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LINGUISTIC CONSTRUCTION OF FEMALE IDENTITY IN POLISH POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the construction of the category of femininity in political speeches of former Polish Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz. The analysis reveals that Ewa Kopacz's public discourse is affected by her desire to manifest the category of femininity as an important element of political practice. The antagonistic binary division into the male and female worlds, which is indicative of discourse gender ambiguity in Kopacz's speech, surfaces at the level of discourse analysis.

Key words: language of politics, discourse analysis, linguistic identity construction, gender, female political identity, Polish political discourse.

1. Introduction

"Gender is a political issue". This statement, often repeated in gender studies (e.g., Bielska 2014; Paczeński 2006), can yield a number of interpretations. The one most frequently assumed pertains to various interdependencies between certain aspects of female carnality and her personal life, on the one hand, and legal, legislative, and institutional aspects, on the other, both of which, in turn, are affected by political decisions, made mainly by male politicians. This is why the issue of gender has become

a subject of analyses and public debates with the objective of eradicating inequity in many aspects of social life (e.g., Mackay & Waylen 2009; Petlyuchenko & Chernyakova 2019; Skowronek 2016; Stashko et al. 2020).

In this paper, however, the opening statement is understood in a narrower sense. We assume gender to be a political phenomenon par excellence, real and active (Franceschet & Piscopo 2008). The objective of this paper is to present a fragment of a large-scope study of ways of construction of gender identity in public speeches by women who hold office and are, therefore, actively involved in Polish political life. The issue addressed in this paper is a relevant one because the style of self-creation by public figures and the way they build their medial image become in time a model to follow and set standards of conduct (Kostro 2014). The women present in the public sphere and "having a voice" in Foucault's sense (i.e. presence and power expressed at the level of social discourse) are also able to manage this voice, to emancipate, to break some social stereotypes, patterns, and conventions (Foucault 2002: 26-27). We are interested in rules of distribution of discourse in a given group: who can speak, when, and whose opinion is more likely to be seen as true (i.e. presence and power expressed at the level of social discourse) are also able to manage this voice, to emancipate, to break some social stereotypes, patterns, and conventions.

We define construction of identity as a complex process during which a person creates their own images through linguistic and non-linguistic practices, mostly because of other people. In this process patterns and schemas present in culture are used. In our paper we discuss only linguistic ones. There are a number of important factors determining the ways of construction of gender identity by female politicians. Firstly, there is the level of social acceptance of the presence of women in politics and general approval of a certain style or way of executing power by women (or lack of such approval). Secondly, there exist crucial socio-cultural mechanisms, which, albeit on a more implicit level, stereotypically present women as biologically and socially unprepared to perform important roles in public life (Graff 2008; Women, gender...

2010). Such mechanisms can surface, for example, as jokes, ridicules, and belittling, or in introducing facts from personal life into political narrative, even when they are not connected with women's political activity. We agree that "[p]ublic women are much more subject to erosion of the wall between their public and private personae than are men, with anything unconventional about their private lives leaching into judgements of their public performance" (Lakoff 2003: 174).

In this paper, we propose a text analysis approach to public speeches of Ewa Kopacz, mainly at the time when she was Prime Minister of Poland (i.e., September 15, 2014 – November 12, 2015), with the objective to reconstruct the elements of the female identity realized at the text level¹.

Adopting the methodology of discourse analysis, we aim to demonstrate how femininity, understood as cultural gender, is manifested in Polish politics as a discourse category and how it can evolve, even in a relatively short period of 14 months, the time that Kopacz was Prime Minister. Gender is treated here as an element of identity, primarily construed by language (see Butler 1990), dependent on context, situation, and circumstances. It can thus change over time, revealing many, sometimes conflicting, features. Although gender can also be manifested in non-verbal behaviours and practices, such as controlling one's own body, we believe that the primary means of gender expression is language. At the same time, language is a means of expression in politics. Nowadays, it competes with image and non-verbal codes oriented towards impressions and emotions. However, some aspects of political communication are reserved for linguistic transmission: precision, specific information, use of abstract concepts. "It is clear that political activity does not exist without the use of language" (Alexiyevets 2017: 7).

A proper context for an analysis of identity construction by a female politician is provided by the research on the dynamics of women's participation in politics. Quantitative sociological studies discuss the political activity of Polish women at

different levels of authorities (Lis-Staranowicz 2018; Paczeński 2006). Such studies include also parliamentary debates concerning bills of special relevance for women, gender-related issues in political discourse, and female image in the media, for example, during election campaigns and debates (Jaworowicz 2016).

Women have been involved in Polish politics since 1989, both in the legislative and executive authorities, even the highest ones. For the first time women became ministers in the government of Jerzy Buzek (1997–2001), which constituted 28 per cent of the government, and then in two subsequent governments: in the government of Jarosław Kaczyński (2006–2007) and that of Donald Tusk (2007–2014). Among the sixteen Prime Ministers since 1989, three were women: Hanna Suchocka (1992–1993), Ewa Kopacz (2014–2015), and Beata Szydło (2015–2017). In the Parliament whose term of office lasted from November 12, 2015 to October 16, 2019, women accounted for 27 per cent of MPs in the Sejm (the lower house) and 13 per cent of senators. These numbers result from the gender parity regulations of 2011, which require that at least 35 per cent of candidates for the Parliament be of one gender².

When addressing the issue of relationships between sex and gender, on the one hand, and speaking style or communication, on the other, we focus on the research, which highlights separateness of "women's language" in political context. Assuming the approach of Lakoff about linguistic separateness of women (Lakoff 1975), it is worthwhile to identify connections between this language and such political parameters as power, dominance, decisiveness, and effectiveness. Research on female language in political discourse usually indicates that such language is directed at relationships and conflict-avoidance, with emphasis on cooperation rather than combat (O'Barr & Atkins 1998; Tannen 1990). Many researchers of feminine political communication note that if women in politics are too feminine (like Sarah Palin in the USA), they are liked but viewed as incompetent (McGinley 2009; Perks & Johnson 2014; Suleiman & O'Connell 2007). Such studies also perpetuate stereotypes of dominance of the male style of communication in public discourse, especially in conflict-saturated politics

(Anderson et al. 2011; Saxonhouse 2015). Female politicians at the highest levels of politics demonstrate masculine communication patterns (Brooks 2011; Dolan 2014; Fracchiolla 2011; Grebelsky-Lichtman & Katz 2019). Of course, politics is only one of the spheres where male patterns of dominance and competition are still visible. The same situation is in business, the police, and the military. There are many sociological and psychological studies discussing this issue, e.g., Pratto & Walker (2004). However, there is plenty of evidence of successful "female communication" suggesting that gender does not determine language use in politics and that the issue is more complex (e.g., Discourse... 2015; Holmes 2005).

Although "politics has no gender" (Stashko et al. 2020: 373), our hypothesis is that Ewa Kopacz's utterances contain linguistic elements indicating the importance of the category of femininity. Examples confirming the hypothesis will be presented in the analytical section (cf., 3. Results).

2. Objectives, methods, and material

Our analysis is based on the assumption that there exists ambiguity in one's own gender identity. We understand it not in medical or biological terms but as a textual and discursive phenomenon: as personal, language-manifested awareness of belonging to a given gender group. Such identity need not be internally coherent because it is constantly subject of external pressures from discursive forces (e.g., public opinion or comments expressed by commentators and male-politicians). Thus, it can be manifested in different forms and strategies depending on the situation, interlocutors, time, and context (Talbot 2019).

We assume that **gender identity** of a female politician has been strongly shaped by many factors that operate in the discourse of women who are active in the whole public sphere, not only in politics. Below we list a number of such factors, which, we believe, can be causal though not determinant throughout our study, that is, they might have exerted a significant influence on Kopacz's utterances. This impact means the presence

of various (contextual) factors, which may potentially influence a given phenomenon, but it is not possible to measure their power as phenomena can also influence one another indirectly.

We follow the **constructivist** approach, in which gender identity is created in discourse practices (Gender articulated... 1995; Ilie 2018; Rutkowski & Skowronek 2011; Skowronek 2010; 2016). We would also like to point out Zimmerman's concept of identity (1998) with the delimitation of three levels of identity: discursive, situated, and transportable. The feminine gender identity constructed in Ewa Kopacz's utterances is a transportable one, because the feminine role manifests itself in many places, where she talks about the role of a mother and refers to a family-oriented woman. Thus, the feminine gender identity is a basic category and is clearly visible in language.

1. Firstly, the male-dominated Polish politics makes female politicians react in a specific way to what is considered "male" in the prevailing androcentric cultural order. It also makes them express their own activity, agency, rationality, and decisiveness. It inevitably entails creating one's own pattern of behaviour, including verbal behaviour, due to the lack of a "positive image" of a female politician: in Western culture, the woman is not perceived as a locus of power/knowledge, but rather as an instrument or element of exercising such power/knowledge (Majka 2011).

2. The second important element, which can affect Kopacz's **gender construction** pertains to some social expectations existing in Poland (Frąckowiak-Sochańska 2011). They surface in discourse about female body, appearance, physicality, and are generally connected with what is considered female visually. The socially structured knowledge about this subject "inevitably determines (regulates) ways of perceiving the [woman's] body [...]. Such knowledge is never 'innocent' or objective; it is always an exponent of social make up. It is saturated with power" (Melosik, *s.a.*). It means that woman's image in the public sphere either conforms to or violates social expectations. "Obligatory heterosexuality" is also relevant in this context. Poles have only just started

"learning" about the non-heteronormative option for those who are active in the public sphere³.

3. The third factor is connected with the family roles of mother, wife, and grandmother stereotypically ascribed to women, as well as specific kind of behaviour attached to them. Female politicians are not "absolved" from these roles either. On the contrary, the social pressure put on them seems even greater. The presence of "templates" of femininity and masculinity forces women in politics to at least partially realize them. At the same time, however, being passive, humble, modest, and submissive dramatically mismatches the image of women who possess actual power. Consequently, they have no choice but to negotiate or even negate the traditional behaviours, which in turn can lead to lack of social acceptance.

4. Finally, we need to mention the feminist aspect, understood not as much as a specific, organized movement in Poland, but rather as a "package of ideas", which Polish women, according to sociological studies, approach with mixed feelings and in a selective way (Butler 1990; Skowronek 2007). They are especially apprehensive of what they call a "radical option" of feminism.

"Polish women are ready to embrace some of the feminist postulates without being fully with feminism. [...] They aim at equal rights, but "not too radically", they want to be emancipated, but "not too much", they want to be successful, but "without sacrifices of the family" (Frąckowiak-Sochańska 2011: 154).

On the other hand, women in politics take advantage of feminist achievements, but at the same time are careful not to lose their conservative electorate.

From a theoretical perspective, the project of a "Polish female politician" seems unrealistic, or at least, incoherent. A woman in politics, wielding a real institutional and economic power, exists also in a complex discursive network, in which "[political – KS, MR] culture gives her access to certain posts, beyond which she should not or

rather may not go" (Majka 2011: 334). On the other hand, she must be able to participate in the male sphere of power, both verbally and non-verbally. Many researches indicate that the politics is a masculine space in which there is a preference for politicians who display masculine characteristics (McGinley 2009). Our study shows the way in which E. Kopacz tries to balance both spheres – what we call gender ambiguity. Kopacz constantly updates it to gain both conservative and liberal electorate. In this way, she constantly and dynamically negotiates her place in the public space within different, often mutually exclusive and conflicting norms, models, and judgements. The question arises if there exists an autonomous concept of a woman in politics in a "non-phallogocentric position" or maybe there is no "third option" exceeding the two dialectic oppositions discussed above (Coates 2015).

It is noteworthy that a woman who creates her own gender identity in politics through her language also gains both a capacity and a privilege to "speak her own voice", which gives her a chance to turn it into "a self-personalization, [...] a performative act triggering and establishing critical awareness [her own and that of the public opinion – KS, MR]. [...] The idea of finding one's own voice [...] means that one can experience dominance in a conversation, discourse, writing and action" (Hooks, quoted in Ostaszewska 2015: 48-49). Of course, this chance may not be fully exploited by a female politician.

Our research is consequently grounded in **Critical Discourse Analysis**, which assumes that in language there are manifestations of not only power relations and ideologies, but also of conscious and unconscious categories constitutive of identities of "social life agents" (Fairclough 2003; van Dijk 1993; Willig 2014). The category of femininity described in this paper can be easily included in the context of the ideology of sexism. We agree with the Krzyżanowska's claim that "CDA-based theoretical and methodological synergies applied in practice might, in fact, be pivotal for the development of both academic reflections and social understandings of gender roles in contemporary society" (2013: 84). When Ewa Kopacz activates her gender identity,

she also activates stereotypical thinking about the social roles, duties, and status ascribed to a specific sex/gender.

The basis of the CDA methodology is that the access to the discourse level is granted by texts (Fairclough 2003). In the selected set of texts the focus was on all references to sex/gender, men/women, femininity/masculinity, family, and kinship relations. We include the concept of "gender polarization": this term is based on the ideology that men's and women's behaviour is dichotomous (Bem 1993; Ilie 2018). We were also interested in references to certain personality traits and behaviours stereotypical gender roles. Those references could be found on the word formation level, the lexical and semantic level, and the syntax level. Sometimes, they are not literal, but metaphorical.

Our analysis is based on qualitative studies. The available resources (eight different speeches by Ewa Kopacz) are analyzed for linguistic and discursive phenomena related to women, femininity, etc. The **textual data** comprise fragments of eight public speeches by Ewa Kopacz, coming from the years 2014–2015. The original texts are divided into utterances; that is, the basic units of semantic content (Stiles 1992). Our aim was to choose the fragments of Kopacz's eight speeches, which contained references to *femininity*, and which could be analyzed grammatically and semantically.

In terms of the genre, they constitute a diverse material, including both prepared and spontaneous texts. Specifically, there are fragments of three political speeches, given to the general public (i.e. exposé of the Prime Minister, a speech delivered in the Parliament when a new government is sworn in, the speech given at the Women's Congress and statements coming from a press conference), but also fragments of four interviews for Polish media: two press interviews (for "Gazeta Wyborcza" and "Viva") and two TV interviews (for TVN and TVP1), as well as a message from Twitter. As we can see, the data are diverse and made public through different media: press, television, and social media. Such diversity makes it possible to reveal ambiguity and

inconsistency in creating the speaker's own identity even within one and the same statement.

The **analysis** presented below focuses on the following questions:

- Can self-identifying elements directed at gender self-description be found in Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz's public discourse?
- Which of these are explicit and declarative, and which are non-intentional even though manifested at the level of text/discourse?
- What linguistic mechanisms serve to construct gender identity?
- Does she maintain in her discourse the division into the "male" and "female" spheres? If so, how does she describe and evaluate it?
- Does Ewa Kopacz emphasize the social roles stereotypically ascribed to women?
- Does her discourse contain any self-excluding elements, i.e. utterances, which suggest gender-related identity "deficiencies"?

3. Results

3.1 Parliamentary exposé of Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz, October 2014.

The first statement we analyze is the parliamentary exposé of Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz⁴. This case is special for two reasons. Firstly, it is an official presentation of the government's strategy by the Prime Minister. Consequently, it is a strictly political text, which also contains elements of gender self-presentation, as is going to be shown. Secondly, an exposé is a type of statement that requires meticulous preparation from the person designated to be Prime Minister. Consequently, we can safely assume that if there appear elements of gender self-construction in this text, they must have been reflected upon and intentional. They constitute the message that the Prime Minister-to-be consciously intends to express. We also assume that even if the first draft of the exposé had been written for the Prime Minister by someone else, she must have approved of the content and amended it (as she mentioned in interviews) before finally

delivering it. In political communication, the person who actually delivers the statement is perceived as the agent⁵.

(1) Pol. *"a dziś Donald Tusk będzie jej prezydentem. Jako Polka jestem dumna z tego sukcesu. [...] Dziękując Donaldowi Tuszkowi za ostatnie 7 lat chcę podkreślić, że sukces Polski, jaki odnieśliśmy po '89 roku ma w sensie politycznym wielu ojców"*. – [and today Donald Tusk will be its President. *As a Polish woman, I'm proud of this success [...]. Expressing my gratitude to Donald Tusk for the last seven years, I would like to emphasize that the success that Poland has achieved after the year 1989 has, in a political sense, many fathers.*];

(2) Pol. *"Jestem lekarzem. To szczególna misja i powołanie. W niej zawiera się zaangażowanie, szacunek i chęć pomocy każdemu człowiekowi"*. – [*I'm a physician. It is an exceptional mission and vocation. It involves involvement, respect and the desire to help every human being.*];

(3) Pol. *"chcę też zaznaczyć, że jest coś, [...] co wymaga tylko męskiej decyzji i odrzucenia złych emocji"*. – [*I also want to stress that there is something, [...] which requires only manly resolution and rejection of bad feelings.*].

In the fragments quoted above, Kopacz uses a few feminine forms (*as a Polish woman*), but is not consistent, as she describes herself as *jestem lekarzem* ('I'm a physician') instead of *jestem lekarką* ('I'm a female physician')⁶. On the other hand, she readily makes use of idiomatic resources of the Polish language, which activate the stereotype of the "male world" and activities within (cf., *the success has many fathers*, requires manly resolution).

It is noteworthy that she often describes her style of governing in terms of the personality traits typically ascribed to men: decisiveness, authority, agency, energy

(cf., Examples 4-6 below). At the level of syntax, speaking in the 1st person singular with emphasis put on the pronoun *ja* ('I') is a strong exponent of such features.

(4) Pol. *"Mam też dziś dla ciebie, Donaldzie, i dla wszystkich wiadomość: To ja stoję na czele polskiego rządu, tego nowego rządu, i za ten rząd biorę pełną odpowiedzialność, oczywiście jeśli Wysoka Izba o tym zdecyduje".* – [*Today I have a message for you, Donald, and for everybody. I am the head of the Polish government, the new government, and I take full responsibility for this government, of course, with the consent from the Parliament.*];

(5) Pol. *"Lubię mówić wprost. Wszyscy wiemy, że nad polskim życiem publicznym od lat ciąży osobista niechęć Jarosława Kaczyńskiego do Donalda Tuska".* – [*I like speaking directly. We all know that Polish political life has been disturbed for years by Jarosław Kaczyński's personal dislike for Donald Tusk.*];

(6) Pol. *"Chcę konkretnej roboty, nie chcę kłótni, oskarżeń o to, kto jest gorszy albo podlega ekskomunice".* – [*I expect a job to be done. I don't want bickering, accusations, discussions who's worse or who should be excommunicated.*].

In her exposé, Prime Minister Kopacz seems to present the male perspective, both at the lexical or phraseological levels and at the rhetorical level. Femininity appears only symbolically, possibly as a means to underscore the change of government, after the strong, "manly" Prime Minister Donald Tusk.

3.2 Interview for *Gazeta Wyborcza*, October 6, 2014 (part 1)

The second example comes from the interview given by Ewa Kopacz on October 6, 2014, only a week after becoming the head of the government⁷.

(7) Pol. Dz.: *"Panią Thatcher? Angelą Merkel? Kim będzie Ewa Kopacz?"*

EK: "Ewą Kopacz. Taką jak dotąd. Byłam samorządowcem, przewodniczącą sejmowej komisji zdrowia, ministrem, marszałkiem i zawsze pozostawałam sobą. Dla ludzi byłam przede wszystkim lekarzem". – [J.: "Margaret Thatcher? Angela Merkel? Who will Ewa Kopacz be?"]

EK: "She'll be Ewa Kopacz. Same as ever. I used to work for local authorities, I have been Chairwoman of the Parliamentary Health Committee, minister, Marshal of the Sejm, and I have always remained myself. And for ordinary people I have been first and foremost a physician".];

(8) Pol. "Przecież mam być premierem dla Polaków, a nie dla moich kolegów z PO czy ministrów. Jeśli więc mam dobrze służyć ludziom, to muszę odczytywać ich oczekiwania". – [I'm supposed to be Prime Minister for all Poles, not just my party colleagues or ministers. If I am to serve people well, I need to be able to understand their needs.];

(9) Pol. "W Platformie miałam takich nauczycieli, jak Tusk czy Komorowski. Wcześniej, gdy byłam w Unii Wolności, to byli ludzie wielkich idei, tacy jak Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Bronisław Geremek". – [In Civic Platform, I had such mentors as Tusk or Komorowski. Earlier, when I was a member of the Freedom Union, my mentors were people of great ideals, such as Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Bronisław Geremek.];

(10) Pol. "Wcześniej pracowałam jako biegły lekarz sądowy, jeździłam do wypadków samochodowych, kolejowych i widziałam ludzi w wielu dramatycznych sytuacjach". – [Earlier I used to work as a medical examiner. I used to check car and train accident scenes and see people in many dramatic situations.];

(11) Pol. "Byłam od trzech lat marszałkiem Sejmu. Lubiłam to miejsce i – jak sądzę – miałam pewne sukcesy. Np. dziś nie trzeba zmieniać regulaminu, żeby dotrzymywać umów dżentelmeńskich zawieranych na posiedzeniach Prezydium Sejmu i Konwentu Seniorów". – [I was Marshal of the Sejm for three years. I liked the position and I

believe I was successful. For example, today there is no need to amend the regulations to keep gentlemen's agreements closed during sessions of the Presidium of the Sejm and Seniors' Covenant.].

Let us discuss three gender-related verbal dimensions of these utterances. As in Examples 7 and 11 above, Kopacz is inconsistent in her use of masculine and feminine forms of nouns (e.g., using masculine forms even though fully acceptable feminine forms are available). We believe that this is a question of habit and automatisms rather than a purposeful choice of words, which, in fact, reflects the real not rhetorical self-description even better. Interestingly, the Prime Minister makes reference only to the male "political genealogy" because she is talking only about male party colleagues (*koledzy* in Polish) not mentioning female colleagues, recalls male political figures (Tusk, Komorowski, Geremek) even though the journalists suggests an analogy between her and other outstanding and well-known female European politicians. Finally, same as in her exposé, Kopacz is trying here to describe herself as: decisive, ambitious, courageous, successful, hardworking, and combative, which are the traits strongly associated with manliness (cf., Examples 12-15 below). Thus, she shows her ability to fight and fight back.

(12) Pol. *"Jestem pracoholikiem, naprawdę lubię pracować. Każdy dzień przynosi problemy, które trzeba rozwiązywać, przy mojej decyzyjności i upodobaniu do pracy może się okazać, że to będzie dla mnie dodatkowa siła napędowa".* – [*I'm a workaholic, I really enjoy working. Every day brings new problems that have to be solved; with my decisiveness and willingness to work it can prove to be an additional driving force.];*

(13) Pol. Dz.: *"Nie wystraszy się pani kilofów przed kancelarią premiera?"*

EK: *"Nie wystraszę się – i górnicy też to wiedzą".* – [J.: *"Won't you be afraid of pickaxes in front of your office?"*

EK: *"No, I won't, and the miners know it too".];*

(14) Pol. *"Zawsze się biłam o ludzi. Mówiłam: 'panowie, wy planujecie, a tu jest sprawa do załatwienia, bo ludzie z miejscowości X mają z czymś problem i może byśmy się tym zajęli'. Uważam, że dbałość o ludzi to obowiązek każdego polityka".* – [*I've always fought for people. I said: 'Gentlemen, you keep making plans while there is a job to be done because people from location X are having a problem. Why don't we focus on that?' I believe that taking care of people is a duty of every politician.*];

(15) Pol. *"Nie jestem strachliwa. Grzegorz Schetyna wpisywał się w moją koncepcję rządu, dlatego dostał to stanowisko. To był dobry wybór".* – [*I'm not easy to frighten. Grzegorz Schetyna fits my idea of the government, which is why he got the post. That was a good decision.*];

In the same interview, the journalists asked Prime Minister Kopacz the following question:

(16) Pol. Dz.: *"Władza jest afrodyzjakiem, przynajmniej dla mężczyzn. A jak to jest w przypadku kobiety?"*

EK: *"Władza? Na mnie nie działa. Kobiety tutaj zasadniczo różnią się od mężczyzn. Jest zadanie do wykonania, no to do roboty".* – [J.: *"Power is an aphrodisiac, at least for men. How is it for women?"*

EK: *"Power? It does not affect me. In this respect women differ from men. There's a job to be done, so let's get to it".*].

The journalists' question makes reference to the commonly known statement ascribed to Henry Kissinger, an American politician. Sexologists refer to this condition as *timophilia*. According to Lew-Starowicz, a renowned Polish sexologist, it means "achieving sexual satisfaction due to a sense of power and belonging to social elite, or due to immense material wealth. The source of pleasure derives then from the sense of prestige and reaction of the society. Timophilia is rare in women"⁸.

Kopacz's response reveals two aspects of her gender self-construction. Firstly, she supports the sharp gender dichotomy ("power affects men – power does not affect women") and defines the two genders in the essentialist manner by ascribing them the features that these two groups of people allegedly possess as a whole and which define them ("men crave power – women do not crave power"). Secondly, the Prime Minister describes women as being hardworking but also as being ready to act without voicing objections (*There is a job to be done, so let's get to it*). In this example, these features are clearly associated with femininity, in contrast to other statements coming from the same interview and from the exposé, in which being hardworking and task-oriented were ascribed to men. We can observe then that femininity as a discourse category, though rhetorically useful, is construed by Kopacz *ad hoc* in the process of her discourse construction instead of being a fixed and stable structure, ready to be reused in discourse. It is also significant that it is not Kopacz who referred to the dichotomic, polarized, masculine-feminine world, but the journalist: Kopacz only reacts to the suggested construction. It is important that she does not refuse the suggestion, thus accepting it.

3.3 Speech at the 7th Women's Congress, September 13, 2015

The three fragments below come from the short speech Ewa Kopacz delivered during the 7th Women's Congress⁹. They show discursive means of gender self-construction different from those which we have discussed so far.

(17) Pol. *"Ale też chcę się pochwalić tym, że w żadnym rządzie nie było tylu kobiet co w tej chwili, w moim rządzie. [...] W moim rządzie ich jest 5 ministrów konstytucyjnych. Ale mam po raz pierwszy w historii panią minister spraw wewnętrznych; jak widzicie, niekiedy niejeden mężczyzna mógłby się powstydić – [a ona] świetnie sobie daje radę."* – [*However, I would like to boast that in none of the previous governments there were as many women as in the current government, my government. [...] In my government there are five female ministers, including the Minister of Interior Affairs,*

for the first time in history. As you can see, many a man could feel ashamed – [but she is handling it quite well.].

Let us focus on the linguistic, pragmatic (pertaining to selecting specific speech acts), and discourse strategies. Firstly, there is a comparison (with the figures provided) of men's and women's presence in politics, which is accompanied by a direct act of praise: there are many women in the current government and they perform their duties better than men. It indirectly points to positive evaluation of femininity, women, and the features associated with them, which are to contribute to better government. Secondly, the speaker highlights her *power*, understood literally, even trivially, as possessing someone or something, i.e. possessive power (*in my government, my Minister*). Thirdly, Kopacz activates the category of *shame*. Shame is understood by psychologists as an unpleasant and oftentimes destructive emotion, triggered by a discovery of "dark sides" of our personality (Jacoby 2017). This emotion, its origin, and the strategies of dealing with it inextricably depend on the currently observed social norms. The statement above alludes to an imaginary situation: men (possibly including former Ministers of Internal Affairs) could feel ashamed by seeing a female minister who does a better job in this post than they did or could have done. Consequently, we are dealing with the *act of shaming* similar to the one, in which a parent (mother) shames a child when they believe the child misbehaved or acted in an inappropriate manner, that he or she was worse than others (cf., *many a man could feel ashamed* [if he saw how successful she is even though she's a woman]). Apart from constantly juxtaposing the male and female in politics as well as their constant competition, other elements are present in Kopacz's speech: explicit evaluation of these two worlds ("women are better in politics than men") and assuming the role of a person who wants to put shame on other adult people/men in high ministerial posts in a manner reminding of an adult caregiver putting shame on children.

Yet another aspect of self-positioning within the concept of femininity is revealed by the following fragment of the same statement:

(18) Pol. *"Istotą mojego myślenia o prawach kobiet jest przekonanie, że to one mają ustalać reguły i to one mają podejmować decyzje co do swojego życia. I te wybory, te ich wybory nie mogą być wymuszone ani sytuacją ekonomiczną ani fałszywie rozumianymi normami kulturowymi". – [The core of my idea of women is my conviction that they have to set rules and they are to make decisions about their own lives. And these choices, their own choices, cannot be enforced either by the economic situation or the misconceived cultural norms.]*

The use of personal pronouns in this fragment is vital for the reconstruction of the discourse. It is significant that in the speech dealing with the topic of women's rights, the personal pronouns used are *one* (*they+fem.*) and *ich* (*their*), instead of the expected *my* ('we') and *nasze* ('our'). This linguistic choice can be interpreted as lack of identification with other women in Poland. It can also be interpreted as a statement coming from a person who has no need to fight for her rights due to the power she already possesses (she has one of the highest posts in the country). Superficially, on the level of declaration, Kopacz "takes the side" of women, but actually she distances herself from them.

The next fragment uncovers new inconsistencies in Kopacz's strategies to construct her gender self-identity:

(19) Pol. *"Wiecie, że kobietom w polityce też nie jest łatwo. A to właśnie kobiety w Polsce zarówno w życiu publicznym, jak i w rodzinie muszą brać na siebie największy ciężar. I zawsze dają radę [...]. Wspierajcie kobiety, bo to jest ważne: żebyśmy my kobiety, wtedy, kiedy musimy się bardzo mocno mierzyć z tą męską częścią... Mówię tu przede wszystkim o politykach tej sceny politycznej... Nie jest to równy pojedynek... Dlatego też to wsparcie od was, te oklaski, które dostałam, ładują mnie na tyle dobrą energią, że ja za chwilę wracam na salę sejmową". – [You know that it is not easy for women in politics either. However, it is women who have to bear the heaviest burden,*

both in their public life and families. And they always manage. [...] Please support women, because it is important: so that we, women ... when we have to face the male world the hard way... I'm talking here mainly about the politicians of this political scene ... It is not a fair fight... That's why the support I got from you, the applause, it charges me with positive energy, so now I can go back to the Parliament.].

The polarization into the male and female political (or even social) worlds seems to be a constant feature of Kopacz's speech. Constant is also the notion of competition and fight between the sexes in the area of politics (*when we have to face the male world the hard way...I'm talking here mainly about the politicians of this political scene ... It is not a fair fight...*). This fragment features an element of vague but profound imbalance of power or inequity of opportunities for the two genders, as well as weakness of women as individuals who have to face a male opponent (only supportive actions of women as a group can, according to Kopacz, counterbalance masculinity in politics).

These three fragments coming from Kopacz's one short speech reveal a constant motif of juxtaposing the male and female worlds (especially in the realm of politics). However, the suggested balance of power is unstable and undefined. A female politician is on one occasion construed as weak and seeking support from other women, whereas in other cases she is depicted as dominating and outdoing men in her competence. Additionally, it is unclear which position Kopacz herself occupies in this recurrent opposition: superficially, she seems to take the woman's side, but at the same time she sends the linguistic signals of distancing herself from them.

3.4 An interview on TVN24, September 9, 2014

Similar ambivalences and inconsistencies at text and discourse levels are noticeable in Kopacz's choice of metaphors. It is well visible in her speech given a few days before the new government was sworn in. The speech was later widely commented on in the media and by the opposition, mostly negatively, though some commentators found

similarities to Angela Merkel's speech, who compared the German government to a good housewife taking care of her home¹⁰.

(20) Pol. *"Wie pan, ja jestem kobietą. Ja sobie wyobrażam, co ja bym zrobiła, gdyby na ulicy nagle pokazał się człowiek, który nagle wymachuje jakimś ostrym narzędziem, albo trzymał w ręku pistolet? Pierwsza moja myśl: tam za moimi plecami jest mój dom, tam są moje dzieci, więc wpadam do domu, zamykam drzwi i opiekuję się własnymi dziećmi. Co w takiej sytuacji zrobiłby mężczyzna? Pewnie pomyślałby: no, nie mam nawet porządnego kija w ręku, ale jak to, ja nie stanę i nie będę się z nim tłukł? Tylko dlatego, że on tu się odważył przyjść i grozić mojej rodzinie. Więc odpowiem jedno: Polska powinna zachowywać się jak polska rozsądna kobieta – nasze bezpieczeństwo, nasz kraj, nasze dzieci są najważniejsze". – [You know, I'm a woman. I can imagine what I would do if I suddenly saw a man in the street, brandishing a sharp weapon or a gun. My first thought would be: there is my home behind me, my kids, so I run home, lock the door and take care of my kids. What would a man do in such a situation? He might think: 'I haven't got anything solid at hand but I'm not gonna back down now', just 'coz he dares to come here and threaten my family. Well, I can say this: Poland should behave like a sensible Polish woman. Our safety, our country, our children are of utter importance.]*

This utterance creates an opposition with the prototypical male/female reactions at its poles – it is a very clear linguistic realization of the gender polarization we mentioned earlier, characteristic of Ewa Kopacz's discourse (Bem 1993). The metaphor of a threatening assailant brandishing a knife is misplaced at the very beginning, because it puts the speaker herself (as well as Poland, conceptualized as a woman) in the defense if she wants to conform to the declared values and models. Additionally, it is built on the emotionally negative image of a male assailant, threat, and fear, with a motif of a child added to it, which is a strong trigger of emotions (Pinich 2017; Rutkowski 2019).

What is especially relevant from the point of view of our analysis is the explicit juxtaposition of stereotypical male and female behaviours. According to these, a woman runs home to protect her children while a man, even without any tools (i.e. adequate weapons), follows his imperative to fight (supposedly, for honour, status, pride, which are the values associated with the male pattern of categorizing reality). Following Kopacz's interpretation, male and female behaviours are instinctive, almost atavistic (cf., *my first thought would be*): "survival" is the female strategy; "struggle", is the male strategy. What is more, this instinctive and emotional female reaction is illogically described as "sensible" (*a sensible Polish woman*). Interestingly, such an attribution of features does not conform to the stereotypical perception of women as more emotional than men (Stashko 2017). It is also noteworthy that the justification for the female pattern of behaviour is depicted as very serious (the assailant is brandishing a sharp weapon or a gun), while the male reaction is incommensurate with the situation (*Just 'coz he dares to come here and threaten my family*). The whole picture is permeated by the construct of "Polishness": this is a Polish man/Polish woman who reacts, consequently, the assailant is the Other/Alien, from the outside of our culture.

3.5 An interview for *Gazeta Wyborcza*, October 5, 2014 (part 2)

The utterances discussed above were interpreted as opting for the policy of avoiding conflicts in order to ensure security¹¹. One wonders how Kopacz herself reacts to the charges of being too conservative and feminine.

(21) Pol. Dz.: *"Mówiła pani na Politechnice Warszawskiej, że gdy kobieta widzi napastnika z nożem, to biegnie do domu chronić dzieci, a mężczyzna rzuca się do walki? To zabrzmiało, jakby: nasza chata skraja."*

EK: *"Dokładnie odwrotnie. Można szarżować i składać puste obietnice. Jeśli pomagamy, to nie tylko duchowo, ale realnie i w ramach całej Unii, a nie w pojedynkę. Wypowiedzią na Politechnice chciałam pokazać, że polski rząd będzie taką matką, która zadba o interesy polskich dzieci, polskich rodzin, a z drugiej strony będzie realnie"*

oceniać to, co możemy w sprawie Ukrainy zrobić". – [J.: "At Warsaw University of Technology you said that when a woman sees an assailant with a knife, she runs home to protect her children, while a man goes right at him. It sounded sort of 'we better stay away from it' ".

EK: "Just the opposite. One can mock and make empty promises. If we help, then not only spiritually but practically, and within the Union as a whole, not on our own. What I said at Warsaw University of Technology was to mean that the government will be such a mother who takes care of Polish children, Polish families, but also, at the same time, will realistically consider what can be done about Ukraine".].

The answer Ewa Kopacz gave illustrates two clichéd strategies: male – fight and female – cooperation. It also contributes to the earlier metaphor of woman with its prototypical representation, which is mother. On the one hand, it can have a discursive value by activating such connotations as warmth, security, intimacy, family. On the other hand, it is uncomfortably close to the model of Polish mother, limited in her interests only to her family, which is risky in this context. It can also be interpreted as an attempt to gain the support of the (massive) electorate and politicians who are not in favour of Polish involvement in international help: a Polish mother first helps her own children and then looks around if she can help others.

3.6 Press conference in Opole, August 28, 2015

Reference to gender appears to be one of the standard communication strategies used by Ewa Kopacz. Her answer to the question what she would do to finally arrange a meeting on national security with President Andrzej Duda is symptomatic in this respect. This is how she answers the question asked by a female journalist¹²:

(22) Pol. "Pani też jest kobietą. Co może zrobić kobieta poza słowem 'proszę'?" – [You are a woman yourself. What can a woman do apart from saying 'please'?]

(23) Pol. *"Ja naprawdę nie gryzę. Dziwi mnie, że jest taka niechęć do tego spotkania. Ja niczego nie żądam, ja po prostu proszę. Tak mnie nauczono w domu. Będę prosić do skutku, mam w sobie pokorę". – [I don't bite, really. I'm surprised by the lack of will for this meeting. I'm not demanding anything. I'm only asking. This is what I was taught at home. And I'll keep on asking, I'm humble enough.]*

The category of femininity surfaces in Kopacz's responses at several levels. Her first words activate the sense of "female solidarity" (*you are a woman yourself*). This strategy is risky because it can be easily ridiculed as "sisterhood of ovaries", in which femininity, framed in purely essentialist and biological terms, is sufficient to constitute understanding, community, and connection among women. On the one hand, it creates a bond between women; on the other, it excludes men ("they don't get it..."). The pivotal part of the response, which is the rhetorical question *What can a woman do apart from saying 'please'?* is grounded within this sense of community (*we, women, know...*). We can see the Prime Minister who is not taking advantage of her post, who is not using political tools of request, pressure, or negotiation, but who instead is putting herself into a position of a subordinate, a petitioner, a woman "waiting for a man", whose only available option is asking and waiting on the subordinate position for any reaction from the man¹³. It is significant that there was no reference to gender in the journalist's question. This category was activated by Kopacz herself. In her self-positioning, including her image as a politician, gender is the category of choice in many (difficult) communicative situations.

In the second part of her response, Kopacz openly distances herself from the strategy of fight (*I don't bite, really; I'm not demanding anything. I'm only asking*), and puts herself in the subordinate position with respect to the President. She identifies asking as the only way to achieve her objectives and connects it with humbleness. Additionally, she indicates her family home and upbringing (a strong rhetorical figure) as a source of this behaviour, and thus paints a complete image of an immature, subjugated "girl", instead of a self-confident and decisive woman, the leader of the

government (cf., Example 24 below). This total rejection of attributes of political fight and adopting the position of someone subordinate, passive, waiting, and humbly accepting decisions made by the other side of the argument, reinforced at that time her reception as a person unable to act as the leader of the government. Many researchers point out that female language makes more use of speech acts such as request and also emotional reference, personal examples, hesitant speech, passive speech, softened statement, apology, receiving approval, asking questions, and empathy (Grebelsky-Lichtman & Bdólach 2017; Grebelsky-Lichtman & Katz 2019).

3.7 "A model daddy's girl"

Ewa Kopacz readily told the media about her family background, about being a daughter, mother, and grandmother. Her reference to the family roles and the idea of the home (as in Example 23, when she says: *I'm not demanding anything. I'm only asking. This is what I was taught at home.*) seems to be her preferable strategy, even in situations, which are not naturally associated with the home and family. Her home and her relationships with other family members become the frame for self-description in the sphere of her current political activities ("I was taught at home to ask politely", "father taught me many things and equipped me with life wisdom" – these could be the reconstructed meanings of what she says), which can be illustrated with three more examples. The first example comes from women's magazine "Viva" (December 22, 2014)¹⁴, the second is a recent comment on Twitter (January 31, 2019)¹⁵, and the third is a fragment of an interview given right before Christmas (December 25, 2014)¹⁶.

(24) Pol. "*Byłam modelową córeczką tatusia. Często z ojcem rozmawialiśmy i były to bardzo poważne rozmowy.*" – [*I used to be a model daddy's girl. My father and I would talk a lot and these were very serious conversations.*];

(25) Pol. "*Dzień rozpoczęłam od freudowskiej pomyłki. Wczoraj kupiłam książkę o dinozaurach dla mojego wnuka.*" – [*I started my day with a Freudian slip. I bought a book about dinos for my grandson.*]

(26) Pol. *"A mnie się marzy, żeby założyć jeansy i bluzę dresową. Dlatego myślę sobie zawsze, że jak pojedę do Gdańska do córki, do wnuczka, to tam wszystko będzie inaczej [...] Kiedy jestem z wnukiem, nie myślę o polityce. Opiekuję się z nim z przyjemnością. To świetne lekarstwo na stres, nie tylko w polityce."* – [Sometimes I dream of putting on jeans and a hoodie. That's why I keep thinking that when I'm going to Gdansk, to my daughter's place, to see my grandson, it's all different. [...] When I'm with my grandson, I don't think about politics. I take care of him with great pleasure. It's a terrific remedy for stress, and not only in politics.].

As we can see in Example 25, family relationships (a book bought by a granny for a grandson) can also be used to justify gaps in a person's general knowledge. The granny figure itself, with its implication of protectiveness, care, emotions, tradition, and focus on family, supports the category of femininity and adds a new dimension to it via the activation of another way of exemplification. At the same time, it situates the category of femininity firmly within the granted cultural order, because the grandmother figure – caring and devoted to her children and grandchildren – is a very strong social script in Polish culture (Tadros 2014: 10).

Kopacz uses family-oriented attributes (being a mother, a granny, being at home, being in Gdansk) to define the private sphere and separate it strictly from her political activities (cf., Example 26). At the same time, she emphasizes her solid grounding in the family and the sense of security it provides. Such a strong and clear division between the private and public spheres, and locating herself in the former, recreates and replicates the traditional, even stereotypical image of womanhood belonging to the sphere of *oikos* and self-actualizing within it.

4. Discussion

The analysis of the Polish Prime Minister's public speeches presented above, which are permeated by the category of gender, allows for drawing some observations. We list them here and at the same time address the research questions posed at the beginning.

In public speeches by Ewa Kopacz, there are numerous and diverse linguistic and discursive elements, directed, among others, at defining herself in terms of sex and gender. The male/female gender category serves the political scene as well. The linguistic and textual elements come from different levels of speech. They include: lexical choices (e.g., presence or absence of femininity markers, specific forms of personal pronouns, family-oriented vocabulary), selection of specific speech acts (e.g., the act of praising, the act of shaming) and metaphors (e.g., the use of the metaphor 'Poland is a woman/mother'). They do not allow for establishing any system or regularity. The linguistic construction of femininity emerging from the use of language is not systematic or regular either. If we look at the utterances which have not been included in our research material, we can say that there is no consistent construction of a stable image of a woman. There is ambiguity: on the one hand, she would like to be more like a man (utterances 4, 5, 6, 12, 13, and 14) and, on the other, she wants to be more feminine (utterances 20, 22, and 23). This kind of unstable ambiguity in the language of female politicians, dependent on the discourse of identity, is also described by other researchers:

"I would like to emphasize here that identities constructed in this way are dynamic, vulnerable, fragmented and ambivalent. We assume that there are certain systematic relations (of transfer and contradiction) between the models of identity offered by the political elite or the media (the system) and everyday discourse (life-world)" (Wodak 2003: 678).

Kopacz's highlighting of femininity can be explicit, direct, and declaratory. In such cases, femininity is strongly masculinized (with qualities such as leadership, strength, decidedness, etc., being manifested). However, the category of gender can be more covert or implied, which has been established in this study. Then it is related to stereotypical images, perpetuated by culture, in which femininity is home-bound, protective, weak, subordinate, asking, etc. Even though Prime Minister Kopacz defines herself as a woman and employs *femininity* as a category useful in rhetorical struggle, she locates herself "outside" this category.

In her speeches, Ewa Kopacz defines *femininity* and *masculinity* as two antagonistic spheres, each opposing the other and competing with the other, in contrast to the existing holistic and symbiotic approaches to this distinction (Davydyuk & Panasenko 2016: 24). She uses this opposition to build her own position, constructing an image composed of the traits contrasted with the traditional masculine way of "playing" politics. These qualities, which include *protectiveness*, *conservatism*, *avoiding conflict*, *focusing on family*, etc., are feminine and, as she believes, better or more successful in political activity.

On the level of declarations, Ewa Kopacz portrays herself as a modern woman, powerful, self-disciplined, and pragmatic. However, this rhetoric is oftentimes replaced by self-excluding remarks: Kopacz suggests that women should be subordinate to men (especially in politics), that they should display some kind of weakness, softness, and submission.

5. Conclusions

Before Ewa Kopacz became Prime Minister, she was little-known to the general public. Thus, her image in the media and what she said could be essential for the promotion of her government and herself as Prime Minister. It appears that this opportunity was weakly exploited or completely missed. Ewa Kopacz's speeches offer an insight into a variety of language strategies she employs as a politically active woman (e.g., highlighting, backgrounding, or negotiating her femininity) and reveal a number of functions of femininity created in the current Polish political discourse. The analysis conducted in this study leads us to the following conclusions:

1. Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz recreates the traditional patriarchal male-female dichotomy, where competition and domination are reserved for men. Our study shows the way in which Kopacz tries to balance both spheres – what we call gender ambiguity. Kopacz constantly updates it to gain both the conservative and the liberal electorate.

2. Kopacz frequently makes reference to vaguely defined femininity in order to achieve two objectives:

- persuasive objective: providing additional support to her political arguments as well as their illustration (Kopacz as a female politician is a woman who protects her children/family);
- self-identifying objective: positioning herself and her actions in the political landscape mainly in opposition to male politicians.

These two discourses are inconsistent.

3. The linguistic mechanisms of constructing gender in Kopacz's discourse are based on activating the traditional male-female dichotomy (or gender polarization). We can see both feminine and masculine traits.

The feminine ones are:

- narrativity (using descriptions and referring to her own experience, typical of women),
- topicality (the topics referred to include: the role of a woman expressed directly and references to women's duties),
- using feminine (subordinate) acts of speech, like an apology or a request, and employing them as a strategy in political discourse,
- playing feminine public "roles", like those of a mother or a grandmother.

The masculine traits are also represented at the level of the topics discussed:

- referring to male role models (party colleagues, Polish statesmen),
- explicit description of her own masculine traits, such as courage or task-orientation,
- using masculine gender indicators in grammar (masculine forms instead of feminine ones),
- grammatical distancing from women (using "they" instead of "we") in a speech addressed to women.

4. In what she says, Ewa Kopacz copies and preserves, often without thinking, the division into the male and female spheres, ascribing to femininity such qualities as passivity, humbleness, humility, diligence, sensibility, and no desire for power. Her

statements also feature elements that strongly exclude and antagonize both genders (femininity cannot demand; masculinity cannot be caring and sensible; masculinity cannot comprehend what can be comprehended by femininity; masculinity thinks about the world in a different way than femininity; thus masculinity and femininity cannot cooperate). The former Prime Minister also willingly employed family discourse to legitimize her views and actions.

5. The metaphors of femininity and woman used by Kopacz and connected with political topics seem misplaced, inadequate, and incoherent. Her statements offered her political opponents many open slots to be filled with their own arguments and misinterpretations. They also triggered ridicule and criticism. The new Prime Minister assumed the post following the two terms of office held by Donald Tusk, who was a very popular politician; thus, she had to confront prejudice right from the start ("Tusks's puppet", "a figurehead", "a dependent person"). Consequently, her gender identity is ambiguous, so it can seem inconsistent or even self-contradictory. This is why the stereotyping of femininity (both her own and generic) by Kopacz yielded a negative and unwanted result.

6. The ambivalences surfacing at the textual and discursive plane which were described in this study derive from Ewa Kopacz's inability to exceed the mainstream culture-specific Polish model of a woman, the need to make constant references to the sphere of domestic and family life when talking about politics, having no feminist awareness and her own reflections on this issue, and finally lack of her own strong voice. Such a discursive model is useless and faulty when applied to the antagonistic scene of Polish politics, dominated by men. Nor is it, paradoxically, satisfying for the Polish polarized public opinion.

Notes

1. Ewa Kopacz was sworn in as Prime Minister on September 15, 2014, after Donald Tusk resigned. On October 1, 2014 she did her exposé and Parliament gave its vote of

confidence to her government. On November 12, 2015, at the first session of the Sejm of the 8th term of office, she submitted the resignation of the Council of Ministers. Currently, she is a Vice-President of European Parliament of the 9th term of office.

2. The percentage of women in parliaments across the world is ca. 16.5. In Western Europe, in the lower houses of parliament the percentage is ca. 27 on average and ranges from 45 (in Scandinavian countries) to 9 (e.g., in Greece, Portugal, Italy). In all these countries it is lower than the population index. The situation is analogical in executive authorities: the average participation of women in the national governments of the EU member states is ca. 25 per cent. In addition, one can notice a correlation between the low presence of women in parliaments and in governments (Barburska 2002).

3. We can provide here examples of such figures as Robert Biedroń, the leader of the Wiosna ('Spring') leftist party, who is explicit about his homosexuality, and Anna Grodzka, the first openly transsexual person in the Polish Parliament.

4. Available at: <https://www.premier.gov.pl/realizacja-planow/expose-premier-ewy-kopacz-stenogram.html>

5. When quoting fragments of statements by Ewa Kopacz, we first give them in their original Polish form and later provide the English translation. All translations of Ewa Kopacz's statements were made by the authors of this article.

6. In the Polish language, masculine forms are grammatically differentiated from feminine forms. "Jestem lekarzem" is the male form, which is matched by an alternative female form: "Jestem lekarką". The Polish word *lekarz* is both generic and masculine, whilst the word *lekarka* is feminine.

7. Available at: https://wyborcza.pl/1,75398,16755521,Premier_Ewa_Kopacz_w_rozmowie_z_Wyborcza_Wladza.html

The second part of the same interview will be analyzed in subsection 3.5.

8. See Z. Lew-Starowicz, Orgazm władzy, "Wprost" No 13, 2009; Available at: <https://www.wprost.pl/tygodnik/156672/orgazm-wladzy.html>

9. Video available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Uw_uSrZOG8

10. Available at: <https://telewizjarepublika.pl/quotnytquot-o-quotbardziej-kobiecemquot-podejsciu-ewy-kopacz-do-rzadzenia,11757.html>

11. What she said was mildly commented on as unfortunate or, less mildly, as infantile, ridiculous, unbecoming the "tough" sphere of politics, especially when uttered by the Prime Minister (e.g., "Angela Merkel wouldn't act like that, would she?"). This is why Kopacz later tried to "toughen" the tone of her speech, to withdraw from the feminine frame, and to enter the gender-neutral sphere of work, tasks, and realism.

12. Available at: <https://natemat.pl/152715,kopacz-o-trudnych-relacjach-z-prezydentem-duda-co-moze-zrobic-kobieta-poza-slowem-prosze>

13. According to Tannen (1990), asking, like other subordinating speech acts, is typical of the model of female communication. Many other researchers also consider requesting to be a typically female linguistic behaviour, especially in situations when making a request is not necessary (Grebelsky-Lichtman & Bdólach 2017; Grebelsky-Lichtman & Katz 2019).

14. Available at: <https://polki.pl/zycie-gwiazd/newsy,ewa-kopacz-wywiad-viva,10041517,artykul.html>

15. Available at: <https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2019-01-31/kupilam-ksiazke-o-dinozaurach-dla-mojego-wnuka-ewa-kopacz-tlumaczy-sie-z-wpadki/>

16. Available at: <https://wpolityce.pl/polityka/227298-papu-papu-babcia-ewa-z-rodzina-w-hektolitrach-swiatecznego-lukru-tvp-dzielnie-walczy-o-miano-pierwszego-lizusa-rp>.

List of abbreviations

Dz. – dziennikarz/dziennikarka (Pol. 'journalist')

EK – Ewa Kopacz

J. – journalist

KS – Katarzyna Skowronek

MR – Mariusz Rutkowski

Pol. – Polish

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Résumé

Language is a basic tool of construction of female identity by women who participate in political activity or, more generally, in public life. This paper demonstrates how the category of femininity is manifested in the speech of Ewa Kopacz, Polish Prime

Minister in 2014-2015. This paper offers a textual and discursive analyses conducted within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis. The authors assume that a person's awareness of belonging to a given gender group is revealed at the level of text and discourse. Such discursive gender identity need not be consistent or undergo reflection or rationalization. Moreover, it changes over time and is subject to various pressures from external discursive forces (e.g., public opinion, the media, or male politicians). Addressing the category of gender is a frequent communicative behaviour displayed by Ewa Kopacz, which she employs both for her gender self-identification and for the metaphorical definition of the Polish political scene. The study shows a number of language strategies used by the former Prime Minister, such as foregrounding, backgrounding, or negotiating various aspects of femininity. The authors also analyze Ewa Kopacz's use of the category of a woman/femininity as a metaphor of Poland and of the way of conducting state politics. The paper describes numerous examples of how she stereotypically divides politics into two antagonistic spheres, "feminine" and "masculine", both axiologically charged. Political activity becomes construed as a gender "boxing ring", in which the position of a woman is ambivalent: sometimes strong, dominating, and powerful, whilst sometimes weak, passive, and submissive. The ambivalences presented in the paper derive, among others, from Kopacz's inability to exceed the existing Polish cultural model of a woman.

Key words: language of politics, discourse analysis, linguistic identity construction, gender, female political identity, Polish political discourse.

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