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THE LANGUAGE OF ENGLISH AND POLISH CORPORATE TWEETS – A CORPUS ANALYSIS

ABSTRACT

The following analysis investigates selected properties of the language of the tweets used in the interaction with consumers on English and Polish brand profiles. The analysis examines the structure of tweets, word frequency, as well as the frequency of informal and non-standard language items, language mistakes, the use of emoticons and hashtags. The study contrasts the language used by English and Polish representatives and reveals a number of similarities and differences between the corpora. What the corpora share is a high frequency of conventional politeness acts and language structures reflecting a customer-oriented tone of the interaction. Differences are observed in the frequency and use of informal and non-standard structures, emoticons and hashtags, as well as in the structure and complexity of the tweets. The study indicates a lower formulaicity and a greater individualization of the interaction on the Polish profiles.

KEYWORDS: Twitter, corporate profiles, language, formality, contrastive analysis

STRESZCZENIE

Niniejsza analiza jest poświęcona cechom językowym tweetów występujących w interakcji z klientami na profilach angielskich oraz polskich firm. Analiza obejmuje badanie struktury tweetów, frekwencji słów, występowania elementów nieformalnych i niestandardowych, błędów językowych, użycia emotikonów oraz hashtagów. Badanie porównuje język stosowany przez reprezentantów firm angielskich oraz polskich i wyszczególnia szereg podobieństw oraz różnic pomiędzy analizowanymi korpusami. Cechą wspólną dla tweetów angielskich i polskich jest wysoka frekwencja aktów grzecznościowych oraz struktur odzwierciedlających nakierowanie na klienta w dyskursie. Różnice dotyczą frekwencji występowania i użycia języka nieformalnego, struktur niestandardowych, emotikonów oraz hashtagów, jak również struktury i złożoności tweetów. Badanie wskazuje na niższy poziom formułiczności i większą indywidualizację interakcji na polskich profilach.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: Twitter, profile korporacyjne, język, formalność, analiza kontrastyczna

INTRODUCTION

The aim of the following analysis is to investigate selected properties of the language of the tweets used in the interaction with consumers on English and Polish brand profiles. The language of the tweets may be influenced by a number

of factors, comprising, among others, the relationship between the participants and the purpose of interaction. The properties of the channel of interaction, its nearly synchronous character, public nature, the anonymity of the consumers, the constraints on the length of the message may also impact the language of the interaction. Other factors comprise the number of consumers using this channel to communicate with the company and the number of representatives managing the account and their communicative competence (Tereszkiewicz 2017a, 2017b). It is therefore worth noting if and how the context of social media interaction and the technological constraints of Twitter influence the language of the encounters conducted online. The analysis presented below investigates the structure of tweets, word frequency, word-clusters, as well as the frequency of informal and non-standard language items, language mistakes, the use of emoticons and hashtags.

A further aim of the study was to contrast the language used by English and Polish representatives. It was hypothesized that, owing to globalization tendencies and a similar purpose of the interaction, English and Polish corpora will exhibit similar properties of the tweets. It was also assumed that the frequency of use of informal items, emoticons and hashtags will be high and will be comparable in both corpora and will thus reflect the conventions of social media interaction.

The material for the analysis comprises the collection involving 1200 corporate tweets from English and 1200 tweets from Polish profiles. The tweets were collected in the period between November 2015 and March 2016. The examples were collected from profiles representing companies belonging to different branches of industry. English companies: O2, EE, Adidas, Barclays, Lloyds, Yodel, East Midland Trains, National Express, Samsung, Sainsbury's, Virgin Media. Polish companies: TMobile, Orange, Adidas, BZWBK, MBank, Inpost, PKP, Polski Bus, Samsung, Allegro, UPC.

The analysis was performed using concordance tools (AntConc, Anthony 2019), followed by a manual close analysis of the tweets.

LANGUAGE PROPERTIES OF ENGLISH AND POLISH COMPANY TWEETS

Table 1 presents selected structural patterns of corporate tweets on English and Polish profiles on Twitter.

Differences between the corpora as to the size and structure of the tweets can be observed. Though the preference for complex tweets characterizes both corpora, the frequency of such acts is greater in the British corpus. British speakers produce longer posts, with a higher rate of complex tweets and multi-tweet posts, with a more diversified use of expansion patterns than the Polish speakers. In comparison to the British messages, Polish tweets are shorter, the frequency of short posts, as well as the occurrence of simple acts is higher.

Table 1. The frequency of selected language features of the posts

Feature	English	Polish
Number of tweets	1200	1200
Number of words in the corpus	20 152	11 762
Number of words per tweet	16,79	9,8
One- and two-word tweets	4	67
Simple tweets	255	525
Complex tweets	945	675
Multi-tweet posts	51	8
Informal and non-standard language	227	480
Language mistakes	328	381

THE MOST FREQUENT WORDS

The analysis of the frequency of words in the corpora may reveal certain features concerning the interaction (Friginal 2009). The frequency of words in both corpora is presented below.

- The most frequent words and clusters in the British corpus

Table 2. The most frequent words in the British corpus

Rank	Frequency	Word	Rank	Frequency	Word
1	933	you	31	128	help
2	692	to	32	127	about
3	565	the	33	127	ll
4	391	this	34	124	they
5	377	we	35	119	there
6	361	hi	36	116	hear
7	328	i	37	116	xa
8	327	your	38	111	http
9	320	a	39	109	call
10	316	for	40	102	what
11	312	can	41	100	dm
12	259	on	42	99	t
13	246	please	43	97	will

Table 2. Continued

Rank	Frequency	Word	Rank	Frequency	Word
14	230	that	44	96	m
15	220	sorry	45	94	thanks
16	204	our	46	88	know
17	200	have	47	88	not
18	186	be	48	85	x
19	180	us	49	84	able
20	172	and	50	81	did
21	170	if	51	78	any
22	167	it	52	78	do
23	160	with	53	77	as
24	154	is	54	77	get
25	154	re	55	74	here
26	149	of	56	73	at
27	144	s	57	68	no
28	140	in	58	68	ve
29	137	are	59	67	been
30	131	team	60	65	so

The list of the most frequent words in the corpus reveals the following properties of the tweets:

- a high frequency of second person pronouns (*you, your*) constitutes evidence of a customer-oriented approach to interaction. The use of polite markers (*please, thanks*) indicates the preference for formulaic acts of requests and thanks. Formulaicity is additionally confirmed by a high occurrence of greetings (*hi*) (cf. Page 2014; Tereszkievicz forthcoming). The frequency of these words is similar to call-centre interaction (Friginal 2009: 139–140), which indicates a degree of conventionality of customer encounters online;
- the corpus, in contrast to call-centre interaction (Friginal 2009: 139–140), reflects a preference for the first person plural pronouns (*we, us, our*). Self-reference by means of the first person singular pronouns occurred in 209 tweets, as opposed to 467 tweets expressed in the first person plural. The use of the first person plural pronouns indicates an institutionalized perspective, rather than an individual perspective of a company representative. The use of *we* may be dictated by the need to enhance a professional tone of the message due to a lack of visual contact with the consumer and thus to enhance the reliability of the response;

- the emphasis put on offers of help and repair is confirmed by a high frequency of the words *help*, *able*, as well as *they* and *team*, and the modal verb *will*, *ll*, used in acts showing willingness to assist the consumer and promising help and repair of services;
- the frequency of *this* and *that* is also worth noting. These pronouns tend to be used in various speech acts to refer to the complainable mentioned by the consumers (cf. Page 2014; Tereszkievicz forthcoming);
- the presence of the words *call*, *dm*, *http* points to the occurrence of requests for further contact via different channels as well as the frequent act of referring consumers to the company’s website or other branches of the company;
- it is also worth noting a high frequency of negative particles *no*, *not*. The particles constitute components of apologies and empathy devices (e.g. *oh no*), as well as refusals and explanations of a lack of desired services.

The above-mentioned properties may be observed in the following messages:

- (1) O2 in the UK @O2
@user Hi Ami, we’re sorry to hear this :(We’re unaware of any issues in the general area. DM us over the full postcode.
- (2) Yodel @YodelOnline
@user Oh no! Emma, could you DM your full address/tracking no and tweet once done, so we can investigate? Many thanks, Jasmine
- (3) Sainsbury’s @sainsburys
@user If the other vouchers don’t show up within 10 days, please let us know. We’ll look into this further, Laura

- The most frequent n-clusters in the British corpus

The British corpus is characterized by a relatively high frequency of word clusters. The figures below present the most frequent 3- and 4-word clusters used repeatedly across the corpus.

Concordance				Concordance Plot				File View				Clusters/N-Grams				Collocates				Word List				Keyword List			
Total No. of N-Gram Types 15157				Total No. of N-Gram Tokens 20855				Total No. of N-Gram Types 17444				Total No. of N-Gram Tokens 20854															
Rank	Freq	Range	N-gram	Rank	Freq	Range	N-gram	Rank	Freq	Range	N-gram	Rank	Freq	Range	N-gram	Rank	Freq	Range	N-gram	Rank	Freq	Range	N-gram				
1	75	1	sorry to hear	1	36	1	ll be able to	1	36	1	ll be able to	1	36	1	ll be able to	1	36	1	ll be able to	1	36	1	ll be able to				
2	58	1	be able to	2	34	1	they ll be able	2	34	1	they ll be able	2	34	1	they ll be able	2	34	1	they ll be able	2	34	1	they ll be able				
3	53	1	sorry about that	3	33	1	be able to help	3	33	1	be able to help	3	33	1	be able to help	3	33	1	be able to help	3	33	1	be able to help				
4	41	1	hi i m	4	33	1	call our team on	4	33	1	call our team on	4	33	1	call our team on	4	33	1	call our team on	4	33	1	call our team on				
5	40	1	let us know	5	32	1	our team on they	5	32	1	our team on they	5	32	1	our team on they	5	32	1	our team on they	5	32	1	our team on they				
6	38	1	our team on	6	31	1	please call our team	6	31	1	please call our team	6	31	1	please call our team	6	31	1	please call our team	6	31	1	please call our team				
7	37	1	please call our	7	30	1	team on they ll	7	30	1	team on they ll	7	30	1	team on they ll	7	30	1	team on they ll	7	30	1	team on they ll				
8	36	1	ll be able	8	29	1	on they ll be	8	29	1	on they ll be	8	29	1	on they ll be	8	29	1	on they ll be	8	29	1	on they ll be				
9	35	1	they ll be	9	25	1	sorry to hear that	9	25	1	sorry to hear that	9	25	1	sorry to hear that	9	25	1	sorry to hear that	9	25	1	sorry to hear that				
10	33	1	able to help	10	21	1	here http bit ly	10	21	1	here http bit ly	10	21	1	here http bit ly	10	21	1	here http bit ly	10	21	1	here http bit ly				
11	33	1	call our team	11	19	1	able to help hi	11	19	1	able to help hi	11	19	1	able to help hi	11	19	1	able to help hi	11	19	1	able to help hi				
12	33	1	team on they	12	19	1	we re sorry to	12	19	1	we re sorry to	12	19	1	we re sorry to	12	19	1	we re sorry to	12	19	1	we re sorry to				
13	31	1	http bit ly	13	18	1	sorry to hear this	13	18	1	sorry to hear this	13	18	1	sorry to hear this	13	18	1	sorry to hear this	13	18	1	sorry to hear this				

Figure 1. The most frequent 3- and 4-word clusters in the British corpus

The following functions of the chunks can be observed (based on Tagg 2012: 135–138):

- expressing an apology – *sorry to hear that/this, oh dear sorry about, sorry to hear you*
- offering help and repair – *be able to, into this for you, they ll be, so we can*
- making a request – *let us know, please call our, a dm with your*
- marking self-identification – *hi I m*
- referring to other channels of communication – *a dm with your, us a dm with, please call our team.*

The clusters clearly prove a high frequency of apologies, offers of help and repair, requests for further contact, as well as the conventional acts of self-identification. The frequency list and the structure of n-clusters reflects a frequent use of conventional formulas (*please, thanks, sorry*), polite requests and offers of help, i.e. acts which attend to the customer's positive and negative face wants, acts expressing the companies' concern with polite and professional customer service (Cameron 2000: 104; cf. Page 2014; cf. Tereszkievicz forthcoming).

- The most frequent words in the Polish corpus

The table below presents the list of the most frequent words found in the Polish corpus.

Table 3. The most frequent words in the Polish corpus

Rank	Frequency	Word	Rank	Frequency	Word
1	279	na	31	43	ma
2	258	nie	32	43	nas
3	253	w	33	42	bedzie
4	234	sie	34	40	przepraszamy
5	217	to	35	38	tym
6	179	z	36	38	www
7	160	i	37	37	bardzo
8	141	o	38	34	jesli
9	133	do	39	34	po
10	123	jest	40	34	x
11	100	za	41	33	czy
12	97	pozdrawiam	42	33	pomoc
13	95	ze	43	32	dziekujemy

Table 3. Continued

Rank	Frequency	Word	Rank	Frequency	Word
14	84	bzwbk	44	32	my
15	84	pl	45	30	moze
16	83	nam	46	30	tej
17	78	xa	47	30	wszystko
18	72	tak	48	29	informacje
19	67	co	49	29	niestety
20	67	juz	50	28	przez
21	63	a	51	27	kontakt
22	58	ale	52	27	mozesz
23	58	prosimy	53	27	sprawdzimy
24	57	http	54	26	dzięki
25	55	jak	55	26	jeszcze
26	50	dla	56	25	https
27	49	mamy	57	25	znac
28	48	sa	58	24	bedziemy
29	47	d	59	24	ciebie
30	45	od	60	24	mozemy

The frequency list reveals both a degree of customer orientation in the language of the tweets, the use of strategies aiming at diminishing the threat to the company's face, as well as an interconnectedness between different channels of communication. More specifically, the following features of discourse can be seen (cf. Tereszkievicz 2017a; Tereszkievicz forthcoming):

- a high frequency of politeness markers can be noticed, such as *pozdrawiam*, *prosimy*, *dziękujemy*, indicating the occurrence of greetings, requests and thanks in the interaction;
- a high occurrence of *sprawdzimy*, *pomoc* (which stands for the noun *pomoc* and the verb *pomóc* without diacritic signs) points to the frequent use of commissive acts in the form of promises of help and repair;
- the words indicate a preference for the first person plural, with most of the verbs above expressed in the first person plural form of the verb and a high occurrence of first person plural pronouns. Indeed, the majority of the tweets (613 instances) are written in the first person plural form of the verb. There were only 9 cases of tweets in the first person singular. Mixed forms of the

verb can be observed in the case of tweets where the main content of the message was expressed using the plural form, with greetings in a singular form, followed by the speaker's self-identification, which explains the high frequency of *pozdrawiam* in the corpus:

(4) mBank @mBankpl
 @user, prosimy o doprecyzowanie dlaczego wykonanie przelewu nie jest możliwe.
 Czy pojawia się jakiś komunikat? Pozdrawiam [MS]

- the use of the first person plural reflects a more corporate rather than a personal character of the messages, as was the case in the British corpus. Tweets in the first person singular diminish the institutional character of the message and express a personal voice of the representative behind the tweet;
- the occurrence of *już, wszystko* constitutes evidence of the acts in which the companies confirm that the complainable has been solved and that the services have resumed, which is a face-saving strategy for the company;
- the list also reveals a high frequency of linking and acts of referring consumers to companies' websites, which is visible in the occurrence of *www, pl, http, x* and *xa* (a part of website address), while the frequent use of *kontakt* reflects the use of requests for contact via a different channel, all of which confirms the use of Twitter as an intermediary channel of communication with a client;
- as was the case with the English corpus, the use of *tej, tym* is associated with a face-saving strategy of referring to the complainable reported by the consumer in vague terms without naming the infraction (*tej sprawie, tej informacji, z tym walczymy, daj nam o tym znać przez formularz*);
- the occurrence of *d* is associated with the use of emoticons (:D) and indicates a high frequency of these symbols in the Polish corpus, as described below;
- what is also worth noting is a frequent use of *nie* (third in the frequency list) as well as *niestety* in the corpus. The occurrence of these elements points to a high frequency of refusals, denials and explanations in the corpus.

The following tweets show the above-mentioned features:

(5) Orange Polska @Orange_Polska
 @user Prześlij nam zgłoszenie poprzez <https://pomoc.orange.pl/> Sprawdźmy to.

(6) Allegro @Allegro_Group
 @user Najlepiej daj nam o tym znać przez formularz: <http://bit.ly/1XK1LMR> Dokładnie opisz sprawę, sprawdzimy o co może chodzić.

(7) Allegro @Allegro_Group
 @user Nie ma żadnej awarii, więc to jakiś indywidualny problem. Zgłosisz przez formularz? Wtedy będziemy mieć wszystkie niezbędne dane.

(8) Allegro @Allegro_Group
 @user Wczoraj faktycznie mieliśmy krótkotrwałe problemy z aplikacją na iOS. Teraz wszystko powinno już śmigać :)

Concordance					Concordance Plot					File View					Clusters/N-Grams					Collocates					Word List					Keyword List									
Total No. of N-Gram Types					10776					Total No. of N-Gram Tokens					11778					Total No. of N-Gram Types					11244					Total No. of N-Gram Tokens					11777				
Rank	Freq	Range	N-gram		Rank	Freq	Range	N-gram																															
1	16	1	przepraszamy za utrudnienia		1	9	1	pomoc orange pl xa																															
2	14	1	prosimy o kontakt		2	8	1	https pomoc orange pl																															
3	13	1	na naszej stronie		3	8	1	prosimy o kontakt z																															
4	13	1	orange pl xa		4	7	1	intercity pl pl site																															
5	10	1	html xa x		5	6	1	boa t mobile pl																															
6	10	1	mamy nadzieje ze		6	6	1	http www adidas pl																															
7	9	1	co sie dzieje		7	6	1	http www spr ly																															
8	9	1	nie mamy informacji		8	5	1	bardzo przepraszamy za utrudnienia																															
9	9	1	pomoc orange pl		9	5	1	http www intercity pl																															
10	9	1	w tej sprawie		10	5	1	https www mbank pl																															
11	8	1	cieszymy sie ze		11	5	1	na boa t mobile																															
12	8	1	https pomoc orange		12	5	1	nie mamy informacji o																															
13	8	1	na http www		13	5	1	pl pl site dla																															

Figure 2. The most frequent 3- and 4-word clusters in the Polish corpus

The function of n-clusters (cf. Tagg 2012: 135–138):

- making a request – *prosimy o kontakt, zapraszamy do kontaktu*
- expressing an apology – *(bardzo) przepraszamy za utrudnienia*
- offering help or repair – *możemy w czymś pomóc*
- expressive acts – *mamy nadzieję że, cieszymy się że*
- referring to other channels of communication – *orange pl xa, boa t mobile pl, http www adidas pl, http www intercity pl, do zapoznania się z, na naszej stronie, etc.*

Among the most common word clusters, formulaic acts of requests, apologies, expressive and commissive acts can be found (cf. Tereszkievicz 2017a; Tereszkievicz forthcoming). The cluster *w tej sprawie* confirms an evasive approach to the complainable and the company's avoidance of naming the infraction. The clusters comprising linking patterns also indicate a frequent practice of referring consumers to other channels of communication, i.e. used in requests for further contact, information, as well as in promotional acts.

A relatively low occurrence of n-clusters can be seen in the Polish data, compared to the British corpus. A low frequency and variety of clusters in the corpus points to a relatively low formulaicity of the discourse and a degree of individualization of the responses.

OTHER LANGUAGE FEATURES OF THE TWEETS

Apart from the frequency of words, it is worth mentioning other language properties of the tweets.

- Informal language

Lexical informality is reflected in the use of shortenings and colloquial or slang vocabulary, as well as words with a high emotional load. The corpora also comprise instances of contractions, capitalizations, reduplication of letters, prolonging of

vowels, multiplication of punctuation marks, as well as onomatopoeic expressions, which have been identified as a means of representing paralanguage in computer-mediated communication (Crystal 2006; Grzenia 2006; Dąbrowska 2013). All of the above-mentioned forms proved more frequent in the Polish corpus.

Examples of informal lexical items from the British corpus:

- colloquial shortenings – *fab, info, plz, pic, pls*
- colloquial phrases and words – *give us a shout, no worries, back with a bang, stuff*
- acronyms – *DM, ASAP,*
- paralanguage – *whoop, whoohoo, ooo*

(9) O2 in the UK @O2

@user Whoop whoop, that's great to hear :)

(10) adidas UK @adidasUK

@user Back with a bang Ben. Welcome back to your best.

(11) adidas UK @adidasUK

@user Great stuff! Stay tuned for everything you'll need to know.

Examples of informal lexical items from the Polish corpus:

- colloquial expressions denoting actions – *wbijąć, dawać, potupać, ogarniać, obczajać*
- emphatic expressions and diminutives – *babole, paczucha, szybciosem, chwilunia*
- emotionally loaded vocabulary – *totalny, super, fajnie, odlot, git*
- Internet users' and social media natives' slang – *Internety, zaorane, podbijać*
- acronyms – *DM, ASAP*
- paralanguage – *c'nie, OGROMNE, wiadomoooooooo, baaaaaardzo*

(12) Paczucha InPost @PaczkomatyPL

@user Jak mówią w Internetach: zaorane.

(13) T-Mobile Polska @TMobilePolska

@user jak nie znasz to koniecznie obczaj :)

(14) T-Mobile Polska @TMobilePolska

@user ciśniemy na maksaaa :D

(15) Samsung Polska @SamsungPolska

@user jasne! Wbij tutaj: http://spr.ly/PrzedSprzedaz_GalaxyS7 ... @DaN_995

(16) adidas PL @adidasPL

@user Totalny odlot!

(17) T-Mobile Polska @TMobilePolska

@user dobry trolling, c'nie?:)

(18) Samsung Polska @SamsungPolska

@user *SOON* – na bieżąco dokładamy nowe sztuki – zainteresowanie tym modelem jest OGROMNE.

In the Polish corpus, instances of non-standard and highly informal expressions, originating from and popularized by pop-culture and social media have also been identified and can be exemplified by the following messages (cf. Tereszkievicz 2017b):

- (19) hej @SamsungPolska pomożecie? telefon mi nie działa :)
 Samsung Polska@SamsungPolska
 @user A co się stało się? :)
- (20) @Allegro_Group Nie działa mi allegro wtf -.-
 Allegro @Allegro_Group 16 cze
 @user Co się stało się? Cały czas to samo? Daj koniecznie znaka.
- (21) @TMobilePolska Takie mało trendy :D
 T-Mobile Polska @TMobilePolska
 @user oj tam oj tam :p
- (22) @TMobilePolska no niech będzie, że ja będę dla Was wyrozumiały...
 T-Mobile Polska @TMobilePolska
 @user nie no jasne, wiemy o co cho. to ofc nie model idealny ale przynajmniej serwisy rozbójnika alibaby mają konkurencję:)

LANGUAGE MISTAKES

The mistakes occurring in the corpora comprise grammatical mistakes, typos and lack of apostrophes in contracted forms, as well as punctuation mistakes. A slightly higher number of mistakes occurred in the Polish corpus:

- (23) Barclays UK Help @BarclaysUKHelp
 @user Hi Laurence, pleased your finding your savings card useful! ^AJ
- (24) NX Customer Service @nxcare
 @user I agree, we should not be advertising information, if we cannot guarantee this facility. We will get this investigate ^zk
- (25) Barclays UK Help @BarclaysUKHelp
 @user Hi, yes they is maintenance fee's applied, please click the link provided for more information: <http://bit.ly/1TX2n4b> . ^GD
- (26) Allegro @Allegro_Group
 @user Hmmm, może coś u Ciebie, po ogólnie wszystko grało ;)
- (27) Orange Polska @Orange_Polska
 @user Nie mamy informacji na temat wprowadzenie tej funkcjonalności.
- (28) mBank @mBankpl
 @user informacje odnośnie zmiany zabezpieczenia przy kredycie hipotecznym, zweryfikujesz w naszej placówce. Pozdrawiam [IW]

In the context of customer encounters, language correctness constitutes a marker of the company's professionalism, signals respect to the consumer and as such is one of the requirements of appropriate customer care. The use of incorrect forms may be perceived as a sign of negligence and carelessness, which may impair the company's image. In the analyzed context, the mistakes reflect the speech-like and colloquial form of the tweets. In most of the cases, they may result from the speed of interaction and be a sign of its spontaneous character. The mistakes constitute evidence that there is a real person behind the screen and thus add a human-factor component to the interaction.

THE USE OF EMOTICONS

The frequency of the respective emoticons is shown in the table below. The two corpora differ as to the frequency of use of emoticons, with their occurrence considerably higher in the Polish corpus.

Table 4. The frequency of emoticons in English and Polish (per 1200 tweets)

Emoticon	English	Polish
:) / :-)	137	349
;))	8	162
:(/ :-(32	23
Emoji	56	61

Smiley emoticons are used in acts expressing offers of help as well as acts of wishes. In these acts, the emoticons enhance the illocutionary force of the message:

- (29) Barclays UK Help @BarclaysUKHelp
 @user You'd need to hold a second account for this, Sarah. We can certainly help you with this if you want one :) ^NI
- (30) EE @EE
 @user Enjoy your day too :) -Louise
- (31) PKP Intercity @PKPIntercityPDP
 @user możesz mieć go w pdf na urządzeniu mobilnym. :)
- (32) PKP Intercity @PKPIntercityPDP
 @user udanej podróży i powodzenia na egzaminach! :)

The use of emoticons is also frequent in promotional and persuasive acts. In these cases, the emoticons can function as strengtheners of questions and assertive acts with a promotional undertone, in which the speakers confirm positive news about services or products with the aim of encouraging the customer to use the company's offer:

- (33) Virgin Media @virginmedia
@user Hi Stuart, the speed boost is free :) Just the postage on the hub you'd pay. ^AR
- (34) Virgin Media @virginmedia
@user Hey Jenni. We'd love to have you on board with us! Have you placed an order for services yet? :) HP
- (35) PKP Intercity @PKPIntercityPDP
@user Tak, wszystkie połączenia są już zaktualizowane na naszej stronie i można kupować bilety. :)

Emoticons are also used to indicate irony and a playful tone. Accompanying acts of criticism, they indicate that the insults are employed in a playful manner (Maiz-Arevalo 2015: 291) and diminish the tone of the criticism or disagreement with the consumer:

- (36) Samsung Polska @SamsungPolska
@user Bluźnisz synu :) Wpadnij do Brand Store i przekonaj się sam :)

Emoticons marking a joking behaviour (i.e. :)), similar to smiley signs, denote positive emotions in assertive and commissive acts and in tweets comprising jocular and ironic messages:

- (37) @T-MobilePolska czy moze dostać od was iphone z okazji dnia kobiet??
T-Mobile Polska @T-MobilePolska
@user jasne! tylko jeden?;)))
@T-MobilePolska tak :)
T-Mobile Polska @T-MobilePolska
@user mamy akurat 150 bez folii pakowane po dwa;)))
- (38) Allegro @Allegro_Group
@user Przekażemy komu trzeba ;)

Interestingly, in the Polish corpus, smiley and joking faces are also used in face-threatening acts of criticism or denial of customer statements and acts of rejection of the complainable. The emoticons may perform different functions in such acts. In example 39, the emoticon is used in acts of disagreement with the consumer, in which case it may diminish the face-threatening potential of the message. The emoticons in the subsequent acts may be seen to strengthen the critical tone of the responses:

- (39) Samsung Polska @SamsungPolska
@user Chwilunia, my się tu spieramy, że co roku ceny wyższe :) Bo tak nie jest ;)
- (40) T-Mobile Polska @T-MobilePolska
@user no to zależy od warunków taryfy. kiedyś były takie, dziś są inne:)
- (41) PKP Intercity @PKPIntercityPDP
@user to nie przewoźnik decyduje o ulgach ustawowych, a ustawa. :)

The frowning face was used in acts of apology, as well as acts of refusal and negative news provided to the customer, where it is used as a means of diminishing the face-threatening tone of the message:

- (42) O2 in the UK @O2
@user Sorry to hear that Stevie :(Have you spoken with the retailer about this?
- (43) Virgin Media @virginmedia
@user Blimey, that's no fun :(Have you tried a speed test over wired connection to a PC or laptop to see what you're getting? ^KT
- (44) PolskiBus.com @PolskiBuscom
@user To niestety, ale nie tylko od nas zależy :(Nie lubią nas w Lublinie :(
- (45) PKP Intercity @PKPIntercityPDP
@user bardzo przepraszamy za utrudnienia. :(

Emoji signs represent a physical action of clapping, a fist bump or hands raised in the air. The signs highlight the speaker's positive reaction and the positive tone of the message:

- (46) adidas UK @adidasUK
@user You're on fire in #UltraBOOST Uncaged, Ben. Keep up that good work. Looking forward to reading your review. 🙌👏
- (47) adidas UK @adidasUK
@user The Boss of the Streets. 😎 #FirstNeverFollows
- (48) PKP Intercity @PKPIntercityPDP
@user Pracujemy nad takim rozwiązaniem. O wszystkim będziemy informować w odpowiednim momencie. :)Dzięki, że jesteś z nami. ❤️
- (49) adidas PL @adidasPL
@user Dali z siebie wszystko! 🙌 Zasłużyli na wielkie brawa! 🙌

As shown above, in the interaction, emoticons comprise non-verbal expressions of attentiveness, interest, involvement and evaluation, introduce a form of gestural cue and in this way enhance rapport with the consumer.

THE USE OF HASHTAGS

The use of hashtags also deserves mentioning. Hashtags proved more frequent in the Polish corpus.

Table 5. The use of hashtags in English and Polish (per 1200 tweets)

Feature	English	Polish
Hashtags	46	134

As regards the structure of hashtags, the tags comprise acronyms, noun phrases, proper and common nouns, as well as clause-based tags.

With respect to the meaning and function, the following forms have been observed in the English corpus:

- names of products and campaigns – #VR, #UltraBOOST *Uncaged*
- names of events – #GrandNational
- metacommentts – #BringBackOurMacaroons, #HereToHelp, #HaileysHere, #MubzCares

(50) Samsung UK @SamsungUK

@user It really is. What have you be watching in #VR ?

(51) Samsung UK @SamsungUK

@user Loving the excitement! There's so many things to love about the #GalaxyS7Edge

(52) Yodel @YodelOnline

@user _ Glad to hear this Natalie :). #HereToHelp for any other queries

(53) Yodel @YodelOnline

@user Thanks for bringing this to our attention Katharne.Send over your tracking details & I'll investigate this for you. #MubzCares

(54) East Midlands Trains @EMTrains

@user We will certainly pass on your feedback Kevin – @EMTrains #BringBackOurMacaroons!

The above-mentioned hashtags with product names perform a promotional and persuasive role. The hashtags in examples 52–54, by contrast, express commissive and emotive meanings in a hashtag form. In this way, they increase the illocutionary force of the message and underline customer care.

In the Polish corpus, the following semantic categories of hashtags were found:

- names of companies, products, services or campaigns – #bzwbk, #Paczucha, #12zawodnik, #BZWBK24mobile, #FirmoweEwolucje, #mbank, #firstneverfollows, #aplikacja
- names of events – #euro2016
- metacommentts – #wazelina, #taktrzymać, #potwierdzoneinfo, #konieczlicytowaniemsie, #znakiczasow, #jestdobrze, #najgorzej, #iykwim, #dobregoweekendu, #witamynapokladzie

(55) Paczucha InPost @PaczkomatyPL

@user Adam, nie za wcześnie na narzekanie? #Paczucha nadana wczoraj przed 16.00, a właśnie trafiła już do Paczkomatu:)

(56) mBank @mBankpl

@user cieszymy się, że korzystasz z aplikacji. Polecamy też bardziej świadomie ;) #mbank #aplikacja #kieszon Pozdrawiam [IW]

(57) T-Mobile Polska @TMobilePolska

@user transfer jest wliczony w usługę. od początku #potwierdzoneinfo

- (58) BZWBK @BankZachodniWBK
 @user świetny widok! :) Marzenie... #bzwbk #dobregotygodnia #czasnaodpoczynek
- (59) BZWBK @BankZachodniWBK
 @user wzorowe zachowanie! :) #taktrzymac #bzwbk
- (60) BZWBK @BankZachodniWBK
 @user taka informacja z rana bardzo nam się podoba! Serdeczne dzięki! :) #bzwbk #jestdobrze
- (61) T-Mobile Polska @TMobilePolska
 @user #najgorzej :/
- (62) T-Mobile Polska @TMobilePolska
 @user ej, tylko na Ciebie czekamy:) załatw parę żubrów #iykwim

The hashtags, analogically to the tags in the British corpus, perform a predominantly promotional role. The tags with the names of the company and specific products label the message as concerning the company and the product in question, in which case they perform a persuasive role as they advertise the product and the company. The hashtags also contribute to the presence of the company in the medium – the more frequent a hashtag, the more trending it becomes, thus increasing the visibility of the company. The tags integrate the consumers and the company around events and products or activities undertaken by the users. In this way, they may help the company to seek common ground with the audience. The juxtaposition of the hashtagged name of the company and the good wishes or evaluative comments, as exemplified in 59 and 60, clearly constructs positive associations with the brand. Among the hashtags used by the company, tags denoting popular events (*#euro2016*), trending topics, tags being part of trending social media discourse and pop-culture slang can also be identified (*#najgorzej*, *#iykwim*). These hashtags combine an interpersonal and promotional function in that they associate the company with the event or trending topic, thus locating the company's tweet in the network of tweets devoted to the same phenomenon. The use of the hashtags deriving from the social media marks the spontaneity, conversationalization and a jocular approach to the interaction. These tags perform an additional phatic function of underlining common ground and forming or strengthening the relationship with the users. They group the message among other popular tweets, which indirectly lends the company a more positive image.

CONCLUSIONS

The comparison of the two corpora shows a number of similarities and differences between the conventions of interaction on the English and Polish profiles. The analyzed corpora exhibit features of conventional customer encounters, as

well as features triggered by the context of social media interaction. The features typical of conventional customer encounters observable in both corpora comprise a high occurrence of properties reflecting a customer-oriented form of discourse, i.e. references to consumers, acts such as apologies, requests for contact or thanks (cf. Tereszkievicz forthcoming). The features which may be triggered by the context and the technological constraints of Twitter comprise the use of short tweets, hashtags, informal and non-standard language, and emoticons. It is in this aspect that the two corpora exhibit the greatest discrepancy.

In the English corpus, emoticons, informal language, abbreviations or hashtags proved infrequent. The shape of the messages, with a low occurrence of paralanguage, verbal expression of emotions, marks a relatively low degree of spontaneity of the interaction. The features of the tweets show a transfer of the conventions of interaction from other channels of customer communication.

In the Polish corpus, a greater individualization of the responses and a diversification in the approach to the consumers can be observed. A greater diversification of the responses is confirmed by a low frequency of clusters and formulaic chunks in the corpus. In contrast to the British tweets, the compositional patterns do not appear to be repetitive. This confirms a lower formulaicity and a stronger individualization of the interaction. The Polish corpus also reflects a stronger presence of signs of informality and conversationalization. The language of the tweets reflects a clear influence of the social media conventions, a greater degree of personalization of the company, of de-institutionalizing the relationship and diminishing of social distance. The discourse of the Polish messages reflects the characteristics of the so-called netspeak (Crystal 2006) and written speech (Baron 2000), exhibiting features of spontaneity, informality and expressiveness to a greater extent than it is the case with the British profiles.

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