CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH ON HATE SPEECH IN NEWS WEBSITES' COMMENTS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF JÜRGEN HABERMAS'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the article is to characterize and compare the cognitive attitudes presented in selected works which reflect the dominant trends in contemporary researches on "hate speech". When determining these attitudes, the Habermasian concept of cognitive interests was used. Generally, in the text, the analysis of the term "hate speech" intertwines with discourse analysis. In most of the cited texts emancipatory threads clearly manifested themselves. Materials aimed at a cool, but in-depth understanding of the reasons for which messages defined as hateful occur in the public space, do not appear too often.

Keywords: hate speech, socio-political concept, emancipatory interest, technical interest, practical interest.

SODOBNE RAZISKAVE O SPLETNIH NOVIČARSKIH KOMENTARJIH S SOVRAŽNIM GOVOROM IZ PERSPEKTIVE TEORIJE ZNANJA JÜRGENA HABERMASA

IZVLEČEK

Glavni namen članka je opredeliti in primerjati kognitivna stališča, predstavljena v izbranih delih, ki odražajo prevladujoče trende na področju sodobnih raziskav o „sovražnem govoru". Pri določanju teh stališč je bil uporabljen Habermasov koncept kognitivnih interesov. V članku je analiza pojma »sovražni govor« kombinirana z analizo diskurza. V večini analiziranih besedil se jasno kažejo emancipatorne niti. Redka so besedila, katerih cilj je na svež in poglobljen način razumeti razloge, zaradi katerih se v javnem prostoru pojavljajo sporočila, opredeljena kot sovražna.

Ključne besede: sovražni govor, socio-političen concept, emancipatorni interes, tehnični interes, praktičen interes.

INTRODUCTION

The term "hate speech" enjoys great popularity to-day. It is used not only in colloquial speech or political disputes, but also as an element of lawyers' language, and legal language.[1] What's more, it is eagerly used by the representatives of *social sciences* and *humanities* as a scientific term.

The growing importance of the term "hate speech" encourages a thorough analysis of its semantic and pra-gmatic transformations. The present text focuses on the functioning of the term "hate speech" in scientific texts the authors of which investigate the presence of the said phenomena in the public space, and in particular in news websites' comments. The main purpose of the arti-cle is to characterize and compare the research attitudes presented in selected materials. In other words, the text is an attempt to answer the questions: "What cognitive attitudes do selected 'hate speech' researchers repre-sent" and "How do their research attitudes co-create the epistemological horizon in the area of research on *hate speech* in news websites' comments?". Moreover, the article seeks to determine how the inevitable persuasi-veness of the term "hate speech" may affect the sphere of the research objectives formulated and implemented by specific researchers. What is more, it attempts to pay attention to the new areas of reflection connected with "hate speech", which could develop as a result of the development of research on the consequences of rende-ring the said term scientific.

When determining the research attitudes present in the research on "hate speech", the concept of cogni-tive interests proposed by J. Habermas (1971) was used, which is not new, but which remains inspiring and organizing. The analysis was made against the back-ground of the basic methodological assumptions widely accepted in the studies on the history of socio-political concepts (Richter, 1995; Koselleck, 2002). In differen-tiating between the denotative and connotative layer of the term "hate speech", reference was made to the classic concept of persuasive definitions by Charles L. Stevenson (1964). The methods used in the course of the research procedure are qualitative. In the text, the analysis of the term "hate speech" intertwines with dis-course analysis.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In recent years, the literature on "hate speech" on the Internet, including in news websites' comments, has ex-panded at an impressive rate (e.g., Hermida & Thurman, 2008; Nagar, 2009; Erjavec & Poler Kovačič, 2012; Santana, 2012; Borton, 2013; Bychawska-Siniarska & Głowacka, 2013). Despite its specificity, it should be viewed and analyzed in a broader context. It is a system of materials that represent a number of different ways of understanding the term "hate speech" and also reflect a wide range of methodological and ideological attitudes. In order to capture and understand this richness, indi-vidual texts on "hate speech" should not be read in iso-lation, but keeping in mind their mutual interrelations.

Despite being a part of a broader system, the stud-ies of "hate speech" on the Internet, and in particular in news websites' comments, have their own specifici-ty. The uniqueness of this field of research is connected with the widespread – though not always verbalized – ideas about the nature of communication on the Inter-net. Generally speaking, when reflecting on the specif-ics of the Internet network as a channel of spreading hatred, a number of researchers draw attention to: a wider range of influence of the Internet than of tradition-al media (e.g., Jaishankar, 2008; Borton, 2013); its inter-activity (e.g., Borton, 2013); its cross-border reach and related challenges, including those of legal nature (e.g., Fraser, 2009; Podemski, 2013); the real or illusory ano-nymity of Internet communication (e.g., Santana, 2012; Bodnar, 2013; Łętowska, 2013); its cheapness, and the ease of mobilization and co-mobilization through the network (e.g., Jaishankar, 2008, Kuz'min, 2008). All these aspects have a strong impact on research imag-ination. They co-create the image of the network as a medium which is extraordinarily open and danger-ous at the same time. News websites' comments may, however, be seen as a space in which the outsiders of modern public communication reveal their intentions, while exchanging opinions about their own and social attitudes. In the light of this narrative, news websites' comments turn out to be a tool with the use of which the authors of hateful messages seek to inform the public about whom they blame, what they blame them for, why they perceive particular social groups in a given way,

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1   The Council's of Europe Committee of Ministers has recommended that "the term *hate speech* shall be understood as covering all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intol-erance, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin" (Recommendation 97(20) on "hate speech"). Moreover, according to "Factsheet on Hate Speech", "ECHR has identified a number of forms of expression which are to be considered offensive and contrary to the Convention (including racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, aggressive nationalism and discrimination against minorities and immigrants). However, the Court is also careful to make a distinction in its findings between, on the one hand, genuine and serious incitement to extremism and, on the other hand, the right of individuals (including journalists and politicians) to express their views freely and to *offend, shock or disturb* others. There is no universally accepted definition of the expression *hate speech*. The Court's case-law has established certain parameters making it possible to characterize *hate speech* in order to exclude it from the protection afforded to freedom of expression (Article 10 of the Convention) or freedom of assembly and association (Article 11)" (Factsheet on hate speech, 2013).

what they expect, and what they would like to change and how. Thus, news websites' comments appear to be a window which allows an insight into the life of anti-culture, which rejects the standards officially governing relationships and forms its own complex system of *counter-mores*.

The fact that the field of research on "hate speech" is an eclectic one is almost universally known. Hence, most works which make use of this term contain an assertion that it is both ambiguous and unclear. In order to avoid this inconvenience, many authors inform their readers about how they understand the term "hate speech" and why they decided to assign a particular meaning to it (e.g., Walker, 1994; Butler, 1997; Wolfson, 1997; Gelber, 2002; Cortese, 2006; Waltman & Haas, 2011; Hertz & Molnar, 2012; Baez, 2013; Boromisza-Habashi, 2013). However, the selection of meta-analyses in which the focus is not on "hate speech" itself but rather on the research on "hate speech" has remained poor. Moreover, there are no analyses focusing on the issue of rendering the term scientific and on the epistemological consequences of this phenomenon.

The already mentioned meta-analysis by D. Boromisza-Habashi (2013) should be recognized as a particularly successful and inspiring one. In it, the author treated scientific comments on "hate speech" as the ones which – along with non-scientific comments – form a bundle of cultural phenomena, which can and should be examined with the help of the tools developed by the ethnography of communication. It should also be emphasized that despite the fact that several years have passed since the creation of the aforesaid study, the description of the literature on the topic presented therein remains valid and worthy of attention. It should be treated as a starting point for any meta-analytical work, driven by the desire to present the contemporary literature on "hate speech" as a collection of sources. In the light of the observations by D. Boromisza-Habashi, it is clear that this collection tells a lot about its authors – their attitudes to science, their vision of practicing science, its objectives, and about their cognitive attitudes in general.

According to the observations contained in "Hate Speech as Cultural Practice", the literature on the literature on "hate speech" is dominated by studies demonstrating the accuracy or inaccuracy of the previous analyses. In particular, there are many works which criticize the proponents or opponents of specific legal practices relating to the freedom of speech. There are also works in which their authors define themselves as active participants in the public discourse on "hate speech", who cannot refrain from engaging in the defense of certain values. Some meta-texts present an argumentation according to which, despite an enormous discord as to the meaning of the term "hate speech", solutions in this field can be evaluated and ranked as better or worse. Finally, there are meta-texts the authors of which try to show the

"primary symbols" which could structure or which do structure the scientific discourse on "hate speech".

In the light of the main assumptions broadly accepted in this field – neatly formulated by Koselleck (2009) – language and social reality interact (transformations of terms are conditioned on social change and vice versa). As a result of this mutual conditioning, the reality described, the way in which it is described, and the ongoing relationship between the two must all be taken into account when studying concepts. Koselleck (2009) also recommended to intensely explore the metamorphoses of the basic concepts, so important for a given community that without them there could be no efficient socio-political communication. Terms of this type – e.g., state, law, nation, government, citizen, family – have been assigned multiple denotations and connotations in the course of their long-term use. Needless to say, the sense and meanings attached to them are not innocent, but they have an impact on both the intellect and emotions. For this reason, language users often have fierce and unsolvable arguments on how to understand them and how to use them in the public space (Koselleck, 2009).

The article also uses the studies of J. Habermas's epistemolgical views. His concept in particular increases the awareness of the normative assumptions that lie at the root of various ways of characterizing and explaining research practices. By adapting its assumptions to the purposes of this article, it can be concluded that scientific research can be motivated by three types of interests. As a consequence, three research areas can be distinguished, i.e. space controlled by technical interest; space controlled by practical interest and space controlled by emancipatory interest (Habermas, 1971; Bohman & Rehg, 2011; Piontek, Hordecki, Ossowski, 2013).

Technical interest, understood as the most primordial, manifests itself in a typical human desire to control nature, aimed at facilitating survival. As a result of sublimation of this attitude – in accordance with the reasoning of J. Habermas – people began to practice science understood as discovering the laws of nature. The knowledge of such laws is seen as the key to increasingly more complex transformations of reality. Transformation manifests itself in finding more and more improvements, tools and techniques that facilitate the use of objects (Habermas, 1971). Practical interest – encourages interpretation activities. It is associated with the human need to understand and communicate. The necessity of its implementation results from the fact that having a rich and valuable knowledge of the world is not automatically tantamount to being able to use it in the most effective way. Sciences motivated by practical interest are therefore aimed at transferring intellectual achievements, and on their basis communities develop the procedures for using the resources available to them (Habermas, 1971). Emancipatory interest stems from the longing for freedom. It is also based on pursuing change – because of change people critically reflect upon reality. Critical

thinking has given rise to disciplines which try to expose technical and practical achievements as sources of slavery and limitations. In the light of this attitude, along with the development of technical sciences (production of knowledge) and practical sciences (production of order), the field of individual choices is narrowing down and inequalities between people are growing. As a result, discrimination is developing and superstition, stereotypes, prejudice and oppression are multiplying. We should fight them in the name of justice (Habermas, 1971).

The views of Ch. L. Stevenson (1964), necessary to present the essence of a persuasive definition, are quoted from the collection of his texts published in 1964. Referring to a slightly modified terminology of Charles L. Stevenson, we can conclude that argumentation uses the static layer of words, while persuasion – the dynamic layer. They can be told apart relatively easily, if we take into account the fact that "Broadly speaking, there are two different purposes which lead us to use language. On the one hand we use words (as in science) to record, clarify, and communicate beliefs. On the other hand we us words to give vent to our feelings (interjections), or to create mood] (poetry), or to incite people to actions or attitudes (oratory)" (Stevenson, 1964, 16-20). In pursuing the first objective, the sender is more likely to refer to the relatively defined descriptive meaning, i.e. he or she takes into account – exclusively or almost exclusively – the set of designates which the words used represent.[2] To achieve the remaining objectives, the sender deliberately uses elusive emotive meanings. According to Ch. L. Stevenson, the latter are "a tendency of words I express or evoke states of mind in the people who use the words" (Stevenson 1964, 20). In the light of the foregoing, it was also recognized that the problems with using the term "hate speech" were primarily associated with the fact that its relatively defined descriptive meaning was blurred. At the same time, the emotive meanings contained therein are very clear or easy to grasp. As a result, the user of the term "hate speech" inevitably runs the risk of the content of their comment being overshadowed by the form, and the attempt to describe and explain reality being superseded by an assessment and agitation. Thus, he or she *nolens volens* creates a message that cannot show what reality is like or what it appears to be, but argues what it should be or how it should be changed. At the same time, the key definition, based on which a text will become a carrier of a certain vision of the world, will not be created with due attention to appropriateness. It will most likely be a definition which is supposed to change mentality, and therefore a *persuasive definition*.

In the analysis of the concept of "hate speech" it was also taken into account that in the well-known article published in 1938 in the "Mind" journal and later reprinted in the work "Facts and Values", Ch. L. Stevenson (1964) showed that the creation of persuasive definitions is the daily bread of philosophers. "There are hundreds of words which, like *culture*, have both a vague conceptual meaning and a rich emotive meaning. The conceptual meaning of them all is subject to constant redefinition" (Stevenson, 1964, 35). Moreover, in his opinion, it is easy to see that this operation appears in everyday speech so often that, so far, linguists have taken very little interest in it, treating it as being too obvious. As observed by Ch. Stevenson, people often use such expressions as „true freedom", „real freedom", „true love", „real love", „true success", „real success" (Stevenson, 1964, 35). By using them they refer to things which they find valuable and worthy of affirmation. „The words are prizes which each man seeks to bestow on the qualities of his own choice" (Stevenson, 1964, 35). Thus, persuasive definitions are created by a specific use of emotive and descriptive meanings – the sender uses the positive or negative connotation of the former to modify the latter (Stevenson, 1964, 35). The foregoing comments served as a framework which made it possible to consider the consequences of rendering the term "hate speech" more scientific. Based on the analysis of the literature, it was observed that it had often been treated as a scientific term, subject to much stricter disambiguations than colloquial expressions. A number of researchers adapt it as a label which denotes a certain group of communication phenomena – but at the same time they do not agree as to its scope.

METHOD

The comments presented in this text are meta-analytical. It was not "hate speech" itself which was analyzed, but rather texts on "hate speech". As has already been mentioned, the method used in this study is a combination of conceptual analysis and discourse analysis. The conceptual analysis focused primarily on the term "hate speech", while its general assumptions were derived from the methodology of research on the history of socio-political concepts (Richter, 1995; Koselleck, 2002, Koselleck, 2009).

In the study it was assumed that at present it is difficult to tell whether or not the term "hate speech" will become one of the basic terms which program the dominant socio-political thinking and practices of modern times. However, it was also recognized that its current popularity poses specific problems to socio-political actors (a trend to use vague but emotionally charged expressions). As a consequence, it was noted that the expansion of the term "hate speech" in contemporary public discourse is conducive to substituting argumen-

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2   Ch.L Stevenson sometimes referred to descriptive meaning as conceptual or referential meaning. However, due to the ambiguity of the terms "concept" and "reference", it is better to avoid these last two expressions.

tation with persuasion. As a result, a field of research on "hate speech" developed, within which various concepts thereof compete with one another. Each concept – regardless of the degree of its methodological establishment – is embedded in a kind of axiology and focused on achieving objectives specific thereto. An attempt was made to define the aforementioned axiologies and objectives with the use of a typology of knowledge constitutive interests/attitudes proposed by J. Habermas, which is not new, but which is still valuable from the epistemological point of view.

Having examined the structure of the term "hate speech" and identified Habermasian knowledge constitutive interests – an analysis of texts dealing with "hate speech", including "hate speech" in news websites' comments, was carried out. Taking into account the limitations associated with the size of a scientific article, when discussing the results, the author decided to present only the analysis of the exemplary yet characteristic and relevant texts. Thus, the following materials were interpreted: (1) texts by Robert Post, Ireneusz C. Kamiński, C.E. Baker and E. Łętowska, on the basis of which it was possible to clearly demonstrate how the representatives of legal discourse most often used the term "hate speech" and how they practiced science; (2) texts by L. M. Nijakowski and S. Kowalski, which helped to illustrate how the term "hate speech" can be used and how scientific reflection within the framework of sociology oriented towards discourse analysis can be designed; what is more, thanks to the presentation of the text by L. M. Nijakowski it was possible to clearly demonstrate the consequences of defining "hate speech" in a non-intuitive manner, inconsistent with language practice; (3) the materials prepared by Obserwatorium Wolności Mediów w Polsce [The observatory of media freedom in Poland] and some other reports on "hate speech", including hate speech in news website's comments– to demonstrate a purely emancipatory way of using the term "hate speech" and the phenomenon of justifying one's views by convincing others of their scientific and undisputed nature; (4) texts by Mikhail Kroz and Natalia Ratinova, to show the emancipatory aspects of the psychological variety of research on "hate speech"; (5) the text by A. M Vierkhovsky, to present a procedure involving a seemingly objective, or at least objectified, hierarchization of the acts described as "hate speech"; (6) the text by M. Głowiński, in order to present how the researcher renders the term related to "hate speech", i.e. "the rhetoric of hatred", scientific; what is more, through the presentation of this text the present author was able to clearly demonstrate the consequences of defining "hate rhetoric" in an intuitive manner, consistent with linguistic practice.

In analyzing and evaluating the materials mentioned above, the following parameters were taken into consideration: (1) the meaning of the term "hate speech" proposed by a given author; (2) the meaning of other key terms used by the author; (3) objectives the achievement of which the author declared in the text and the nature of these objectives (the answer to the question of whether the material focused on the implementation of cognitive, practical/hermeneutic or emancipatory tasks); (4) research methods used by the author; (5) axiological assumptions declared and implemented in the text; (6) epistemological assumptions declared and implemented in the text.

RESULT

The results are presented in accordance with the order of the analyzed texts. Materials representing a wide range of disciplines were analyzed this way. These include legal and sociological texts, texts on media studies inspired by the law and sociology (including media monitoring reports), as well as psychological and linguistic texts.

Knowledge constitutive interests in legal texts

It should be emphasized that the literature abounds with texts the authors of which try to describe in detail where and how the law is used today as a tool for combating comments seen as hateful and worthy of punishment by the socio-political elites and / or large social groups. The reflections of Robert C. Post and Ireneusz C. Kamiński are a good example of this. The former, when characterizing the development of regulations limiting the various forms of hate speech, tries to identify a number of practical problems associated with the implementation of the do's and don'ts in this regard. The latter is the author of numerous publications in which he attempts to describe and explain the development of appropriate standards of the Council of Europe, formed primarily along with the evolution of the case law of the European Court of Human Rights (Kamiński, 2010, 179).

This way of researching the issues related to hate speech seems to stem from technical and practical motives. Both authors create texts which make it easier to understand the development of modern legal systems. They also broaden the knowledge of how to distinguish between what today's society or their elites consider to be an extreme and non-extreme statement, a statement deserving / not deserving to be morally criticized, and finally a statement deserving / not deserving to be addressed by the authorities. The authors intend their research to facilitate the work of lawyers, journalists, press spokespersons, creators of advertisements, and a number of other communication professionals. Moreover, one can find in them a certain emancipatory intent – the desire to free the reader from the uncertainty of the boundaries between legal and illegal speech.

A slightly different way of conducting research on hate speech can be found in the texts by C. Edwin Baker (2009, 140-157) and Ewa Łętowska (2013, 15-20). These

authors, starting from the analysis of the law governing the punishment for hate speech, oppose the excessive – in their opinion – regulation of the sphere of permitted comments. What is evident in their texts is the fear that the noble intentions of the opponents of hatred can result in laws which, in the long run, could destroy the actual freedom of conscience, religion, thought, expression, opinion, print and press. The described approach resounds in a particularly interesting way in the views of E. Łętowska (2013), who clearly emphasizes that with the development of new means of communication there appear more and more temptations associated with the overregulation of communication. She maintains that the specificity of the Internet leads people to thinking that there should be a special law governing its use. What is more, in her opinion, the spontaneity and the wide reach of this medium create the temptation to punish the instances of hate speech in an extremely harsh way. Moreover, the desire to make the law stricter is often underpinned with a belief that the profit-oriented on-line forum moderators deliberately avoid the removal of even the most drastic comments. However, according to E. Łętowska (2013), the problem – at least in Poland – lies not so much with the law but rather with the lack of its consistent implementation. In her opinion, Polish regulations allow authorities to effectively respond to the cases of abuse of freedom of expression – what is needed is the will to act (Łętowska, 2013, 15-19).

The texts by C. E. Baker and E. Łętowska seem to be primarily inspired by the emancipatory interest. Nevertheless, they also play an important technical and practical role. The emancipatory quality of this type of materials manifests itself mainly in pointing out that the freedoms of individuals, even in developed democracies, are not guaranteed once and for all, but require constant protection and care. The authors' approach also reveals a fear resulting from the fact that noble intentions have often led to the imposition of the will of the stronger upon the weaker. Moreover, in accordance with the said authors, too intense ousting of hate speech from public space can destroy pluralism, excessively narrowing down the range of positions expressed by individuals troubled by the uncertainty of whether their comments are lawful or not. What is more, these texts should be regarded as an encouragement to search for the answer to the question of how regulations alter behavior and interpersonal relationships. Finally, the articles by C. E. Baker and E. Łętowska also contain serious specialist legal knowledge, facilitating the efficient use of the law, and in particular its accurate interpretation.

Lech Nijakowski's emancipatory approach

However, texts on hate speech, in particular the hate speech found on the Internet and in news websites' comments, are dominated by the works of activists who want to define "hate speech" in order to be able to fight it. Materials of this type usually belong to the broadly--understood field of research on discourse (discourse analysis). This trend is clearly seen in the article "Hate speech in the light of the theory of discourse" by Lech M. Nijakowski (2008).

In it, the author assumed that the "scientific relevance" of the term "hate speech" is "indisputable", as evidenced by the "achievements of the discourse theory and analysis". He also concluded that because of the politicization of the term, "it is very difficult to use and encounters a number of emotional [and therefore extra--rational (?) – B. H.] criticism" (Nijakowski, 2008). Moreover, he stated that the purpose of the article was to "attempt a detailed definition of *hate speech* in the Polish public discourse and its operationalization – suggesting some indicators and instruments making it possible to determine whether a given text should be considered as an example of hate speech or whether such an accusation should be rejected (Nijakowski, 2008).

Most importantly, in the light of the approach presented by L. M. Nijakowski, practicing hate speech is independent of the intentions of the sender. In other words, according to his observations, the scientific evaluation of linguistic actions can and should ignore the motives and reasons due to which the sender formulated their message. Thus, a situation in which the sender unintentionally creates a statement that meets the criteria for classifying it as "hate speech" is possible. ("At this point it must be emphasized YET AGAIN that the category of intention is not essential in discourse analysis. It does not matter whether the person reproducing hate speech does so to harm the vilified group or whether his or her words are a behavioral expression of his or her strong prejudice against a foreign group. Very often anti-Semitic comments are made by people who are driven simply by the desire to strengthen the Polish-Jewish dialog.") (Nijakowski, 2008).

The "objectified" proposal of L. Nijakowski boils down to the assumption that there are five determinants of hate speech. These include: 1 Over-generalization of a negative quality; 2 Assigning a particularly negative characteristics; 3 Disregard, undermining the rituals of respect; 4 Cataloging and comparing the representatives of the hated group; 5 Group object of hatred (Nijakowski, 2008).

It should be emphasized that the understanding of the term "hate speech" referred to above no longer reflects the emotive meaning of the term "hate". Moreover, its components have not been clearly defined. The qualities mentioned by the author can be attributed to different language phenomena in a purely arbitrary manner. Thus – if a researcher decides to use the term "hate speech" proposed by L. M. Nijakowski, a possibility opens up for them to decide, to a large extent arbitrarily and in line with their own likes and dislikes, which of the tested comments should be considered as hateful (Nijakowski, 2008).

Finally, as a result of the efforts of the author, a persuasive definition is created, however, the author himself is not certain whether it can be treated as a definition ("it has many drawbacks"). Therefore, to be on the safe side, he concludes that hate speech cannot be properly defined, but also does not need to be. It is enough to use the term with a "sociological", "cultural", "anthropological" or some other scientific intuition, which will inevitably make it possible to tell the difference between the cases of hateful comments and other linguistic acts (Nijakowski, 2008).

Accordingly, L. M. Nijakowski proposes the following definition – as a support for scientific analyses: "As can be seen in the light of the foregoing remarks, hate speech is a phenomenon strongly dependent on the context, and for this reason it is exceptionally difficult to define. It seems, however, that the indicated characteristics of this type of discourse allow a general definition. Hate speech consists in assigning particularly negative qualities to and / or calling for discriminatory action against a certain social category, especially one the membership of which is seen as a *natural* (resulting from classification), and not chosen. *The naturalness* of a given category is the result of social negotiations, and not expertise" (Nijakowski, 2008).

It should be emphasized that in the light of L. M. Nijakowski's arguments, a definition was created according to which the connotation and denotation of the term "hate speech" do not match at all, therefore, the author uses the term in a non-intuitive way, which the recipient most likely finds misleading. The denotation proposed by the author, even though imperfect and imprecise, is supposed to be objective, devoid of emotions, based on hard criteria – though embedded in a context, and determined independently of the intentions of the sender. The connotation, however, cannot be subjected to this kind of treatment – referring to something as "hate speech" arouses intense emotions and almost inevitably suggests that the one who used a given expression genuinely hates, and therefore is a carrier and a sower of hatred (even if they are not aware of it – because ultimately their language exposes them – hermeneutics of suspicion, we are all suspects, we are all enslaved by language).

As a consequence, L. M. Nijakowski's concept appears to be motivated primarily by the emancipatory interest. Its author is interested in "hate speech" because he sees its presence as a manifestation of outrageous slavery. Both the recipients and the carriers are enslaved here. The role of the researcher – in the light of this approach – is therefore to expose haters, which should be understood as a painful but necessary diagnosis. Without it there is no way one could think of a democratic society, without it there is no way one could dream about curing those who are ill with hatred.

There is, therefore, a tension in the literature between the connotation of the term "hate speech" and the attempts to make the term more scientific, separate from the feelings and intentions of the author of a given comment under consideration. It should be emphasized, however, that there are also voices in science, according to which formally defined hate speech is what the connotation of the term suggests, i.e. a proof of hatred felt by the author of the hateful comment.

Other emancipatory proposals

Emancipatory intentions are also included in the definition of "hate speech" proposed by Sergiusz Kowalski (2010, 238-241). According to the author, "hate speech" means insulting and humiliating groups, and if it is applied to individuals – it is only because of their membership in a given group; the insulted, humiliated groups are natural or at least are very difficult to leave; the membership of individuals in groups is a phenomenon from the sphere of imagination, similarly to the characteristics and activities of the insulted and humiliated groups, which are created in the mind of the recipient without any attempts to verify these ideas.

Yet another example is the proposal by Mikhail Kroz and Natalia Ratinova (2005, 75-92). In the opinion of these researchers, hateful comments are deceitful by definition. According to the aforementioned authors, the specificity of hateful messages stems from mendacity at the level identification and / or attribution. Moreover, messages of this type are often formulated as seemingly defensive, and are in fact a disguised incitement to violence.

The characterized emancipatory attitude should be seen as a rich source of texts calling for the fight against hate speech, especially on the Internet. The publication entitled „Mowa nienawiści w interencie: jak z nią walczyć?" [Hate speech on the Internet: how to fight it] published by Obserwatorium Wolności Mediów w Polsce [The observatory of media freedom in Poland], is an explicit example of this kind of texts. The work contains a lot of materials the authors of which try to balance – with varying degrees of success and accuracy – the need to fight hatred with the need to protect freedom of expression.

A wide range of different reports on the prevalence of hatred in online communications corresponds to materials of this type. Such publications are usually the result of the implementation of various grants and programs aimed at counteracting racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and intolerance. Reports of this type are often founded by various associations and foundations which aim to build a civil society and promote democracy and human rights (Czarnecki, 2009; Dzjaloshinskij, 2007; Dzjaloshinskij & Dzjaloshinskaja, 2007; Dubrovskij & Karpenko, 2003; Gliszczyńska, Sękowska-Kozłowska, Wieruszewski, 2007; Kowalski & Tulli, 2004; McGonagle, 2013).

The emancipatory interest can also be seen in the various typologies of hate utterances. The classificati-

on into "hard hate speech", "medium hate speech" and "soft hate speech" proposed by A. M. Verhovskij is just one example. This concept remains arbitrary in two senses. First of all, the author establishes the subcategories of "hard", "medium" and "soft" hate speech in a rather arbitrary manner. Second of all, the classification of specific comments into particular categories cannot have the form of subjective "capturing of the implicit content of the studied comments", based on some kind of "research intuition" or "getting the feel of the sender's intentions" (Verhovskij, 2002).

Michał Głowiński's "rhetoric of hatred"

An interesting emancipatory position can be found in the texts by M. Głowiński, who uses the term "rhetoric of hatred", contrasting it with the term "rhetoric of empathy". In his approach, the various features of political comments taken together become a proof of the extremely negative emotions and intentions of the author – a proof that the author treats certain people or groups as enemies who are dangerous, and therefore do not deserve understanding but need to be annihilated (Głowiński, 2009).

According to the characteristics of "hate rhetoric", those who practice it assume that "Anyone who is considered an enemy that must be destroyed (the sooner the better!) can be treated as an object of hatred; in this approach, being the enemy is a certain predetermined role, absolutely not subjective, i.e. independent of the person to whom such a role is assigned (the case is similar with institutions and organizations)". At the same time, "*rhetoric of empathy* is the opposite of *rhetoric of hatred*. Even when used for the purpose of arguing with persons, institutions or organizations in a highly critical manner, it shows some understanding of the other party, it recognizes that what the representatives of the opposite party say, represent and aim at is not simply the result of ill will, bad intentions, despicable, condemnable games"; "In other words, hatred and contempt do not become an absolutely dominant factor in a comment" (Głowiński, 2009).

In particular, M. Głowiński sees "rhetoric of hatred" as a rhetoric of absolute arguments (Głowiński, 2009); moreover, it treats the persons it deals with not as persons with opposing views but as objects of evaluation, analysis; it is constructed based on dichotomous divisions; it is based on a conspiracy vision of reality; it is connected with using emotionally unambiguous terms; the subject of this rhetoric presents themselves as a carrier of absolute and therefore non-negotiable truths (Głowiński, 2009).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

When working out the details of the research problem formulated in the introduction, the question was raised of whether it was possible, on the basis of the presented materials, to decide which of the three epistemological attitudes indicated by J. Habermas seemed to prevail in contemporary research on "hate speech", and in particular on "hate speech" on the Internet. This question harmonizes with the main purpose of the article (to characterize and compare the research attitudes presented in selected works which reflect the dominant trends in the study of statements defined as "hate speech"). Therefore, when analyzing the selected texts, the answers to the questions formulated in its final paragraph were tried to find. Attention was also paid to the question of whether hate speech researchers formulated technical, practical and emancipatory objectives in an explicit or implicit manner (significant, though auxiliary indicator of methodological awareness of the researchers). Finally, yet another question was whether it was possible to identify concepts the proponents of which tried to design their research so as to balance the implementation of technical, practical and emancipatory objectives (integrated research, which appear to be a chance for the most objectified results).

In the course of the analysis, it was observed that in most of the cited texts emancipatory threads clearly manifested themselves. This phenomenon seems to apply to the vast majority of texts dealing with "hate speech". It can be assumed that, to a large extent, it is a result of the nature of the term "hate speech", which is too emotionally charged to successfully serve as a scientific term. For every definition of the term "hate speech" which has been rendered scientific, to a lesser or greater extent triggers a string of negative experiences and associations, encouraging a fight against the disseminators of the communication referred to by that name.

The popularity of utilitarian attitudes, on the other hand, can explain the fact that it is possible to observe a discourse in which – in accordance with the ideal of technical sciences within the Habermasian meaning – participants attempt to describe and explain in an objectified way the specific legal solutions related to "hate speech". Texts of this type often attempt to answer the question of why certain regulations apply or do not apply in a particular place and time.

In the area of research under consideration, there are also texts inspired by the technical-practical-emancipatory interest. Their authors, declaring a strong belief in the usefulness of their arguments, do not stop at the descriptive characteristics of a given legal status associated with "hate speech". They also try to determine whether regulations should be amended or not – the conclusions of their texts often contain *de lege lata* or *de lege ferenda* proposals.

The use of the term "hate speech" in science correlates poorly with the practical attitudes of researchers. Texts aimed at a cool, but in-depth understanding of the reasons for which messages defined as hateful occur in the public space, do not appear too often. It is also diffi-

cult to find comparative studies demonstrating messages motivated by hatred in comparison with messages motivated by other feelings.

It should once again be emphasized that the range of literature on "hate speech" is so broad that it is impossible to become familiar with all the works in this field. It should also be noted that the analysis was primarily based on the interpretationistic methodology. Hence, a large number of conclusions formulated in the present text have to remain presumptions, be it probable.

Moreover, as has already been noted, the article contains a brief analysis of only selected texts on "hate speech". Hence, the presented conclusions undoubtedly require further, in-depth analysis. What is more, the catalog of texts the authors of which cultivate research on "hate speech" in a specific way should be significantly expanded. However, the presented material allows novel insights into the condition of contemporary research on "hate speech", including hateful news websites' comments. This text does not ignore the existing research on the cultural specificity of the discourses and metadiscourses on "hate speech". However, it is not a text written from the perspective of the researcher examining communication cultures.

The article shows that rendering the term "hate speech" scientific is a supracultural act. First and foremost, it is conductive to the dissemination of the already described, specific constellation of ideas about the social sciences and humanities. This constellation has certain consequences – one of which is the utilization of the investigation of the phenomena which researchers choose to refer to as described above.

The most important conclusion which follows from the considerations presented in the article comes down to the statement that every researcher who decides to refer to certain messages as "hate speech", *nolens volens*, to a lesser or greater extent, infuses their text with persuasion. Thus, at least to some extent, they reject the concept of science, in the light of which they are obliged to act argumentatively, but at the same time in accordance with the scientific standards laid down in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (in particular, the abandonment of Weber's postulate of "freedom from valuation" (1985)).

Meanwhile, although this postulate should be formulated with a certain degree of shyness, it may be fitting to assume that, at a time when the Internet tempts us in so many ways – to become popular, to participate in the global circulation of opinions and to compete for recipients, the role of social and humanities research conducted in the traditional way is particularly important. Perhaps due to this temptation, the humanities and social sciences which would not attempt to coin new terms to attract attention with, would have specifically important tasks to complete – the task of being a witness, not influential, but significant; the task of proving that even in the highly interactive environment of today

we can and we have to do more thinking than communicating, reflect more on the appropriateness than on creating messages, playing acts, or developing theories and narratives which the world has never seen before.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the meta--analysis proposed herein can and should be placed in the context of broader research on the persuasiveness of the terms used in the texts on non-axiologically-neutral speech. With the help of the categories used to dissect the term "hate speech" rendered scientific, a number of other persuasive expressions naturalized in modern science can be analyzed, such as "extreme speech", "the language of hostility", "fighting words", "excitable speech", "political correctness", "insult of religious feelings", "blasphemy", "freedom of speech", "freedom of conscience and religion", "violation of personal rights", "defamation", "defamation of religion", "insult", "discrimination", "intolerance".

What is more, the theoretical framework proposed in this article makes it possible to investigate the epistemological awareness which reveals itself in the scientific text containing the said terms. As a consequence, there is hope that through this type of investigations, many important features which make up the mentality of contemporary researchers analyzing current public discourses will be identified. Moreover, it makes it possible to determine – in the course of in-depth studies – which one of the three Habermasian cognitive attitudes dominates in the contemporary research on these discourses, if any. This finding would be an important achievement in the field of sensible reflection on the functions that the aforesaid research has in societies heavily saturated with various communication technologies.

The theoretical originality of the text lies in highlighting the consequences of making the term "hate speech" scientific despite its extremely vague denotation, but also very strong connotation. So far, no due attention has been paid to the fact that the denotative vagueness and connotative intensity of the term "hate speech" to large extent determine the attitudes of researchers and significantly affect the results achieved / created by them. The text also illustrates the consequences of a radical departure from colloquial meanings and senses, which is something many researches using the term "hate speech" do.

Understanding the impact of the term "hate speech" on the attitudes of researchers analyzing such phenomena is also important in the social context. An extensive knowledge of the problems associated with making the said term more scientific may prevent the fetishization of research results, in particular by the media and political actors. What is more, the popularization of the knowledge of the cognitive attitudes of researchers could possibly prevent the politicization of their achievements, as well as stop them from being turned into a source of manipulation. Moreover, being aware of the difficulties associated with making the term "hate spe-

ech" scientific should be regarded as a necessary, be it insufficient condition for the dialog between the scientific community and other communities coexisting in the public space (agreement as a necessary step towards overcoming alienation between professions).

The studies presented in the text form part of a program of popularization of "fruitful discussion", outlined years ago by Roman Ingarden (1998). They emphasize the fact that "especially the multitude of specialized scientific languages of individual groups and schools of thought and the force of the habit to use one's own language only, the reluctance to think in any other language, making it impossible to regain the inner freedom of man, create real walls between different people and communities (scientific, artistic, cultural, religious), walls hindering or altogether preventing reaching an agreement on many theoretical, and – even worse – practical issues. What is meant to be a means for communicating and agreeing on the same proposition, becomes a barrier which often proves impossible to overcome. Moreover, it is not just a barrier to reaching an agreement between people, but also to reaching out to the reality seen and linguistically expressed by someone else. Therefore, stubbornly sticking to one's own language, one's own way of understanding and valuating things, is precisely this lack of inner freedom which makes any attempts at discussions between people illusory." (Ingarden, 1998, 174-175).

RICERCA CONTEMPORANEA SUL DISCORSO INCITANTE ALL'ODIO NEI COMMENTI SUI SITI DI NEWS: DALLA PROSPETTIVA DELLA TEORIA DI JÜRGEN HABERMAS SUL SAPERE

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RIASSUNTO

Lo scopo principale dell'articolo consiste in caratterizzare e paragonare gli approci cognitivi presenti in articoli selezionati che riflettono le tendenze dominanti negli studi contemporanei di "discorsi di odio". Determinando questi approcci prima di tutto si è serviti del concetto degli interessi costituenti la cognizione (Habermas). Inoltre, è stato fatto il riferimento alle premesse metodologiche vastamente accettate in ambito degli studi sulla storia dei concetti socio-politici e al concetto delle definizioni persuasive di Ch. L. Stevenson. In generale, nel testo viene evidenziata l'alternanza tra l'analisi del concetto di „hate speech" e l'analisi del discorso. Nella maggior parte dei testi analizzati ben distinguibili sono i fili d'emancipazione. È possibile presumere che nella gran parte ciò risulti dalla natura del concetto di „hate speech" la cui è fortemente caratterizzata emotivamente per servire bene come termine scientifico. Sono visibili anche le prove di descrizione e di spiegazione oggettiva volte a presentare le precise soluzioni legali legate al „discorso d'odio". Invece, prima di tutto, mancano i testi volti a concepire le cause per cui i messaggi definiti come odiosi sono presenti nell'area pubblica.

Parole chiave: hate speech, concetto socio-politica, interesse emancipazione, interesse tecnico, interesse pratico.

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