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EMOTION-GENERATING MECHANISMS
IN TELEVISION PROGRAMMES

1. IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON TELEVISION

Television understood as an audiovisual medium has undergone great changes in the way programmes and messages are produced, journalists and editorial teams work, broadcasting schedules are organised, and televisions formats are modified. TV stations in Poland and all over the world halted the production of most programmes during the pandemic, aiming at a short, temporary broadcasting break. Amper Analysis states that the pandemic caused a delay in about 60% of script-based television programmes. A decrease in the number of script-based programmes was expected to take place before the end of 2020. What was observed was an increase in the production of out-of-studio programmes, relying on the producers' flexibility.[1]

The extended time of the pandemic imposed changes in the form and manner of recording programmes all over the world, for example:

– programmes recorded without audience—mostly political commentaries and entertainment shows could not be recorded in front of an audience (e.g. talk shows: "Che tempo che fa" on Rai 1, "Skandaliści" on Polsat);

– programmes recorded in a professional studio or home studio—reporters' broadcasts were confined to a studio, TV reporters broadcast from home (TVN24, CNN);

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[1] See also Peter WHITE, "Covid 19 Shutdown Will Delay 60% of U.S. & Global Drama," *Deadline*, May 19, 2020, https://deadline.com/2020/05/covid-19-shutdown-delay-international-drama-1202938005.

– programmes recorded on location—studios were turned into on-location studios (e.g. TVN's *Uwaga* was broadcast from a bus);

– programmes' length and frequency was changed—programmes produced in line with the sanitary restrictions were made longer while those whose production came with a risk were shortened (e.g. shortened length of TVP2's *Pytanie na śniadanie*);

– working with video communicators—most of the news programmes, political commentaries, breakfast shows were produced with the use of video communicators (e.g. *BBC News* broadcast on BBC, *Wiadomości* news bulletin on TVP, *Studio CT24* on CT24);

– an increase in the number of live programmes—chat shows, current affairs programmes, call-in programmes (e.g. *Eleven Call Live* on Eleven Sport 1);

– big concerts and entertainment events could take place without an audience;

– new television categories were created, e.g. Platige Image created a post-production studio and Polsat set up a new studio, Virtual Events, for online events.

The pandemic affected programme schedules. There was no fixed time of broadcasts but no fixed programme schedule, either. Television channels struggled with the programme schedule of the day and the weeks to follow.

1. Sports channels had to produce a new offer to the most personalised audience due to sports events being cancelled; special reruns and political debates were offered. The character of the channel was changed by airing film documentaries, sports reports, and more interviews and chat shows.

2. Television series and daily programmes were halted, which disrupted the daily television schedule. This sent an unclear signal to the audience who were used to a fixed order of television programmes—a deviation from it confused the audience.

3. Many television channels turned into news channels, churning out the news on the coronavirus.

Television channels had to change the routine of their journalists' work. A rotation system of work, sanitary regime, and lowering of the number of employees responsible for content production was introduced:

– a rotation system was introduced for the news journalists, with the simultaneous automatic delegation of tasks;

– journalists broadcast their programmes from home, bringing the audience closer to their private lives, their kitchens or living rooms;

– the rotation system was based on new principles, relying not on specific programmes but rather days of the week;

– entertainment shows disappeared from the schedule or changed their format, involving fewer people, which affected their quality.

The changes affected the audience, who had to change their viewing habits and open themselves to new programmes and technological solutions. TV channels in Italy quite quickly embraced the new reality and encouraged their viewers to accept new materials available through new means of broadcasting.[2] A similar phenomenon was observed across the world. TV channels in Poland also adapted to the new reality. New broadcasting channels gained in popularity, such as VOD or Player.pl, as well as websites and social media. Many broadcasters changed their programme offers, prices and provided access to an even greater amount of content. Special low-costs sets of video content related to popular programmes were made available online (e.g. *Start* available on the Player). Broadcasters all over the world started to create online collections of the latest movies, lifestyle or sports programmes. To show solidarity, broadcasters opened some pay-per-view channels and content to all viewers, e.g. Canal+. Big television corporations verified their mission and social duties and acknowledged the importance of information and social responsibility. CNN, BBC and Euronews devoted 50 million dollars' worth of their airtime to organisations promoting health and spreading information on how to combat the global health crisis caused by the coronavirus.[3] Nielsen's study shows that despite many changes in their functioning, TV stations attracted more viewers than before. This was observed particularly in North Korea, USA, and Italy.[4]

2. MECHANISMS OF GENERATING EMOTIONS IN TV CONTENT

Emotions are an object of psychological studies, and their definitions and range depend on the methodology used and solutions applied, including ex-

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[2] See also Alice THORPE, "How the COVID-19 Pandemic Is Reshaping the Italian Television Landscape," *Ampere Analysis*, April 20, 2020, https://www.ampereanalysis.com/report/profile-how-the-covid-19-pandemic-is-reshaping-the-italian-television-landscape.

[3] Maciej KOZIELSKI, "Darmowy czas antenowy w CNN, BBC i Euronews na komunikaty o koronawirusie," *Press*, April 3, 2020, accessed June 20, 2020, https://www.press.pl/tresc/61105,darmowy-czas-antenowy-w-cnn_-bbc-i-euronews-na-komunikaty-o-koronawirusie.

[4] Piotr JAGIELSKI, "Oglądamy więcej, ale co epidemia oznacza dla przyszłości telewizji?" Kultura, *Onet*, March 20, 2020, https://kultura.onet.pl/wywiady-i-artykuly/koronawirus-jak-kultura-zmieni-sie-przez-pandemie/rvwpq54.

periments, neuropsychology and neurobiology.[5] Two main approaches to emotions can be identified: as an element of feelings, experiences, subconscious processes. Emotions are generated on the level of stimuli, feelings, and somatic changes.[6] This article does not attempt to define emotions but rather presents audiovisual mechanisms which may dynamize an emotional reception of television content. Simultaneously, it presents a semiotic function of mediatisation, which points towards the media's ability to encode and transmit content.[7]

The pandemic affected the means and messages of television broadcasts, and consequently affected emotions aroused in viewers. The coronavirus dominated TV content, brushing aside guests and audience. Face-to-face contact was replaced by video communicators. The new reality required the image of the journalist to be redefined. Television became a means of access to entertainment, information, education, and culture. Mediatisation became symptomatic of TV messages, both in terms of content and the technology used, which is of great significance for audiovisual media. The biggest challenge of the pandemic was an immediate provision of the schedule with new, fixed, homogenous content. The phenomenon of mediatisation of emotions, as well as emotionalization of the media, was observed. TV content was filled with emotions, leading to an emotional reception of the content. The SARS-Covid-2 theme dominated TV channels, mostly through the news feeds. The examples of generating emotions come from the following TV channels: Rai 1, Rai News 24 (Italy), Polsat, Polsat News (Poland), TVP 1, TVP Info (Poland), TVN, TVN24 (Poland), BBC News, BBC World, Sky News (UK), FOX NEWS, CNN, Indianapolis TV News (USA), Eleven Sport

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[5] See also Magda B. ARNOLD, *Emotion and Personality* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960); Antonio DAMASIO, *Błąd Kartezjusza. Emocje, rozum i ludzki mózg*, trans. Maciej Karpiński (Poznań: Dom Wydawniczy Rebis, 1994/1999); Magda JARYMOWICZ, "O afekcie zawiadującym podmiotem i możliwościach podmiotu panowania nad emocjami," *Przegląd Psychologiczny* 1–2 (1997): 49–56; JARYMOWICZ, *Pomiędzy afektem a intelektem. Poszukiwania empiryczne* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Psychologii PAN, 2001); Abraham MASLOW, *Motywacja a osobowość*, trans. Józef Radzicki, Teresa Rzepa, and Adam A. Zych (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2010); Robert PLUTCHIK, *Emotion: A Psychoevolutionary Synthesis* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980).

[6] See also Jan STRELAU and Dariusz DOLIŃSKI, eds., *Psychologia. Podręcznik akademicki* (Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, 2008); Tomasz MARUSZEWSKI ET AL., "Emocje i motywacja," in *Psychologia. Podręcznik akademicki*, ed. Jan Strelau and Dariusz Doliński (Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, 2008): 43–62.

[7] Stanisław MICHALCZYK, "Pojęcie mediatyzacji w nauce o komunikowaniu," in *Mediatyzacja kampanii politycznych*, ed. Mariusz Kolczyński, Marek Mazur, and Stanisław Michalczyk (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2009), 17–33.

(international sports channel), CT24 (Czech Republic), ProSieben (Germany), SDT (Brazil), RTS (Ecuador). Mechanisms of media representation of emotions could be observed in two main areas: formal (form) and thematic (content):

2.1 FORMAL MECHANISMS GENERATING EMOTIONS IN TV CONTENT

2.1.1 Visual enhancement

Visual enhancement is a mechanism of generating an emotional message related to the pandemic, enhancing the main message:

− the ever-growing number of visual elements, which intensify the message and affect the audience more powerfully. The emotional character is produced mostly through an increased amount of visual elements (infographics), which are supposed to educate and explain the issue but which, in fact, are strictly connected with production of feelings of threat, fear, underscored by the growing statistical numbers and bars in a graph (TVN 24 in Poland, CT24 in the Czech Republic, BBC in the UK, Sky News in the UK);
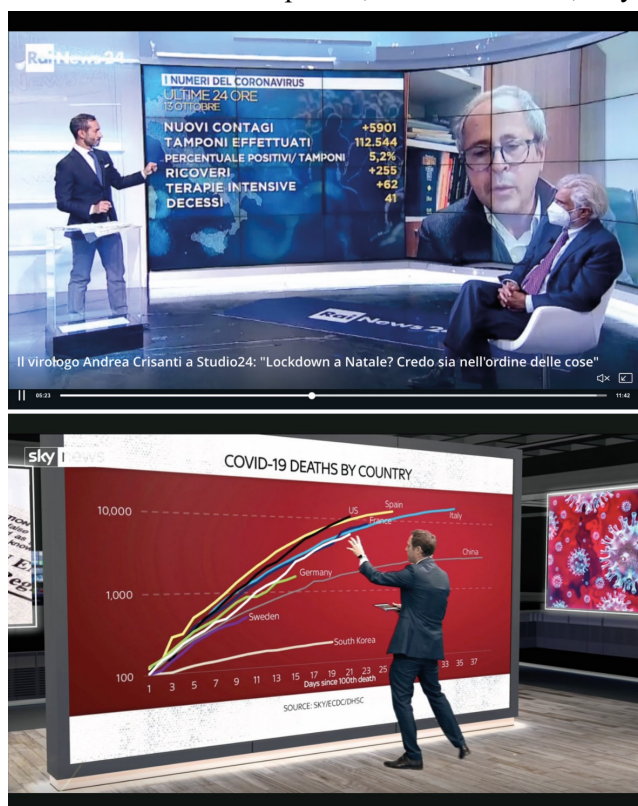

Figure 1. Examples of infographics in news channels.

Source: https://news.sky.com, https://www.rainews.it.

– introduction of images known from specialist messages: infrared camera detecting bacteria and viruses on the hands and objects; explanation of invisible mechanisms, e.g. viruses in the organism, droplet spreading of invisible bacteria. The form augments the message through specialist elements typical of medical, scientific, hermetic messages;

– the design of the television studio, related to the coronavirus, threat, health; visual elements intensifying feelings of fear, threat, adding to the emotional message;
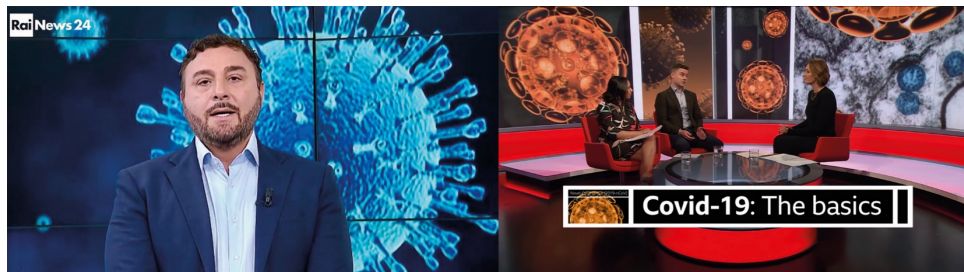

Figure 2. Examples of designs of the TV studio.

Source: https://www.cnn.com, https://www.rainews.it.

– colours affecting the emotional message: dominance of red as a symbolic, emotionally-charged colour of threat; yellow conceptualised as a colour of warning, attracting viewers' attention. Both colours appeared in information bars labelled: "Z ostatniej chwili" (Breaking news), "Na żywo" (Live), "Wydanie Specjalne" (Special edition) and were linked to the emotion of fear in the face of the coronavirus (TVN 24 in Poland, Polsat News in Poland, CNN in the USA).

Figure 3. Examples of the use of colours in news channels.

Source: https://www.polsatnews.pl.

2.1.2 Gradation

Gradation is a mechanism of gradually introducing information. It is intended not only to spread information but also build up tension and intensify the emotional message:

– information bars: they evoke feelings of anxiety, threat, fear; they refer to a state of war, fighting, power, e.g. the *Fakty* news bulletin on TVN: health crisis, virus is not letting up, a new wave, a state of threat, virus does not choose, millions of infections, the power of the virus, epidemic is not giving in, the fight goes on, hard time; the *Wiadomości* bulletin on TVP: protect yourself and others, the world is fighting with the coronavirus, struggle against coronavirus, virus is not easing up, virus is attacking, tragic death toll;

– numbers and statistics: daily, global statistics on those infected and deceased; gradually introducing negative information on the pandemic; the numbers are commented upon by journalists;

– graphics and news text: they contribute to the first, often spontaneous and emotional reception of the message; only later on the news, data and knowledge are absorbed; this allowed the news to induce emotions of fear and uncertainty in the viewers (FOX News in the USA).

Figure 4. Examples of the news headings related to the coronavirus.

Source: https://www.foxnews.com.

2.1.3 Sense-making

Sense-making is a mechanism of making sense of information, pictures, events, news through visual elements. The message is linked with a certain emotion imposed by a visual code:

– visualisation of the former "pandemic logo", which acts as a reminder of the threat, and is visible during the news broadcast; visual symbols of the virus, protective clothing, medical equipment became conspicuous visual elements

evoking fear (threat, anxiety). Regardless of the topic, these elements stimulate the eyes and inform about danger (TVN 24 and TVP Info in Poland);

— the size of visual elements: many television channels involve the use of oversized graphic elements, whether fonts or infographics. This could have an effect on the whole audiovisual message. A disproportion between oversized graphic elements and real pictures could evoke negative emotions, and consequently the message could be associated with fear, threat, anxiety. Predominance of negative graphic elements over content-based message (TVN 24 and TVP Info in Poland, Rai News 24 and Rai 3 in Italy, SBT in Brasil);

Figures 5. Examples of oversized graphics in the news.

Source: https://tvn24.pl, https://www.tvp.info, https://www.sbt.com.br, https://www.rai news.it.

— blurring of the difference between the author's message and individual message. Apart from professional broadcasts, we can observe amateurish productions, which epitomise "authentic" message, its significance and information coming from hardly accessible sources. The emotional tone of amateurish broadcasts, produced by the audience, permeates the global message. Messages, often dramatic, come from hospitals, social welfare centres, or ambulances. We observe a quantitative shift from professional recordings to amateurish ones (TVN24 in Poland).

2.1.4 Mechanism of contrast

The contrast mechanism brings out differences, builds up a message based on confrontation and comparison of elements. It is the most conspicuous in messages associated with extreme emotions—joy and sadness, fear and bravery:

– a change in the message through a presentation of contrasts; pictures can get extra meaning during the pandemic, e.g. crowds on the beach, crowds on the streets. They depict both health risks and joy during holidays and health risks and political engagement, respectively. Pictures, e.g. empty seats, a face covered by a mask, are attributed with a symbolic value. These symbolic pictures are often in contrast with the primary emotions in viewers. New emotions are generated through pictures of a symbolic value (CT24 in Italy, CNN in the USA, France24 in France, BBC News in the UK);
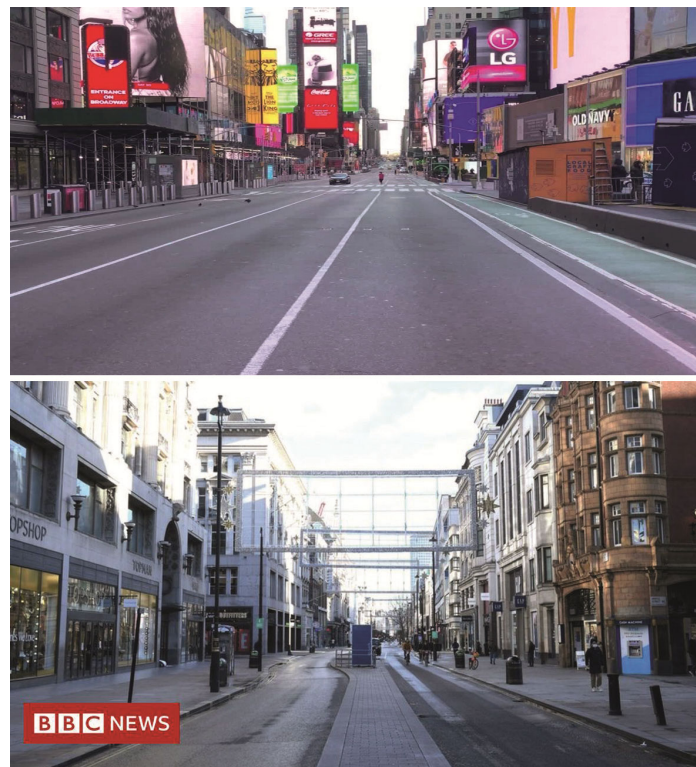

Figure 6. Examples of frames from the news, showing empty spaces during the pandemic.

Source: https://ct24.ceskatelevize.cz, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news, https://edition.cnn.com, https://www.france24.com/en.

– creation of visual messages through emotional contrasts, evoking feelings connected with health risks and safety. Social distancing maintained between a reporter and a guest reinforced the feeling of safety on the one hand, however, on the other hand, reminded of the epidemic health risks. This was evidenced by social distancing, the use of long microphone stands, wearing masks and gloves (TVN, TVN 24 in Poland, CT 24 in Czech Republic).

Figure 7. Examples of programmes showing a social distance between people.

Source: https://ct24.ceskatelevize.cz, https://www.tvn.pl.

2.1.5 Mechanism of absence

It is a mechanism of presenting the absence of those who co-produce the material; the form of the material changes its message; it is evident in the case of entertainment shows and political commentaries programmes:

– entertainment without audience: some sort of emotions disappeared together with the disappearance of great and spectacular entertainment shows; programmes were produced without audience or on location with a lowered number of people present. A clear emotional contrast could be observed between the emotions of joy, happiness and the sight of empty seats, no applause, or spontaneous reactions from the audience (Polsat in Poland, Rai 1 in Italy, NBC in the USA);

Figure 8. Examples of TV programmes without audience.

Source: https://www.polsat.pl, https://www.rai.it/rai1, https://www.wheeloffortune.com, https://www.nbc.com/americas-got-talent.

– a change in the formula of in-studio programmes for the sake of online communicators; many programmes had a fixed group of journalists working in the studio and those working remotely; castings were organised online; the news presenters were often the only person present in the studio. The

absence of guests in the studio evoked feelings of absence, void, abnormal functioning of society (BBC News in the UK, ProSieben in Germany);

– presence of digital audience—an attempt to generate positive emotions (joy, surprise, affection) in an entertainment programme by connecting with the audience (*The Wendy Williams Show* on FOX (USA), *Even Tot Hier* (Dutch TV), *Britain's Got Talent* with virtual audience (UK));
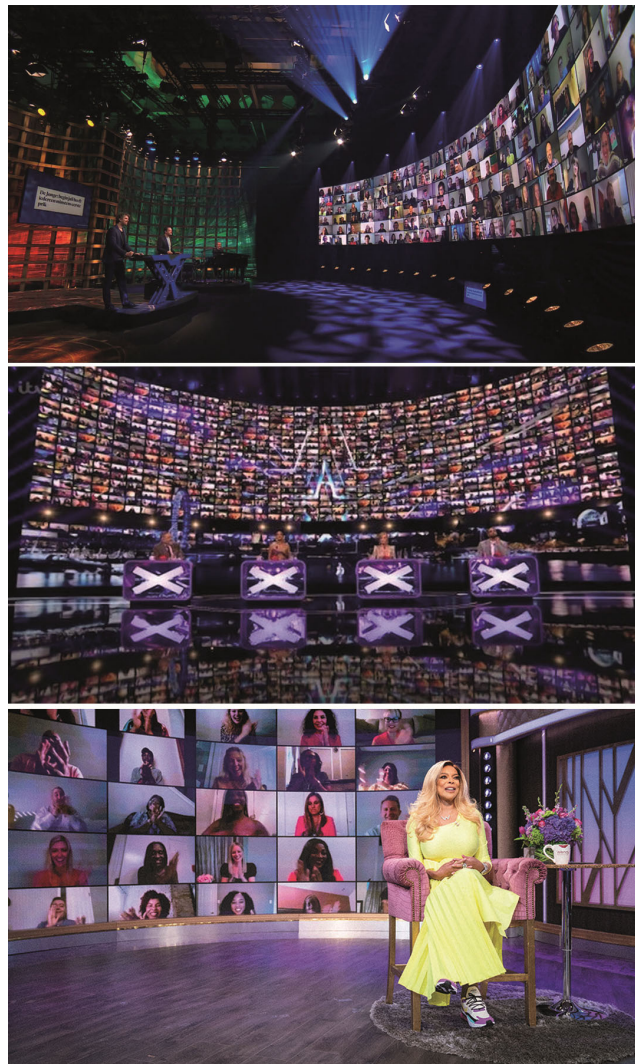

Figure 9. Examples of programmes with digital audience.

Source: https://www.wendyshow.com, https://www.bnnvara.nl/eventothier, https://www.itv.com/britainsgottalent.

– working away from the studio: home studio brought a new dimension to the message delivered by a television presenter, it shrank the distance between the presenter and viewers and showed new working conditions during the pandemic (home studios of journalists working for TVN 24 (Poland); Indianapolis TV News (USA) or the *250 m² Kuby Wojewódzkiego* talk show broadcast from the host's place);

– television programmes introduced a new means of communication through video communicator, highlighting the new (dangerous) reality of the pandemic and no personal contact (TVN 24, Poland).

Figure 10. Examples of programmes using internet communicators.

Source: https://tvn24.pl, https://ct24.ceskatelevize.cz.

2.1.6 Mechanism of generalisation

Generalisation means attributing an emotional value to a bigger portion of media materials:

– a system of wearing masks, face shields, gloves dependent on the epidemic situation in the country. Reporters and journalists across the world had to use them in order to shoot their programmes. These elements were associated with a feeling of health risks and fear; they were extended onto the whole programme, regardless of the content, e.g. the news. An evident sign of risk, fear, was produced by glove-wearing field reporters (the news broadcasts in China, Slovakia, Poland, or Russia).

Figure 11. **Examples of news presenters in the pandemic.**

Source: https://www.polsat.pl, https://mb.ntd.com/slovak-news-anchors-wear-masks-on-air450753.html.

2.1.7 Mechanism of expressing emotions

An individual's facial expressions, behaviour and reactions are presented during an audiovisual programme. Covered faces of the hosts, presenters, journalists, and guests made it difficult to unambiguously read these elements. Materials produced without wearing masks led to an emotional dissonance among viewers. Fear and anxiety experienced by viewers was not identical with the journalist's expression. Consequently, a suppression of emotions or their neutralisation was observed:

– expression of emotions was visible through specific means of expression, most frequently: secret camera, pictures taken from distance, blurred portraits, people shown from behind when discussing unpleasant things, repetitions highlighting the dramatic character of a situation, e.g. the same shots of an ambulance, of the dead; emotional close-ups, slow motion applied to laughter or crying (Polsat News in Poland, SBT News in Brazil);

– expression of emotions in an emotion-ridden broadcast represented by an emotional attitude of the presenters and reporters (crying, getting emotional); a change of the journalist's status from a cool-headed professional into an emotional person (emotional personification), e.g. in CNN News (USA), RTS (Ecuador), NBC (USA), Globo News (Brazil), TGR (Italy);

– an unusual placement of guests on TV programmes, the news or current affairs programmes; conversations on online communicators made the guests shown by the cameras the same way as presenters, speaking directly to the camera (audience); their emotional impact was bigger than of those who stand aside and do not look into the camera (this strategy was especially

effective in the case of the elderly, suffering because of the pandemic), e.g. TVP Info (Poland), SBT (Brazil).

Figure 12. Examples of programmes with an emotional reaction of TV presenters.

Source: https://www.cnn.com, https://www.nbc.com, https://globalnews.ca/tag/rio-de-janeiro.

2.2 CONTENT-RELATED MECHANISMS OF GENERATING EMOTIONS IN TELEVISION CONTENT

2.2.1 Narrative mechanisms

A dramatic character of the message is created through a script-based layout of the material, having an influence on the selection of pandemic-related content, which is evidenced in the case of television news reports:

– bracket narration: presenting the main topic as contrasted with the initial and final sequence of the report, e.g. "Paragony grozy" (Receipts of terror; *Interwencja* on Polsat)—a report on high prices triggered off by the pandemic presented through bracket narration, using contrasts. The report begins with images of holidays, interviews with sunbathers, then it moves on to show huge bills for meals, a secret camera, telephones from discontented customers, then a return to picturesque views of the sea and the beach;

– human story: presentation of a social issue through an individual story, e.g. "Przez pandemię, to może być ich koniec" (They can be finished by the pandemic; *Interwencja* on Polsat), a story of a tragedy related to closing workplaces on the basis of a family-run factory of artistic glass, which had to shut down after 24 years in the business. The narrator is the father of a family, the owner of a company, who talks about tragic consequences of the pandemic;

– happy ending: presentation of people's stories, from difficult beginnings to a happy ending, e.g. "Ozdrowieńcy opowiadają o walce z koronawirusem" (The recoverers talk about their fight against the coronavirus; *Interwencja* on Polsat), a report telling the stories of three young people who recovered from COVID-19. They talk about the dramatic course of the disease, challenges, their fears and joy from recovering from the disease;

– creation of a hero: narrating a story focusing on non-standard actions of a hero, e.g. "Naprawiał i rozdawał dzieciom komputery. A ludzie się odwdzięczyli" (He repaired computers and gave them to children: People paid him back; *Interwencja* on Polsat). It is a story of a young engineer who had to shut down his business due to the coronavirus. During the quarantine period, he started helping children, repairing old computers and giving them to children. He became a hero of the report, and was paid back through a money collection organised by viewers;

– following the story of a character: narration of a story following the fate of a character, e.g. "Osiem testów i siedem tygodni kwarantanny" (Eight tests and seven weeks of quarantine; *Uwaga* on TVN). It presents the fate of a father, from the moment of quarantine isolation until the reception of negative test results;

– TV series: presentation of a story not in a single report but a series of reports, culminating in a positive or negative finale, e.g. "Czy można było uratować pielęgniarkę z Kozienic?" (Could a Kozienice nurse have been saved?). It presents a story of a nurse who dies of a COVID-19 infection.

2.2.2 Mechanisms using the dramatic character of the message

They are observed in the titles of reports and on information bars in news reports. This mechanism is a hyperbole of the emotional character of certain expressions enhancing audiovisual content:

– titles refer to the pandemic, highlighting dramatic elements; they are the keywords to the content of audiovisual materials, introducing the message; they add to the dramatic character of the message: "Przez pandemię to

może być ich koniec" (They can be finished by the pandemic), "Walczą z koronawirusem, ale są hejtowani" (They are fighting the coronavirus but they are hated), "Protesty na granicach. Ludzie chcą jeździć do pracy" (Protests at the border: People want to commute to work); *Uwaga* on TVN: "Od pandemii nie ma wakacji" (No holiday for the pandemic), "Ludzie wciąż się mnie boją" (People are still afraid of me), "Jak zrobić test na Covid-19? Jak walenie głową w mur" (How to be tested for COVID-19? It's like banging your head against a brick wall), "Agencje turystyczne w tragicznej sytuacji" (Tourist agencies in a tragic condition), "Mimo 40-stopniowej gorączki zajmował się chorymi" (Despite a 40-degrees fever, he treated patients), "Na koncie mam 54 grosze" (I have only 54 groszy in my account), "Połowa przewoźników zbankrutuje" (Half the carriers will go bankrupt), "Czy można było uratować pielęgniarkę z Kozienic?" (Could the Kozienice nurse have been saved?), "System zapominał o takich jak my" (The system has forgotten the likes of us);

− references are made to science fiction films and the former pandemics (reality mixing with fiction); creation of intertextual messages leading to an overly dramatic message related to the COVID-19 pandemic;

2.2.3 Mechanism of an authoritative character

A mechanism of building up a message through the presence of authorities (opinion leaders), evoking certain emotions:

− an increasing role of experts, virus experts, doctors, scientists appearing on an everyday basis in the news reports, in political commentaries. The emotions they evoke depend on the topic of conversation, their individual features of character (e.g. TVN 24 in Poland, CNN in the USA);

− another type of a mechanism of an authoritative character, connected with negative emotions, is the appearance of government members and experts commenting on economic, educational, and health issues; their comments were supposed to be of an authoritative character, affecting viewers' lives.

2.2.4 Mechanism of rhythmicity

A presentation of regular COVID-19-related materials during the months of the most intense fight against the pandemic (March–May). This rhythm enabled constant access to information on the pandemic, maintaining an emotional character of the materials. This mechanism was often linked with a mechanism of *blocking* (accumulating) certain emotional messages:

– daily press conferences—the most important news of the day; each information channel adjusted their programme schedule to the press conferences organised by the prime minister of the minister of education; it was followed by a visualisation of the topic and emotionally-charged comments, supported by an expert, a poll, or statistics;

– daily programmes about the pandemic—dominance of the COVID-19-related information; each TV channel informed about the government's actions taken in relation to the coronavirus and the pandemic. New programmes, offering general health-related guidelines, appeared in the television schedules. Emotions in such programmes are toned down, and do not lead to a dramatic effect. However, the pandemic changed the perspective taken in the material. The emotion of fear, anxiety was evoked by a virtual set design and experts' opinions. Documentaries and reports were made, even pandemic films, offering a broader perspective of the news, e.g. "Koronawirus. Raport" on TVN 24 (Poland), "Koronawirus. Poradnik" on TVP Info (Poland); "Virus. Outbreak" on Sky News (UK).

Figure 13.
Examples of programmes on the coronavirus.

Source:
https://tvn24.pl,
https://news.sky.com.

2.2.5 Mechanism of exposure

A mechanism for making certain issues dominate in order to intensify the message, e.g. dominance of fear-related elements in comparison with other elements. It is a mechanism strictly connected with mediatisation of emotions:

– television materials (mostly reports and news) were dominated by challenging situations, negatively affecting people's lives during the pandemic. The most common stories were: hopelessness in the face of the pandemic; the tragic situation in social welfare centres; social groups fighting against bad publicity and fear; a lack of sense of normality and safety; fear of an infection;

– presentation of the generation gap: the young versus the elderly in the face of the coronavirus; presentation of young people's negative behaviour;

– creation of the image of health service workers: presentation of their bravery and a devoted attitude to their work; their fight against bad publicity and fear; a more frequent presentation of medical staff while working (in operation theatres, in ambulances, treating patients, etc.);

– a common device was to present a difficult, tragic situation connected with the pandemic from two main perspectives: family and professional work. Domestic violence was shown from the perspective of its perpetrators and victims, also as a social report; separation between parents and children, the course of the disease in children and related risks. Many materials showed people in empty workplaces, fighting for jobs, experiencing fear and stress;

– touching upon the topic of isolation; presentation of people closed confined to their homes, isolation wards, hospitals. The topic of isolation generated strong emotions of fear, uncertainty, sadness, loneliness but also compassion.

2.2.6 Mechanism of changing dynamics (positive and negative content)

A mechanism presenting a changeable nature of emotions in viewers, through a dynamic link between positive and negative content of the message:

– linking normality, or coping with normality, with evoking uncertainty with negative statistics and examples of deviations from the norms of everyday life;

– creating the message through a thematic contrast between a good and bad character, together with their stories, presentation of extreme cases, e.g. positive and negative behaviour, attitudes.

CONCLUSIONS

The pandemic resulted in a radical change observed in television prac-
tices. Production of television programmes was frozen globally, the work of
journalists and editorial staff was modified. Viewers, accustomed to pro-
gramme schedules, had to change their viewing habits. The topics of the
news programmes became almost all the same. Pictures evoked emotions
that accompanied viewers in their everyday struggle with the pandemic. The
scale of emotions rose and changed in the course of the pandemic, also in
Poland.

Emotions presented in television materials during the pandemic were
mostly negative or perceived as negative. The details are presented in the
following table:

Table 1. Typology of positive and negative emotions

Emotion	Type of mechanism	Examples and form of TV message	Frequency	Type of emotion
threat/ uncertainty	content mechanisms and formal mechanisms	titles of the news and reports, presenters wearing protective masks, gloves, face shields, presentation of social distancing, no audience allowed in the studio; recurring images (e.g. hospital, ambulance), social isolation (views out of the window, behind a fence, behind a glass); graphics, statistics, colour use; studio design; rhythm of negative information; a lack of normality (empty restaurants, churches, cinemas)	very often	negative
fear/anxiety	content mechanisms and formal mechanisms	fate of the ill; gradation of negative information; hyperbolization of graphics, pandemic-related infographics; colour use (red, yellow); statistics; studio design; rhythm of negative information; the news bars	very often	negative
sadness		fate of families, tragic stories of those who died of the coronavirus; crying presenters, empty streets, restaurants, churches	very often	negative
happiness/ joy/hope	content mechanism	narrations related to heroes; recoveries	rarely	positive

Emotion	Type of mechanism	Examples and form of TV message	Frequency	Type of emotion
surprise		emotional personification of TV presenters, especially the news presenters who, through their uncontrolled emotional reactions, surprised the audience, indirectly generating emotions of compassion, empathy; thematic contrasts; a lack of normal (standard) elements of a television broadcast and a changed image of reporters (masks, gloves); studio design	rarely	positive
anger		production of messages connected with closure, a lack of information, no chances of defence against the coronavirus; contra-dictory information	often	negative
worry/ compassion	content mechanisms and formal mechanisms	authentic recordings of ill viewers; crying reporters and presenters; pleas made by the health service; expansion of emotions in broadcasts	often	negative
solidarity (among neighbours and globally)	content mechanisms	messages presenting neighbours supporting each other, charities, dedication of the health service, global community in fighting against the pandemic; creation of heroes: hero volunteer, hero health service worker	often	negative
loneliness/ stagnation	content mechanisms and formal mechanisms	messages related to social distancing, isolation, no hope for recovery; empty television studios; no audience; use of internet communicators; frames as symbols of loneliness: empty cities, churches	often	negative

Source: own study.

Despite generating negative emotions, television's popularity during the pandemic grew all over the world. Television became an important, valued source of information. What is significant for viewers is the audiovisual character of television, its suggestiveness expressed through pictures and being "here and now".[8] The research shows that the BBC news channels were watched by over 20 million viewers in April 2020, and the news websites were visited by 84 million users only within a week of the pandemic. Sky

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[8] Aleksandra DRZAŁ-SIEROCKA and Wiesław GODZIC, eds., *Media audiowizualne* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, 2010).

News is reported to have tripled the number of its viewers in March 2020.[9] In Italy in 2020, an average viewer watched television 30 minutes longer than in the previous year, and the greatest increase was observed between 24–30 March, 2019 (+49.1%) (confindustriaradiotv.it). The third week of March 2020 gathered a record-high audience in the Polish news channels (increase by 76%).[10]

Changes observed in the audiovisual medium of television affected the materials' content and triggered a host of emotion-generating mechanisms. The analysis shows that these mechanisms were known before the pandemic (e.g. close-ups, repetitions, slow motion, human story, contrasts); yet, the pandemic intensified them. The COVID-19-related materials dominated the main TV channels between March and June 2020, affecting programme schedules. Both national and regional channels introduced new programmes devoted to the coronavirus. On the level of form, we could observe the following mechanisms: visual enhancement, gradation, sense making, contrast, generalisation. On the level of content, we could observe the mechanism of dramatic character, accumulation (blocking), exposure, changing dynamics, as well as all sorts of narrative mechanisms. The produced materials proved how important is the appropriate combination of form and content, rhythmicity, and repetition of messages. The genre form of the news changed during the pandemic and started invoking new emotions, e.g. entertainment (talent shows, quiz games, talk shows) with no audience generated emotions of fear, uncertainty, and moved away from the "normal" view of television entertainment.

Relationships between emotions and cognition are determined by the way these notions are understood. "Emotions affect beliefs and knowledge. They can strengthen or weaken certain beliefs but can also lead to new beliefs and multiply knowledge."[11] They can be an element of conscious or unintended manipulation of the viewer in many aspects. Strong disinformation, fake news, which are nowadays mixed with facts about the pandemic, all result in viewers' uncertainty about the reliability of the news. An example of such a

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[9] Freddy MAYHEW, "UK Broadcasters Reaching Record Audiences during Coronavirus Crisis," *PressGazette*, April 8, 2020, https://www.pressgazette.co.uk/uk-broadcasters-reaching-record-audiences-during-coronavirus-crisis.

[10] Patryk PALLUS, "Koronawirus wpływa na oglądanie telewizji," *Business Insider*, March 26, 2020, https://businessinsider.com.pl/media/tvradio/koronawirus-wplywa-na-ogladanie-telewizji-dane-nielsena/tdw6t7d.

[11] Andrzej DĄBROWSKI, "Wpływ emocji na poznawanie," *Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria* 3 (2012): 315–35.

phenomenon could be contradictory information about the coronavirus spread by FOX News (USA) in contrast to other TV channels. Such a mechanism of affecting emotions may create an apparent viewer, who will copy unreliable information and is unable to tell her own emotions from knowledge. The analysed material allows us to distinguish the following areas of manipulation:

a) repetitiveness of negative information: the significance of the information leads to emotions being generated. A series of materials on the coronavirus without positive, entertaining materials triggers aversive, negative reactions, consequently leading to negative emotions. Such a disproportion in the media messages (founded in suggestive imagery) may in the long term alter the perception of reality among viewers. Emotions, affecting the processes of evaluation, may lead to, "as a consequence of repetitiveness, formation of attitudes … (beliefs, opinions)";[12]

b) emotional bias towards a message: "an emotion may bias the recognition of a stimulus, by appearing automatically as a result of decoding of the stimulus type and value at the subcortical level on the basis of the sensory code and standards."[13] This can be evidenced in the context of graphics, text, infographics, colour and music;

c) a visual disproportion: exaggeration of the natural size, e.g. the virus, syringe, face mask; using excessive infographics with negative data on COVID-19, disproportion between a human silhouette and studio graphics, exposing close-ups (details) of medical tools;

d) reliance on authorities: the message hinges on the authorities' statements; this goes in line with Robert Cialdini's principles behind psychology of persuasion. One of them states how influential authority can be. We often pay more attention to the person speaking rather than the message;

e) contrast building: generating opposing emotions can lead to a manipulation in the way viewers react. According to Plutchik's wheel of emotions, generation of a given emotion makes it impossible to generate its opposing emotion at the same time, e.g. joy–sadness, fear–anger; surprise–expectation;[14]

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[12] Maria JARYMOWICZ, "O afekcie zawiadującym podmiotem i możliwościach podmiotu panowania nad emocjami," *Przegląd Psychologiczny* 1–2 (1997): 49–56.

[13] See also Kamil IMBIR, *Odmienność emocji automatycznych i refleksyjnych: poszukiwanie zróżnicowania neurobiologicznego i psychologicznego* (interdisciplinary doctoral dissertation) (Warsaw: Repozytorium Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2012).

[14] See also Robert PLUTCHIK, *Emotion: A Psychoevolutionary Synthesis* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980).

f) a visual and content-related appraisal: "the quality of emotions depends on the degree of an event's significance viewed from a subject's perspective[15] (it is linked with interpersonal and emotional communication (presenters crying, usefulness of emotions, expression of emotions);

g) automated messages: presentation of the staple elements of the message (infection data, daily press conferences, daily talks with experts), combined with emotional tension connected with a lack of positive, expected messages (impossibility to contain the virus, inability to prepare for the consequences of the decisions made by the authorities, absorption of an excess of medical information).

The revolution related to the production and reception of television content during the first wave of the pandemic exerted a significant effect on the way television functional The viewers started to receive the content with a greater emotional involvement. Broadcasters and employees of television stations worked under pressure. The expectations targeted at audiovisual media were redefined, questions arose about the balance between the news and entertainment, regarding education, impact on the society, media authorities, or the authentic power of the message. Undoubtedly, an interesting research question would be how the viewers themselves evaluate the messages produced by television stations.

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[15] See also Nico H. FRIJDA, *The Emotion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

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MECHANISMS OF GENERATING EMOTIONS IN THE TELEVISION BROADCAST

Summary

The aim of this article is to present the mechanisms of mediatisation of emotions in TV broadcasts in relation to the messages concerning the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. The pandemic time has radically changed the way television works. The production of many TV programmes has been suspended around the world, and the way journalists and editorial staff work has changed, yet the viewership during the pandemic grew all over the world, despite negative emotions being generated.

The study relies on a qualitative analysis of the emotion-generating mechanisms in the audio-visual image. The research material was TV programmes about SARS-CoV-2 in March–June 2020. The research tools used permitted an analysis of the content of the message and its formal

side (sound, image, graphics, music). The final results were divided into two areas of emotion-generating mechanisms: formal (forms) and thematic (content).

The analysis shows that especially negative emotions were evoked in TV programmes during the pandemic: threat, sadness and fear. At the level of form, the following mechanisms were revealed: visual enhancement, gradation, giving meaning, contrast and generalization. In terms of content mechanisms, one can observe the mechanism of drama, content accumulation (blocking), exposure, variable dynamics of positive and negative content, and narrative mechanisms. The observed mechanisms of generating emotions may also lead to manipulation of the recipient through the repetition of negative information or the use of authorities.

The conducted analysis confirmed the importance of combining form and content as well as strength, rhythmization and repetition of specific messages in the audiovisual message. The article may be the basis for research on the relationship between emotions and cognition, as well as research on the reception of audiovisual content.

Keywords: television; visual media; emotion; audiovisualism; pandemic.

MECHANIZMY GENEROWANIA EMOCJI W PRZEKAZACH TELEWIZYJNYCH

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie mechanizmów mediatyzacji emocji w przekazach telewizyjnych na podstawie przekazów o pandemii SARS-CoV-2. Czas pandemii radykalnie zmienił sposób działania telewizji. Wstrzymano produkcję wielu programów telewizyjnych, zmienił się sposób pracy dziennikarzy i redakcji. Jednocześnie, mimo generowania negatywnych emocji, oglądalność telewizji na całym świecie nadal rosła.

Badanie polega na jakościowej analizie mechanizmów generowania emocji w przekazie audiowizualnym. Materiał badawczy stanowiły transmisje telewizyjne na temat SARS-CoV-2 w okresie marzec–czerwiec 2020 r. Zastosowane narzędzia badawcze pozwoliły na analizę zarówno treści, jak i strony formalnej przekazu (dźwięk, obraz, grafika, muzyka). Ostateczne wyniki podzielono na dwa obszary związane z mechanizmami generowania emocji: formalny (formy) i tematyczny (treść).

Z przeprowadzonej analizy wynika, że najczęściej negatywnymi emocjami wywoływanymi w przekazach telewizyjnych w czasie pandemii są: zagrożenie, smutek i strach. Na poziomie formy ujawniły się następujące mechanizmy: wzmocnienie wizualne, gradacja, atrybucja znaczenia, kontrast i uogólnienie. W zakresie mechanizmów treściowych możemy zaobserwować mechanizmy dramatyzmu, akumulacji treści (blokowania), eksponowania, zmiennej dynamiki treści pozytywnych i negatywnych oraz mechanizmy narracji. Przeprowadzona analiza potwierdza wagę łączenia formy i treści. Artykuł może stanowić podstawę do przyszłych badań nad związkami między emocjami a poznaniem oraz recepcją treści audiowizualnych.

Słowa kluczowe: telewizja; media wizualne; emocje; przekaz audiowizualny; pandemia.