressive media), advocated for an alternative vision – community-driven strategies that emphasized dialogue and inclusion of marginalized groups.

The dissertation contributes to disinformation research by addressing underexplored aspects of the discursive construction of disinformation in 'non-Western' contexts. Its social impact lies in providing recommendations for reshaping the discourse on countering disinformation. The normative stance of the study calls for a shift toward democratizing communication tools while critically examining neoliberal, technocratic visions of media and technology development.

(czytelny podpis doktoranta)