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The Role of English in the Shaping of Polish Marketing Discourse

ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to show the influence of academic and professional marketing English on Polish marketing discourse. In view of Poland's transformative role in communist Europe, the paper can be regarded as a pilot study for the discussion of the phenomenon addressed in the context of the experience of other post-socialist nations. The analysis of the adaptation of English borrowings was based on numerous documents, participant observations and interviews. Critical Discourse Analysis with qualitative methods was the main methodological approach. The study shows that Polish marketing discourse is a linguistic-cognitive hybrid of Western and Polish cultures. For this hybrid, English has become both a trigger and a marker, as well as a carrier of the power of Western marketing ideology. Terminological borrowings from English were much needed, but in many situations there were conceptual or linguistic problems with their adaptation.

Keywords: marketing discourse, marketers' jargon, post-communist Poland, English borrowings

Vloga angleščine v oblikovanju poljskega marketinškega diskurza

POVZETEK

Članek ima za cilj prikazati vpliv akademske in profesionalne marketinške angleščine na poljski marketinški diskurz. Glede na transformativno vlogo Poljske v komunistični Evropi lahko članek služi kot pilotna študija za razpravo o obravnavanem pojavu v kontekstu izkušenj drugih postsocialističnih držav. Analiza prilagajanja angleških izposojenk temelji na številnih dokumentih, opazovanju z udeležbo in intervjujih. Glavni metodološki pristop je kritična analiza diskurza s kvalitativnimi metodami. Študija je pokazala, da je poljski marketinški diskurz jezikovno-kognitivni hibrid zahodne in poljske kulture. Za ta hibrid je angleščina postala tako sprožilec in označevalec kot tudi nosilec moči zahodne marketinške ideologije. Terminološke izposojenke iz angleščine so bile zelo potrebne, vendar so se v številnih situacijah pojavile konceptualne ali jezikovne težave pri njihovem prilagajanju.

Ključne besede: marketinški diskurz, marketinški žargon, postkomunistična Poljska, angleške izposojenke

1 Introduction and Background

In contemporary cultural studies, discourses with a marketing orientation are referred to, among others, as cultural discourses (Wojcieszuk 2008) and, according to linguists, constitute the dominant – or even hegemonic – cognitive paradigm in social communication (Warchala 2015). Firat and Venkatesh (1993) proposed the thesis that contemporary marketing can be treated as a key institution of postmodernity. It is a type of social practice that most strongly influences the redefinition of words, terms and other sets of already established meanings: “Marketing is an intentional practice of meaning-making and semantic representation. It is now the most important process regulating life in the postmodern era. There is nothing accidental in the system of postmodern semiosis, because meanings are established and assigned by the institution of marketing” (Firat and Venkatesh 1993, 246).

Regarding the context of post-communist European countries, the plural form of the term under discussion (*discourses*) ought to be used with a distinction between marketing discourse in mind and the discourse of marketing. There is a strong interdependence between them, but they should be considered as communicatively distinct and separate phenomena. The first one is understood here as a set of norms, values, attitudes, etc. and ways of expressing them related to the specialist (academic and professional) communication of marketing theory and practice. The discourse of marketing, by contrast, is a cognitive model and a system of meanings transferring the marketing reality to other areas of social life and shaping the rules of functioning in these areas.¹ The latter can be considered very similar to what in the literature is called *advertising discourse* (e.g., Danesi 2015; Serazio and Szarek 2012) or *discourse of advertising* (e.g., Cook 2001; Jaworska 2020), explained as a “persuasive social discourse” (Danesi 2015, 1) created by commercials. Among Central and East European post-socialist countries, this discourse produced a new citizen: evolving from a mass socialist consumer to a market-based consumer (Dunn 2004; Kurczewski 1994; Serazio and Szarek 2012).

There is no doubt that discourses in mind should be analysed and described in the context of global, primarily Western marketing, which at the same time means mediating it through the English language. Confronting the culturally different realities in which a certain area of human activity develops is connected with the assumption that most probably we are dealing with a cross-cultural transfer of knowledge and experience. Analysing the discourse of intercultural management and marketing in relation to the societies of Central and Eastern Europe, Witkowski (2007) writes about colonialism as one of the effects of the cultural contacts: “Marketing theories are based mainly on the experience of leading companies from the United States and Western Europe. From such a perspective, management and marketing theories seem almost absolute: the principles that managers should follow should apply always and everywhere. Thus, we often have a situation in which the American point of view on American reality is mechanically copied all over the world. This situation brings to mind not only doubts about the reliability of marketing knowledge, but also the still lively discussion of colonialism” (Witkowski 2007, 6).²

¹ Both discourses are carefully analysed and described in Smoleń-Wawrzusiszyn (2018). This paper is based on the research done for that project.

² All English translations throughout the article are by the author.

Most previous cultural and linguistic research on marketing discourse – both Polish and European (e.g., Bulawka 2006; Chłopicki and Świątek 2000; Dyer 1982; Goddard 1998; Łuc and Bortliczek 2011; Martin 2002; Ożóg 2008; Serazio and Szarek 2012; Zimny 1995) – has identified it primarily with the above-mentioned advertising phenomenon as an area of persuasive public communication, which is epitomised by advertising and commercial industry, as well as its impact on society. As Danesi (2015, 3) rightly pointed out, people introduce the discourse into various activities and communication acts on a daily basis. The study presented here intends to focus on another dimension of marketing discourse that has so far received only peripheral attention: the space of the theoretical (academic) foundations of marketing and their verbalisation in the jargon of marketers in practice. Thus, advertising communication and its discursive specificity remain outside the scope of my research, although it belongs to marketing communication in the broadest sense. Without Western sources – Western textbooks and professional guides for marketers – the communication space with which the present article is concerned would not exist in the post-socialist countries. Created in English for Anglo-Saxon realities, it has become a knowledge base and the form of marketing communication translated into the national languages of Central and Eastern European countries (Kotler et al. 2011).

Polish linguistic and sociocultural experience allows the conclusion that the phenomenon under discussion had an impact on all post-socialist European countries, to a greater or lesser extent, but the specific research whose results are presented here concerns the Polish reality and, as such, can serve as a reference point for further comparative analyses. As Domański (2005) stated, in the context of the newly liberated European countries in the 1990s, Poland is a pivotal case study because it represents the second-largest post-Soviet economy after Russia, and witnessed rapid economic and social growth in that period. This is probably the reason why, as Bugajski (1995, 31) aptly noted, after the collapse of communism in Poland “forced Sovietization was replaced by voluntary Europeanization, Americanization and Hamburgerization”. Thus, this transformation became the beginning of the power of a discourse formed and disseminated not by totalitarian forces, but by the power of a free-market view of reality saturated with consumerism. A new meta-narrative of Western market ideology became a provider of legitimacy for the new capitalist order (Serazio and Szarek 2012, 759–60). In cultural and linguistic analyses resulting from the first observations of changes in linguistic communication, the term *consumer Polish* (*polszczyzna konsumpcyjna*) was born quite quickly (Ożóg 2007). The language expressed the sphere of purchases, sales, services, products, and goods, and it contained old words connected with trade and services (external marketing communication), but also thousands of new words naming new products recently introduced to Poland with English as their source language (Bulawka 2006). As Griffin (1997) observed in his study on Polish press advertisements after 1989, almost 90 percent of his research sample contained at least one English word, which, in the author’s opinion, was the expression of the society’s openness to the West (its power and wealth) and rejection of its communist past.

2 Purpose of the Study, Research Sources and Methodology

The main goal of the study is to characterise the marketing discourse, identify its key communicative features and, among these, focus on the specific role of the English language.

Thus, the main research questions are the role of academic and professional marketing English in the formation process of Polish marketing discourse, and the impact of marketing English on the functioning and social perception of the discourse under discussion.

The source material that formed the basis for the analyses presented here comes from the years 2012–2018. The assumption, based on discourse research methodology, was made that discourse manifests itself in broadly defined and genre-diverse texts. The term *text* is used in this study in the broadest sense, as proposed for discourse analysis by Duszak and Fairclough (2008, 18). In line with this understanding, the analysis included texts of various genres and from various sources, including spoken interactions, multimodal texts originating from television and the Internet, as well as written and published statements. All of them had to meet the following requirements: (1) thematic criterion – connection with the field of marketing and the marketing industry and the scope of their activities in both the theoretical and practical realms; (2) the criterion of representativeness of a given genre (text, medium, etc.) for communication in marketers' groups. In other words, the analysis covered the communicative practices of marketing theorists and practitioners: academic textbooks, specialized publications (books, lexicons and articles), trade press and industry communications, and spoken language in professional situations. Such a corpus is difficult to quantify uniformly. Using the criterion of a material sample, meaning excerpted research texts of various lengths were taken from the collected materials, a corpus of around 250 such samples was constructed that was the subject of analysis in this work. In addition, the marketers' language and communication behaviours were verified in one-to-one interviews with 20 marketing professionals.

However, the specific categories of text genres and their concrete representations are as follows:

- 1) specialised literature: academic (dictionaries, encyclopaedias, lexicons, subject monographs and textbooks), and popular science literature (guidebooks);
- 2) professional marketing press – magazines *MARKETER+*, *Brief*, *Marketing w Praktyce*, *Online Marketing Polska*;
- 3) professional marketing portals: *Marketing przy Kawie*, *Nowy Marketing*, *Sprawny Marketing*;
- 4) marketers' blogs and websites: paweltkaczyk.com, sprawnymarketing.pl, arturjablonski.com, takaoto.pro/blog, b2b-marketing.pl, newcreative.pl, marketing-automation.pl, dworzynska.com, urszula-phelep.com, kotarbinski.wordpress.com, barbarastawarz.pl, dajemyslowo.com/blog, jacekpogorzelski.pl, piotrwawrzyniak.pl;
- 5) email offers for commercial industry events (training courses, conferences, forums, symposia, etc.) and their detailed programmes;
- 6) email correspondence between marketers of the same or different levels;³
- 7) data obtained by means of participatory observation: statements made by businessmen, marketers and others connected with the business world; these come from both official and unofficial contexts.

³ The material was obtained during my cooperation with Polish marketing agencies through managers' agreement to verify employees' correspondence, but subject to the author's anonymity, non-disclosure of company-relevant data and possible identifying features of the company.

In order to conduct this research on Polish marketing discourse, the post-Foucault linguistic variant of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) methodology has been chosen (Grzmil-Tylutki 2010; Lisowska-Magdziarz 2006; Piróg 2009). This is the post-Foucault variant in the sense that it continues Foucault's established assumption of a link between power and knowledge and the notion that structures of power and knowledge manifest themselves in the use of language (Foucault 1977, 76). This is due to the fact that marketing is treated here as a kind of institution or ideology (Mautner 2015) that has the potential for social power (Fairclough 1993). In other words, the research was conditioned by the thesis that in the case of marketing we are undoubtedly dealing with the key issues for CDA orientation: the phenomena of social change and discursive change (Duszak and Fairclough 2008; Grzeszczyk 2003; Hackley 2003). These require a normative perspective due to the mechanisms of exercising social power revealed in them. Such a perspective should be assumed with regard to any linguistic representation of discourse, and thus also with regard to the influence of the English language on Polish marketing discourse discussed in the present paper. The analyses were primarily qualitatively oriented, i.e., it was crucial to consider the discursive context of the presence of English in the marketing discourse, rather than its quantitative verification.

3 Polish Marketing Discourse – Key Features

3.1 Discourse Field

As mentioned above, Polish marketing discourse is understood here as the professional area of academic discourse and communicative practices in the marketing industry. It is not a style of communication of elites only, academic or managerial – managers as the oligarchs of free-market postmodernity (Potulicka and Rutkowiak 2010, 312–14), but the entire community involved in specialized marketing procedures. In other words, the field of the discourse consists of marketing – a scientific discipline, and marketing – a type of business activity. If we follow the criteria used by sociologists (Czyżewski, Kowalski, and Piotrowski 1997) with regard to the typology of discourses, then the marketing discourse should be classified as a public discourse related to specific social worlds (groups). Business people, among others, are considered as a type of such a group. What is more, business people are representatives of a professional group, which – along with publicists, journalists, writers, clergymen, scientists, experts, intellectuals – co-creates the so-called discourse of symbolic elites, i.e., communities that exercise “direct control over publicly available knowledge, publicly legitimate beliefs, and the content of public discourse” (Czyżewski, Kowalski, and Piotrowski 1997, 24). Thus, Polish marketing discourse is a part of contemporary public discourse and includes the statements and other communicative practices of individuals and institutions professionally associated with marketing. It is an institutional discourse – in the global context it can be partially associated with the phenomena covered in the literature by the term *corporate discourse* (Breeze 2013). This is a broadly understood business communication practice related to the activities of large, usually multinational companies (corporations), including, among others, contact of corporations with individual customers, other business entities, and their entire social environment (ibid.).

3.2 Discourse Participants

The discourse under discussion is created by a community which includes two main subgroups: theoreticians and practitioners, and it is often the case that the roles of participants are intertwined, which is a natural phenomenon in the case of the so-called applied fields. Each of these groups has certain characteristic models of behaviour, but there are also communication patterns common to both. Marketing theorists include scientists, lecturers and trainers. For those working in academia, it is also characteristic to be subject to the rules of academic discourse, which regulates their communication models to a significant extent. The group of practitioners, on the other hand, comprises all marketing specialists working in various companies and institutions, both private and public. In this case, we are also dealing with the standardisation of certain acts of communication, but it is already an immanent feature of the group, and not an effect of the influence of another discourse (as in the case of scientists). The community in question is not only heterogeneous, but also represents different communication styles. In fact, the only common feature of all the participants is the use of professional language of marketing as a field, but the way this language is used varies depending on the specific communication situation. This does not mean, however, that we are dealing with a differentiation leading to communication tensions or exclusions. Both spheres of discourse – theoretical and practical – interpenetrate each other, and it is often as a result of such confrontation that meanings important for discourse are established. As Altkorn (2004, 11) points out, “marketing is not only a cognitive field, but also – or even primarily – the sum of certain practical knowledge and skills that constitute the professional strengths of entrepreneurs and managers.”

3.3 Marketers’ Professional Jargon

Marketing communication as understood in the management sciences includes a number of communication tools. Among them the most socially recognizable sign of marketing activity is advertisements (Jaworska 2020, 1). In Wasilewski’s view, this variety of persuasive texts constitutes, in the field of marketing, “a produced language, in which the image of a free recipient is created, guided by instinct, sense of taste, etc.” (Wasilewski 2010, 179). On the other hand, at the opposite pole to the language of advertising there is “the language of internal production – the language of technocratic professionals” (Wasilewski 2010, 179), that is, the style of communication of marketers. As we are dealing here with a specialized language related to a specific type of professional activity, we can talk about the functioning of a particular variant, which is marketers’ jargon. Since the 1990s it has been developing in Poland, and other post-socialist European countries as well, as a type of communication characteristic of the so-called “new professions” (Kaszewski and Ptaszek 2009, Kuć 2011) – the term describes the professional spheres shaped after the transition to a free market economy, which had no previous patterns.

3.3.1 The Jargon as a Variant of Post-socialist “New Professions” in Eastern Europe

Common to communication in the environment of marketing professionals and other groups representing the “new professions” is a set of features which result from the close links of these

professions with the global world of business. First, communication in these environments is international and intercultural, with a large number of borrowings from English – required to name the new phenomena of the new professional reality, but also to symbolise the prestige of the Western world desired in post-socialist countries (Kuč 2011). The term “new professions” points to the formation of hitherto non-existent professions, and we are dealing here with branches that did not exist in some national cultures (post-communist), but were borrowed from others (Western), in which they constitute a certain continuum. Second, the “new professions” are characterized by highly hierarchical and templated communication. Characterising the spoken language of business, Kochan (2010) stated that it is the language of organisation, and it is this organisational model that constitutes a certain universe for the linguistic contacts of the representatives of the “new professions”. It is a model built of formulas and lexical phrases characteristic of corporate communication. It also has a set of keywords, among which a very important place is occupied by the lexeme *management*: “almost everything can be managed: stress, risk, uncertainty, problems, process, human resources” (Kochan 2010, 149–50). Thirdly, the industry jargon of the “new professions” is characterized by intense variability, reflecting the nature of these professions as constantly evolving, both globally and locally. Finally, the last feature that unites the communication strategies of those working in the “new professions” concerns the development of two different worlds, and thus two different languages, within them. One of these worlds is the realm of etiquette and ethics in dealing with clients, while the other is the much less polite world of interprofessional contact. As Wasilewski vividly noted, “the language of marketers can [...] be compared to the language of gravediggers, whose behind-the-scenes [...] lexis concerning peripheral activities is quite different from the façade exposed to the customer” (Wasilewski 2010, 179–80). The language of the “façade”, i.e., customer contact, shares many features with the language of advertising: it persuades, seduces, entices, and ultimately – sells. In turn, the style of the “behind-the-scenes” communication of marketers is not internally homogeneous – it is possible to identify certain substyles in it, which are closely related to specific communication situations. Among the most significant are: 1) development of documents important at various stages of marketing projects, and public sharing of industry knowledge and experience (books, press articles, specialist blogs, etc.); 2) offering and implementation of training sessions, conferences, congresses, etc.; and 3) daily informal professional contacts (oral and written).

3.3.2 English Components in the Jargon

As one might expect, the least formal subtype of marketers’ jargon is found in the case of the last mentioned type of communication between marketers – in everyday unofficial professional contacts. It should be noted, however, that the colloquiality of contact does not mean the deprofessionalisation of language in this case, as everyday conversations still require specialized terms. The phenomenon that may attract attention in the use of English in the discussed subtype (and at the same time distinguish it) is the large quantity of English components. Such usage patterns, however, result from the personal traits of the employees, although according to Murdoch (2000, 100) people from the marketing industry excel at this type of linguistic behaviour. In the everyday contacts of marketing specialists, it is also more common to see (or hear) an extensive vocabulary of borrowings – the creation of various vocabulary categories from English-language bases and their adaptation to the Polish

inflectional system. A good example of this are the words (*marketing*) *brief* and *briefing* – their meaning and forms are taken from the English language but in the sentence structure they take on inflectional forms typical of Polish masculine nouns (e.g., *briefu/briefingu*, *briefem/briefingiem* etc.). If a marketer has to prepare some guidelines for their colleague to carry out a project, they say they have to *zbriefować* [*z-brief-ować*] the other person, which can be explained as “to brief someone”. The process of preparing and communicating these guidelines is what marketers call *briefowanie* [*brief-owanie*].

4 Cross-Cultural Knowledge Transfer and the Polish-English Marketing Communication Hybrid

Cross-cultural transfer of knowledge is another phenomenon which characterizes all “new professions” after the changes of 1989 in Poland, since – as mentioned above – communication in these fields is international and intercultural. This is a phenomenon of great importance for the communication in question, because it is, in a way, the source of its discursive potential. The phenomenon of cross-cultural transfer of expertise manifests itself on various levels, two of which should be considered the most distinct and significant in the formation of the Polish marketing discourse: one pertains to the English-language specialized nomenclature as a source terminology for the industry we are interested in, and the other to the rhetorical strategies developed under the influence of the institution of Western marketing. Their transfer to Polish culture and their combination with argumentation typical of Polish social realities brought about specific effects in the sociocultural sphere. However, due to the specific focus of this paper, only the first of the issues identified above will be discussed here.

4.1 Adaptation of Professional English Concepts and Terms in the Marketing Discourse

A great number of borrowings from the English language, which flowed into Poland after the political changes of the 1990s, have sparked numerous discussions from the very beginning. In the 1990s, Polish linguists were highly critical of the language of the business community, and the widespread use of English terminology was seen as an expression of snobbery or linguistic poverty. Representatives of business circles tried to defend themselves against the harsh criticism by explaining their linguistic with rational reasons for this particular style of communication:

In Polish business, the number of English expressions often already exceeds Polish ones. This makes work much easier. Looking for Polish equivalents is simply a waste of time. Using foreign equivalents is supposed to make work easier and more efficient [...]. It is a practical shortcut at work and it has nothing to do with disrespecting the culture of the Polish language. We use borrowings among people who understand them, not among those who have no idea about them.⁴

⁴ See <http://natemat.pl/7287,zrobiles-juz-draft-i-research-na-dzis-w-korporacjach-angielskiego-wiecej-niz-polskiego> (published March 30, 2012 – accessed November 13, 2022).

In my opinion, the issue of specialized English in Polish marketing discourse, however, touches upon a much deeper problem than just normative issues related to their adaptation in Polish. Looking at English terminological borrowings in the context of the cross-cultural transfer of Western marketing knowledge to Polish economic soil shows a much broader problem: a specialized language associated with a new field and industry has overtaken the reality of that field. Along with the desired Western civilization, Poles received only a fragment of it, which took on a life of its own in their linguistic practice, without having a cognitive foundation – which means that Poland had never had any knowledge and experience about marketing: “In Poland, like in any other post-communist European countries, there were no institutions, no academic expertise and no theoretical background for a market economy, and for marketing” (Zurawicki and Becker 1994).

Hence, in the process of at least fragmentary transfer of Western realities, it was necessary to also borrow their specialized linguistic markers. This issue was addressed in relation to the Polish discourse of Public Relations (PR) by Ćwiklińska (2009), who focused her attention on the analysis of the cross-cultural transfer of specialist knowledge from the perspective of the adaptation of English-language PR terminology in Polish PR discourse. In the summary of her analysis, the researcher states that the cultural difference between Polish and American PR science and practice is manifested, among other things, by the divergence in the network of semantic relations and their lexical representations in Polish and English in the field of specialist PR terminology.

In order to examine the implementation of English terms in the specialist literature for academic purposes, Polish marketing lexicons and dictionaries were analysed. The mechanisms of adapting the English terminological apparatus to the Polish marketing realities are well illustrated by the resources of *Marketing Lexicon*, edited by Altkorn and Kramer (1998). In accordance with the accepted editorial principle, all the entries of this lexicon are noted together with their English basis (italics in brackets). In the dictionary three variants of adaptations of English loanwords to Polish were noted:

- 1) entries fully translated into Polish, e.g., Eng. *stock balance* – Pl. “bilansowanie zapasów”; Eng. *key-person strategy* – Pl. “strategia osoby kluczowej”; Eng. *wear-out* – Pl. “zmęczenie reklamą”;
- 2) entries partially translated (partially Polonized), e.g., Eng. *me too strategy* – Pl. “strategia me too”, Eng. *yield management pricing* – Pl. “kalkulowanie cen wg yield management”; Eng. *off price strategy* – Pl. “polityka cen ‘off price’”;
- 3) entries left in the original because of the impossibility of translating them into Polish in a synthetic manner and the need for descriptive definitions, np. Eng. *benchmarking* – Pl. “sztuka odkrywania, jak i dlaczego niektóre przedsiębiorstwa funkcjonują sprawniej niż inne” [the art of discovering how and why some businesses perform better than others]; Eng. *broker* – Pl. “pośrednik hurtowy zajmujący się nawiązywaniem kontaktów i pomocą w realizacji transakcji pomiędzy producentami a nabywcami instytucjonalnymi” [a wholesale intermediary dealing with establishing contacts and assisting in the completion of transactions between producers and institutional buyers], Eng. *marketing-mix* – Pl. “kombinacja czterech podstawowych

elementów marketingu: produktu, ceny, dystrybucji i promocji, na której opiera się każda strategia marketingowa” [the combination of the four basic elements of marketing: product, price, distribution and promotion, on which any marketing strategy is based] (Altkorn and Kramer 1998).

The examples presented above show that at the initial stage of the formation of the specialized terminology of the Polish marketing industry, different linguistic strategies of adaptation were applied. A lot of awkwardness can be seen in this process, but at that moment of the industry's development it was probably considered a necessary evil, as there was a need to name elements of a hitherto completely unknown reality. This mechanism is reflected particularly well in one of the entries from the lexicon mentioned above – it is the term *brief*, which has been already exemplified in section 3.3.2. Its Polish equivalent (which in the dictionary has the status of the main entry) was partly put in quotation marks, which was most likely to signal the substantive inadequacy of the Polish word in relation to the English source. So the entry looks as follows: “*Brief* – ‘streszczenie’ koncepcji reklamy (ang. *brief*) – zwięzłe, krótkie zestawienie i charakterystyka zaprogramowanej kampanii reklamowej” [*Brief* – a concise, brief ‘summary’ of an advertisement concept and characteristics of the programmed advertising campaign] (Altkorn and Kramer 1998, 245). In marketing or general business lexicons from the early 21st century published in Poland, no one attempts to translate the word *brief* into Polish anymore, because it is a term understood in the marketing environment (and beyond) as an internationalism adopted in global business communication.

One of the important factors for retaining English-language elements both in marketing and in other “new professions” is the inability to translate their meanings into simple Polish equivalents due to their semantic inadequacy in relation to the conceptual scope of the English-language source. In business communication, precision and economy of message are equally important. Thanks to the common English terminology, both of these requirements can be met (the English language in this dimension becomes an exponent of professionalism), but not necessarily in the case of translations into European languages. For example, describing the idea of a *start-up* (regarded as one of the keywords of contemporary business newspeak) for the Polish audience, it is explained that

- (1) according to the common definition, it is a **venture in the early stages of its growth**. To put it simply, it is, for example, a **company** whose only capital is the fact that it has been established recently and its owner, often a student or other fairly young person, has a unique and perhaps even revolutionary idea for a business. Since the company is in the growth phase, i.e., it is taking off and going up (at least this is the assumption), it is most advantageous to refer to it in English – short and straightforward. It would be much more difficult to describe such a business in Polish. You would have to make it long and complicated, e.g., like this: an **enterprise** created in order to look for a business model that would guarantee its constant development and optimistic perspective for the future. This growth in turn could be achieved by obtaining institutional funding, a loan or selling some shares. The description of such an initiative could go on forever. The point is that in business, time is money.⁵

⁵ See <http://forsal.pl/artykuly/766958,biznesowa-nowomowa-dlaczego-uzywamy-slow-ktore-niewiele-znacza.html> (accessed November 28, 2022). All examples from the analysed sources that are used in the present discussion are numbered.

As can be easily noticed, *start-up* is defined for the Polish audience in different ways (see words and phrases in bold), which means an attempt to explain the meaning of the presented concept as well as possible when no single-word equivalent exists in Polish. The other examples of terms from lexicons from the 1990s that have not found a simple Polish equivalent in the marketing discourse are as follows (with their Polish explanations):

- (2) Merchandising – zintegrowany system działań przedsiębiorstwa handlowego w zakresie planowania i kształtowania usługi handlowej pod względem treści, formy, miejsca, ilości, czasu, jakości i ceny. Jest to termin rozpowszechniony głównie w USA. Należy go utożsamiać z marketingiem handlowym lub jeszcze bardziej szczegółowo z marketingiem w punkcie sprzedaży detalicznej. (Altkorn and Kramer 1998, 155–6) [the integrated system of activities of a commercial enterprise in planning and shaping a commercial service in terms of content, form, place, quantity, time, quality and price. It is a term prevalent mainly in the USA. It should be equated with trade marketing or, even more specifically, with marketing at the retail point of sale].
- (3) Cash and carry – rodzaj samoobsługowego punktu sprzedaży z pogranicza handlu hurtowego i detalicznego nastawionego na zaopatrzenie drobnych detalistów, właścicieli lokali gastronomicznych, rzemieślników, zakładów żywienia zbiorowego i innych odbiorców hurtowych, a także odbiorców indywidualnych prowadzących działalność gospodarczą oraz przedstawicieli wolnych zawodów. (Altkorn and Kramer 1998, 155–6) [a type of self-service point of sale bordering on wholesale and retail trade aimed at supplying small retailers, owners of catering establishments, craftsmen, mass caterers and other wholesale customers as well as individual business and professional customers].
- (4) Benchmarking – ta trudna do przetłumaczenia angielska nazwa postępowania oznacza dążenie do równania do najlepszych, odkrywanie dlaczego i w jaki sposób jedne przedsiębiorstwa działają lepiej i efektywniej od innych. Celem jest twórcze naśladowanie najlepszej praktyki wyróżniających się przedsiębiorstw. (Sztucki 1998, 36) [this difficult-to-translate English term means striving to match the best, discovering why and how some companies perform better and more efficiently than others. The aim is to creatively emulate the best practices of outstanding companies].
- (5) Billboard – tablica reklamowa dużych rozmiarów umieszczona na ścianach domów i specjalnych konstrukcjach w miejscach dużego ruchu przechodniów i samochodów. (Sztucki 1998, 36) [a large-sized board on which advertisements are displayed placed on house walls and special structures in areas of high pedestrian and vehicle traffic].

The second factor in favour of leaving many English terms in Polish marketing was the “weirdness” of their possible Polish equivalents. Such a characterisation was not, of course, made in academic sources (textbooks, lexicons etc.), whose task was to convey knowledge objectively and neutrally. However, such comments appear in the source material in the statements of marketers. Consider the following:

- (6) The word *rebranding*, so necessary in the realities of a market economy, could be translated as “przemarkowanie”,⁶ but this sounds bizarre.⁷

⁶ The word *przemarkowanie* is a morphological calque of the English *rebranding*.

⁷ See http://www.wysokieobcasy.pl/wysokie-obcasy/1,96856,16772240,Badacz_nowej_polszczyzny__epicko__ogarniam_swoj_radar.html?disableRedirects=true (accessed November 28, 2022).

- (7) I didn't want to translate the term *sharing economy* into Polish, because it sounds poor in Polish.⁸

The authors of the above statements did not justify their opinions, so I base my judgements of their comments on my own assumptions. As far as the word “przemarkowanie” is concerned, it is a structurally typical Polish combination (prefix *prze-* indicates something that is subject to change), so morphologically the term can be understood. It may also be accepted acoustically. It is probably the semantic aspect that is the reason for the critical assessment of this word – the meaning of “markowanie” is unclear in Polish (it has at least six meanings from different meaning ranges),⁹ so formulating a new term on its basis creates semantic dissonance.

In the case of the second term, *sharing economy*, which was assessed as “poor” in Polish, there might be two explanations. The first one, linguistically clarified, is that the structure of the term would need to be translated atypically for the Polish adnominal modifier used to be combined with the noun “economy”, and secondly, a periphrastic translation would be necessary. The second clarification refers to an ideological factor – the notion of *sharing*, being conceptually close to *common*, could be associated in Polish translation with the economic system that applied in the years of communist rule.

Today, Polish-English hybridity is an obvious standard in the communicative practices of Polish marketing discourse. It manifests itself in the use of elements from both languages next to each other, as well as in offering bilingual equivalents for a given term, as seen in the following examples:

- (8) Leadership w sprzedaży – nowoczesne metody profesjonalnego zarządzania zespołami sprzedażowymi.¹⁰ [Leadership in sales – modern methods for professional management of sales teams]
- (9) 1,5-godzinne wystąpienie Krzysztofa Ibisza poświęcone personal brandingowi!¹¹
[1.5-hour speech by Krzysztof Ibisz dedicated to personal branding]
- (10) Wgląd w konsumenta, czyli dlaczego insight może być głęboki.¹² [Consumer insight, or why insight can be profound]

4.2 Axiological Dimension of the Implementation of English Borrowings

The issues presented in 4.1. reflect the problems that have accompanied the transfer of marketing expertise from Western culture to the Polish culture. In addition, it is worth noting other processes associated with the transfer of expertise, which affect the axiological dimension of the Polish marketing discourse. One such phenomenon is the modification of English-language word compounds. A notable example here is the word *target*. What is surprising in the case of the lexeme in question is the mechanism – conditioned by the usual

⁸ Quote from Marcin Maj's speech at the IX Online Marketing Convention. See <https://o-m.pl/arttykul/285/prof-bralczyk-marcin-prokop-michal-gorecki-marcin--maj-na-ix-kongresie-online-marketing.html>.

⁹ See: <https://wsjp.pl/haslo/podglad/102364/markowac> (accessed November 28, 2022).

¹⁰ See <http://www.kongres-sprzedazowy.pl> (accessed November 28, 2022).

¹¹ See <http://www.kongres-sprzedazowy.pl> (accessed November 28, 2022).

¹² See <http://nowymarketing.pl/a/11616,wglad-w-konsumenta-czyli-dlaczego-insight-moze-byc-gleboki> (accessed November 28, 2022).

communicative practices of Polish marketers – of transforming the source, binary English-language construction into a one-element term. In the jargon of Polish marketing specialists, *target* is the semantic equivalent of *target group* or *target audience*. These terms in English always occur in a two-element combination (in the marketing context, one does not encounter the word *target* in isolation), both in marketers' trade publications and their language, as well as in academic papers on marketing. If any component of the collocations discussed is omitted in American marketing discourse, it is the defining element, which is the word *target*, not the defined component (*audience, group, etc.*), e.g., "We will now examine the steps in creating an effective integrated communication and promotion program. Marketers must do the following: *identify the target audience, determine the communication objectives, design a message, choose the media through which to send the message, select the message source, and collect feedback.* [...] A marketing communicator starts with a clear target audience in mind. The audience may be current users or potential buyers [...]" (Kotler et al. 2011, 464). In Polish, the original English term *target audience* or *target group* is shortened to the first component and functions in the sociolinguistic context of marketing as *target*. Since the *target group* is *de facto* a group of people, the use of the lexeme *target* alone to name the target group leads to axiological depreciation – a person or a group treated as a target is identified with an object to be hunted, conquered. This is because in Polish the semantic values attached to *target* remains the non-personal scope. The only context from the sources analysed, in which a two-element translation was used, turned out to be a type of inept calque – a literal translation of English *target group* resulted in a collocation "target grupa", which is difficult to accept normatively in the Polish language – structurally, lexically and semantically.

The word *target* quickly became a trendy word in the marketing environment (and also among business people in general), as evidenced by its inclusion in Śpiewak's online *Glossary of Fashionable and Unfashionable Words*, in which it is explained as follows:

- (11) Target – ma coś z celu i z rynku. Gdy ktoś pyta, kto jest twoim targetem, zapewne oznacza to, komu chcesz sprzedać swój towar, czyli jak i w jakim celu coś robisz.¹³
 [Target – it has something to do with a purpose and a market. When someone asks who your target is, it probably means who you want to sell your product to, i.e., how and for what purpose you do something]

As a trendy word, and, it seems, a useful one for Polish marketers, *target* has also become the basis for derivative words. Examine the following:

- (12) W jaki sposób targetować i dopasować udostępniane treści, aby pozyskiwać najwyższej jakości leady? [...] Zły wybór kanałów, niewłaściwe targetowanie, a może brak pomysłu na ciekawą kampanię? To bardzo prawdopodobne! Czas to zmienić!¹⁴
 [How to target and adjust the content you share to get the highest quality leads? [...] Wrong choice of channels, wrong targeting or no idea for an interesting campaign? It's very likely! Time to change].

¹³ See http://niniwa22.cba.pl/spiewak_slowniczek_slow_modnych_i_niemodnych.html (accessed November 28, 2022).

¹⁴ See https://www.maileforum.pl/uploads/action/copyMail/2017/30/9867_1d7c0685ca/.copyMail.html?a=42223/1&f=email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=42223/1 (accessed August 15, 2017).

(13) To sprawia, że już żadnej reklamy nie będziemy targetować kontekstowo, a więc na podstawie treści, ale będziemy ją mogli zaadresować do konkretnej grupy odbiorców. Dziś telewizja jest praktycznie nietargetowalna (Stępowski 2016, 110) [This means that we will no longer be targeting any ads contextually, i.e., based on content, but we will be able to address them to a specific audience. Today television is practically untargetable].

During one-to-one interviews with marketers, they were asked, among other things, about their personal attitudes to the use of the word *target* and its derivatives in contexts relating to people.

The majority of those questioned (16 out of 20 respondents) shared the following experience: in their early stages of working in marketing, the word *target* drew their attention as blatant, inappropriate, and unsuitable in communication about human-centred activities. However, over time, frequent contact with marketers' jargon has neutralised this perception and the term is now seen without negative axiological connotations. For the remaining four respondents, the word *target* still remained an irritant as being too harsh, both literally (the sound) and figuratively (the meaning). On this basis, it can be concluded that marketing discourse can have the effect of nullifying the value dimension of words or phrases, although this is not a phenomenon typical of the communicative attitudes of all participants in this discourse.

5 Conclusions and Limitations

According to Serazio and Szarek (2012, 765), the key role of the English language in Polish advertising discourse after the changes that started in 1989 was to advertise products or services by using the language of the West, or to "add an air of affectation to those offerings". English, as a symbol of a better world from behind the Iron Curtain, was a marker for achieving the desired sociocultural prestige (Bulawka 2006). As for the area discussed in the paper, one may observe a similar cultural phenomenon with regard to the everyday communication of marketers. Their jargon (one of the manifestations of the "new professions" in post-communist Poland) shows that borrowings, adapted in the different ways outlined above, may be a tool for the ennobling identification of this profession with Western models. These loanwords have often led to an exaggerated use of English in marketers' everyday communication. The question of English borrowings in the academic foundations of marketing and the foundations of the theory of the field is somewhat different. English borrowings were adopted in Polish marketing discourse to name a new type of knowledge and new professional communication, which had varying results.

The examples and contexts of communication practices under discussion illustrate that the observed cross-cultural transfer of marketing knowledge is a complex phenomenon. The transfer of foreign cognitive models cannot consist either solely in maintaining their foreign-language names or in "naturalising" them through simple, unreflective translation. The path in between, by finding a culturally appropriate word in the target language, also seems to be difficult. Various solutions are being sought in Polish marketing discourse, but in many cases a lack of harmonious translation of Western cognitive models into Polish language and cognitive space is evident. This has consequences not only in the sphere of specialist meanings – in

the conceptual and terminological area, but also on the axiological level, i.e., in the ethical dimension of communication (e.g., seeing people as “targets”). This dimension seems to be much more important in terms of the social impact of marketing discourse than the (un)aesthetics of the Polish language reshaped by English. In the case of naming behaviours, a language user usually has a choice: to use a loanword, to look for its Polish equivalent or to paraphrase a foreign term. On the other hand, the remodelling of values expressed in the language, as an effect of a hasty transfer of specialized English expressions or structures without negotiating their meanings, may lead to axiological changes that are not necessarily expected by Polish society, but still unconsciously adopted by it.

The final finding is that the discourse under discussion, due to the influence of English, is a linguistic-cognitive hybrid of Western culture and Polish culture. For this hybrid, English, understood as a linguistic and cultural phenomenon, has become both a trigger (*English as a reason for*) and a marker (*a component*) of Polish marketing discourse. It can also be said that it has become a carrier of the power of Western marketing, which engulfed the Polish reality after 1989 in two ways: through the ideology inscribed in the professional literature of the field, which Polish professionals encountered and assimilated, and through the worldview created in public discourse by advertisements – the effects of marketing production.

The study is a general view of the issue. Certainly, further in-depth research is needed, including consideration of the quantitative aspect, in order to examine the scale of the phenomenon and its possible dynamics (for example: the difference, or lack thereof, between the initial period of English borrowings, i.e., the 1990s, and the present state of affairs). The findings also suggest the need for a broader, comparative analysis of the phenomenon under study in the context of other post-socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe, focusing on whether English influenced the marketing discourse in a similar manner in those contexts.

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