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LANGUAGE OF HATE THROUGH COMMUNICATION IN SOCIAL NETWORKS

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Abstract

Work on the theme of hate speech used in the media and mass media for the importance and complexity that this topic represents, can hardly be neglected, especially since today the whole world is under the influence of the development of modern technology. In our society, where there is a lack of adequate information of the citizens about the impacts that derive from the use of hate speech, when it comes to the content of these messages, it is noticed that they are tainted by the most diverse, regardless of the status, gender or other extra-linguistic factors. The Internet revolution has redefined the concept of communication. *The main objective* of this article is to study the impact of the use of hate speech in the media in Albania, the examination and linguistic interpretation of the lexicon, drawn from the speech of public figures, as well as the evidence of characteristics in the relevant speech. *The main method* is the research, classification and analysis of the selection of the "language" of hate from the speech of public figures in written and spoken discourse. Through this statement, we must come to the *conclusion* that the use and promotion of hate speech in the media has a profound psychological, spiritual, but also physical impact, which can go up to fatal consequences. Based on this analysis, we can say that it remains the duty of state institutions through legal acts, even media, etc.

Keywords: *hate speech, media, mass media, discourse, lexicon, syntax.*

1. Language and its power

Words have incredible power: they can destroy, suppress, heal, liberate and generate many other emotions. So the language we use moves along an emotional spectrum from active hatred to deep love. As people who care about their beautiful words and their power, we must ensure that we always use them in the most vital and compassionate way possible. If we start from the most negative extreme, it's not hard to identify. Violent language is what communicates hatred, disgust and intolerance. Various studies list a number of factors that have influenced the development and presence of hate speech, in both traditional and new media. Whereas at the micro level, there are developments in the media industry, such as technological advances, new media relations with the public, financial difficulties, lack of adequate investment in human resources.

Researcher Anne Weber, in a Council of Europe publication on hate speech, points out that there is no universally accepted definition of the term, despite its very frequent use. "Although many states have passed laws prohibiting the growth of 'hate speech', definitions of what is prohibited vary considerably from one another." Only the Council of Europe's Recommendation 97(20) on "hate speech" defines the following: *The term "hate speech" is to be understood as a summary of all forms of expression that propagate, promote, encourage or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred, based on intolerance, including intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism or ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility towards minorities, immigrants and people of migrant origin*".¹³⁰ Weber emphasizes that hate speech aims to strike at the dignity of those it targets, in their own eyes as well as in the eyes of other members of society.¹³¹ The latter can only happen through the media, especially television and the Internet in this day and age. Weber points out, among other things, that perhaps the force of law attempts to establish order and prevent, only by understanding and applying our best human values, such as dignity, mutual respect, equality, democracy and social peace, can we make the law understand and work.¹³² And that, of course, is the job of the media.

In fact, when we talk about hate speech today, we should stress that television and radio are not the media most affected. The Internet is the area most affected by hate speech, because everyone has the opportunity to comment anonymously. But we also have other studies confirming that many of the stereotypes, erroneous thoughts and attitudes are in fact born as a result of exposure to TV and radio content, as well as the press as a whole. So, on the Internet, there are often attitudes that originate in the traditional media. One of the factors influencing this conflict is cultural diversity within a society and between different societies. Academic Artan Fuga sees cultural diversity as a European value, while stressing that Albanians have an interest in speaking the "language" of cultural diversity. Fuga brings Albanians the attitudes of scholars and philosophers such as Will Kimlika, Jurgen Habermas, Jacques Derrida and Michael Volcer. These famous names emphasize that "there are no nations with a 'pure' identity without minorities and cultures from neighboring countries".¹³³ And more than that, in the times we live in, the aerial movement of people means that even cultures that don't share the same borders and territorial spaces are mixed. Stigmas, and negative apriori, different connotations are often inherited not only in relations between different communities, but also city by city and region by region, as everywhere, in all peoples. The problem is when these stigmas, whether explicit or hidden, find their way into television and radio broadcasts. Walter Lipman points out that "mass information is motivated by prejudice, interest and is highly subjective in nature".¹³⁴ This means we can't expect information to be completely clean and colorless, even if it's simply national. All media are really about a certain society, and are obliged to respect its codes. The academic Fuga is based on Lipman's writing that the collective illusions of public opinion are transmitted to the media and the collective illusions of the media are transmitted to public opinion, creating coherence in an illusory world constructed by media-public opinion interaction.

Methodology

For the realization of this work, we relied on some main research elements as follows:

- in the analysis of data supported by the most powerful institution in Albania AMA which investigates in detail the continuity and part of the ethics of each show

¹³⁰ Weber, Anne. 2009. Manual on hate speech. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, 3

¹³¹ Waldron, Jeremy. 2012. The harm in hate speech. Londër: Harvard University Press, 5

¹³² Waldron, Jeremy. 2012. The harm in hate speech. Londër: Harvard University Press, 14

¹³³ Fuga, Artan. 2017. Mediamorfozë dhe metakomunikim. Tiranë: Papirus, 501

¹³⁴ Fuga, Artan. 2017. Mediamorfozë dhe metakomunikim. Tiranë: Papirus, 506

-in questionnaires that are developed online and preserving the privacy of each journalist so that the results are as efficient as possible

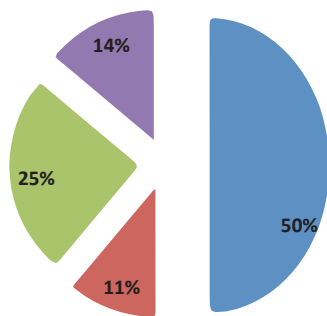
- in the presentation of opinions by our journalists but also by different authors, whether they are foreign or local

The data presented in this study is the result of surveys conducted among 50 journalists, editors and chief editors of broadcast media: TV Klan, TCH, News 24, Ora News, Top News, ABC News, Klan+, etc. The survey was conducted in September 2022, with the help of students from the Department of Journalism and Communication, UT, Elsa Kallanxhiu and Renaldo Salianji

The role of the media and journalists in combating hate speech

Meanwhile, in conditions of information explosion (or information explosion), the role of journalists as a protective filter against the emergence of hate speech in the media is increasing. I. Ramonet speaks of the need for a so-called "information ecology": because of the explosion, because of its over-feeding, information has been contaminated in the first sense of the word, poisoned by all kinds of lies, contaminated by rumors, distortions, misinterpretations and manipulations. R.C.Almagor (2008)¹³⁵, in the essay *Limits of Objective Reporting*, Almagor challenges the axiom that objective reporting is good ethical reporting. Analyzing the contradictions and paradoxes in the relationship between objectivity and ethics in reporting, Almagor points out that objective, neutral coverage of hate speech in the media is not always linked to professionalism. Subjectivity should prevail over objectivity when the media cover anti-democratic issues or phenomena, such as hate speech. What's more, technology has made journalism increasingly fast-paced, with the objective being the most topical, with consequences for the quality of information. Under these conditions, what is needed is to raise awareness and educate journalists about hate speech and its consequences in society, as an important link in limiting the phenomenon.

Figure 1: Trends in the emergence of hate speech in audiovisual media, 2022



The media reflect almost all of the above. On the positive side, for most broadcast journalists, hate speech is not an unknown phenomenon. Of the journalists surveyed, 36% said they had a great deal of knowledge of hate speech, 28% a little and 36% some, although more than half were unable to provide a definition. However, it should be noted that there is still no comprehensive definition by researchers of what hate speech is, while the university is the main source of journalists' knowledge of hate speech; Only 22% of respondents said they had acquired knowledge in the media where they

¹³⁵ Raphael Cohen-Almagor: 'The limits of objective reporting' *Journal of Language & Politics*, 2008

work and 19% in different training courses¹³⁶. As for the day-to-day work of their newsroom, only 14% of journalists said that hate speech was very important in the media where they work, a low figure, while 67% felt that it was of little or no importance. Significantly, half of the respondents said that there was an increase in hate speech in the broadcast media, while only 11% thought the opposite.

1.1.1 Tensions arising from hate speech

In the context of the country's tradition of religious harmony, the protection of Jews during the Second World War, the absence of acts of aggression or violence against other peoples or groups with different psychocultural traits, it can be said that the term "hate speech" does not coincide with the meaning given to it by the social sciences, based on historical facts and numerous confrontations, from Antiquity to the present day.

But in a way, it can be seen as a derivative of what we prefer to call tense content language, and in our broadcast media it is more frequently and periodically encountered in mainly televised debates, particularly during election campaign periods. This type of language fosters a general tension in society, which comes and articulates itself in conversations in cafés, or in different environments, where clashes between parties are concretized by the phrases, tone and arguments used. This is not to say that we lack those fragments of the public which, thanks to the level, can transmit the content of the various media to their filters. This image becomes a little more complicated with the new media, where anonymity, thanks to the possibility of having its own press, radio or television (as French researcher Eric Scherer puts it), feels free to violate the privacy of others, to denigrate, insult or use banal and threatening expressions that contradict the traditional value system.

The use after the 1990s of strong peach-colored labels such as "cecen", "malok", "prostitutes", etc, is a clear indication of this. To some extent, they can be seen as consequences of the media's resolution of the country's problems, regions and different groups. Similarly, the model of commercial film product shows, where the correspondence of individuals, gangs and stereotypes about different populations, which appear with intensity and in ordinary artistic settings, leaves traces, I believe some categories without life experience and, likewise, without solid background.

If we agree that it's important not just to list the facts as an argument, but to have a point of view focused on the causes of this situation and the reactions of different audiences to hate speech (films) or tense language full of insults and name-calling (TV), we would consider it logical to review the legislation and prepare relevant suggestions, chronic AMA evidence in various media (if possible) and find ways to stimulate ethical debate within production newsrooms.

New media in the context of mass communication

Media specialist Lambeth (1998:229), when talking about media and ethics, says that among the indicators of a society's strength is the degree of justice and citizenship with which it resolves disputes. Particularly when disputes concern constitutionally protected media, public interest is high. According to this author, since the media enjoy constitutional protection, this should be understood as

¹³⁶ The data presented in this study is the result of surveys conducted among 50 journalists, editors and chief editors of broadcast media: TV Klan, TCH, News 24, Ora News, Top News, ABC News, Klan+, etc., The survey was conducted in September 2022, with the help of students from the Department of Journalism and Communication, UT, Elsa Kallanxhiu and Renaldo Salianji

protection for all, as many media codes of ethics claim. Given the least protected or privileged, this media strength should serve precisely in their favor.

Every time we describe and appreciate the work of the media, we imply a value judgment, as when we speak of freedom, identity, integrity, diversity and even information itself. The main difficulty in determining the media's duty is that the media in a free society have no obligation to fulfill any particular social objective. In these societies, the media doesn't own the government and society either, so their responsibility is formally like any other social organization. They simply shouldn't harm anyone, and are free to work for what they want: for the government, for the particular interests of groups or individuals. Throughout the history of the media, however, certain unwritten obligations have been expected to be fulfilled. The normative description of media performance can be linked to social and political theories, professional experience; public opinion; the public; the market; the state; social interest groups. The most fundamental of these normative obligations derives from the historical context that created the media institution: in most democratic societies, this involves the link between the media and democratic political institutions in the formation of opinion.

The public has a certain relationship with the media and expects them to fulfill a mission. The state is very influential, which can change depending on the context, and the government can reward or punish the media. Usually, the major media see a vested interest in respecting the objectives or legitimate interests of the state, even in the face of criticism. The interests of certain groups may be particularly economic, but also cultural and social, and are reflected in the choice of news and information and the way they are organized, in advertising, etc.

The media talks about it in the public interest, but we forget that the media are founded for some purpose, not the public interest.

The role of the media in general and television in particular is accepted, not only to inform and entertain the general public, but also to provide space for education and the preservation of certain ethical and social standards. Many authors see the media as a mirror of society, where many issues that characterize or disturb society often find a place in media spaces.

But on the other hand, in-depth studies of the media, and in particular television as the world's most influential medium, underline that we have entered another period, where television offers positive models for society as a whole and governance in particular, as well as the power to influence that society negatively.

Since the first live televised debate between US presidential candidates Kennedy and Nixon in 1960, television has played a leading role in democratic processes as the greatest promoter of democracy. Television has become symbiotic with the word transparency. Thanks to it, society claimed to be able to touch power, art, culture and so on. But it seems that with the "touch" available to us, many individuals and groups claim that their ideas and thoughts must be transmitted through the media to affect society as a whole.

Television itself tends to bring everyone to the head of culture, language, trends, fashion and so on. Author Bruno Olivier says: "Television massages the size of time, making millions of viewers experience the same thing, at the same time, and feel the same desires, the same expectations, the same passions."¹³⁷ He adds that in audiovisual production, programs and messages are generally conceived in a logic of uninterrupted flow, which imposes an eradication of differences. So, on the one hand, we have a diktat of the screen, and on the other, we want to break out of this diktat through elements of society.

¹³⁷ Olivier, Bruno. 2015. *Shkencat e komunikimit, teori dhe arritje*. Tiranë: Papirus, 174

What is the definition of hate speech? According to Merriam-Webster, hate speech is a speech, statement or expression that displays hatred for a particular group of people. Definitions are also provided by other prestigious dictionaries, which address this issue from group to individual.

Sociological researchers point out that even parodies and comedy sketches in TV shows are a camouflaged language of non-tolerance of the other and, similarly, as hate speech for a given community. Unfortunately, in these series, the actors themselves from these regions attempt to parody the characters and jargons, targeting an entire area. We even have unacceptable parodies of people who may have mental problems and disorders.

If we look closely at Albanian television, despite the attempt to maintain certain ethical standards, we can see many cases of stereotypes being promoted that already exist for the region's neighbors. A concrete example would be the annoyance or irritation shown by Albanians when they hear that Serbs use the negative term "the albanian", whereas there is no murder of conscience when we use the term "shkjau" to designate this ethnic group. You only have to look closely at the news about a separate incident recently in Bularat, Gjirokastra, to see how we see a person of a different ethnicity. In fact, it was an Albanian national of Greek nationality. But the word "Greek" has often been used as a bad thing, confusing the individual's origin with his own personal wrongdoing, which is to shoot and attack the forces of law and order.

Whereas television was once the sole national media "ruler", and there were also global efforts (CNN, BBC, DW, etc.), renowned researcher Dominique Wolton, analyzing communication in today's interactive Internet society, sees it this way: "... National television is a factor of modernity, of social and cultural cohesion, of national identity, because there is a common culture. On the other hand, on the world stage, television doesn't have the same role, because it doesn't have a common culture; On the contrary, it has an informative and entertaining function and also contributes to the preservation of national identities."¹³⁸ The problem arises when this television transmits the language and attitudes of the street to a certain phenomenon in front of millions of viewers.

Expressions of sporting fanaticism, anathematized by one city or another nation, often find their way onto TV screens, and are even amplified by the media. The fact that fans in other countries are doing the same thing can't be the reason for what happens to a small group of fans, to be distributed virally to other groups, who are physically distant from this event. Moreover, negative news related to these countries finds more space than positive news, which is not uncommon. The editorial policy, which aims for high visibility and clicks on TV pages on the Internet, often leads to negative news and its amplification. For example, the beating of two young Albanians in a suburban affair in a Serbian town made headlines in Albania. Meanwhile, dozens of regional organizations, in which hundreds of young people and professionals from Albania participate and host in Serbia, Bosnia, Macedonia, etc., are being set up. They receive no promotion whatsoever. It's also easy to spot numerous cases of religious and gender discrimination, especially for members of the LGBT community. Often, different guests in the TV studio are allowed to say whatever they want; TV editorial policy distances itself, but this screen is still used to transmit hate speech or at least the language of non-acceptance and intolerance. So, when it comes to television and radio, it's not enough to stand back and do nothing, but also not to include and boycott these people, who use the right to opinion, speech and expression to attack a particular community.

On the other hand, media owners need to understand financially and editorially that television and radio are not their property, but "owned" by hundreds of thousands (perhaps millions) of listeners and viewers. Without this audience, these media have no meaning and no value. Media regulation is necessary to guarantee acceptable democratic language in all media productions. Certified and consolidated ethics committees are needed to prevent these phenomena and take action in the event of any violations that may occur in the audiovisual media. This should be done from within the media,

¹³⁸ Wolton, Dominique. 2009. *Të shpëtojme komunikimin*. Tiranë: Papirus, 14

as a filter that does not allow an unacceptable level of public discourse to emerge. Just as we ask factories and large plants to put filters in place to prevent gases harmful to our lungs, the media should put filters in place to prevent them from poisoning our minds.

2.1 Hate speech in media discourse and its impact on society

From the outset of this analysis, it should be noted that "to value ethically responsible behavior as the limit of censorship is an absurdity. Ethics is not censorship. Ethics protects and reflects the world of values, primarily human values and dignity. Few researchers would object to media freedom, but on the other hand, this freedom does not mean that the media themselves can and should be exempt from responsibility. No freedom, including freedom of expression, is absolute. "It is limited by the duty to respect the dignity of others and their legitimate freedom. Programs should not be written, created and broadcast if they undermine the truth: not only the factual truth that is conveyed, but also "truths about a human being", the dignity of a person in all its dimensions."¹³⁹.

The artificial reality of hatred emanating from the media

Various researchers have highlighted the confrontation that occurs between the reality conveyed by the media and what actually happens. The messages conveyed by the media, in the case of the television screen, often promote artificial realities for people who come from different socio-cultural backgrounds. These artificial realities depend on various actors, from the editorial policies of the media, to the professionalism or *raison* of the journalist himself, but why not on the worldview (interpretation, misunderstanding, skills) that certain social groups may display on the stories covered by the media. Exposed to these images, the public reaches the point where it can no longer distinguish between the reality that is presented on screen and the reality that actually is. Artificial reality constructed from media-derived content is generally triumphant. If we analyze this impact with reference to the effects of hate speech emanating from the media, we can say that this approach can create artificial realities of hate, which, over time and through various media processes, can have enormous social and escalating consequences.

Polish researcher Michał Drożdż from the Institute of Journalism and Social Communication at the Pontifical John Paul II University analyzed this issue, presenting the reality conveyed by the media as determining the reality perceived by audiences, although it may in fact be different.²² According to Drożdż, reality is increasingly shaped by media rules. Media hate speech adopts a number of performative characteristics, creating an artificial world of hate. This world penetrates the real world of interpersonal relations. Secondly, the media world and reality collide at some point, increasingly relativising and blurring the boundaries of media-constructed reality. In this way, the public loses the ability to distinguish between hatred in reality and its portrayal in the media.

2.2 Albanian television and hate speech

As mentioned above, the Criminal Code of the Republic of Albania links this phenomenon to hatred and conflict that may be caused by race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation. From the outset, it should be noted that Albanian televisions, in general terms, have been careful not to incite hatred and conflicts that may arise from racist, anti-religious or homophobic content. This attention, which may derive from the legislative framework governing this issue, may also result from the social norms that characterize Albanian society in general. There are few, if any, cases where media professionals, including journalists, moderators, their managers, etc., hear assessments that violate human dignity for

¹³⁹ Drożdż, Michał. T. 35 (2016) nr 5. «Hate Speech in Media Discourse.» *Acta Universitatis Lodzianae. Folia Litteraria Polonica*, 20.

reasons of race, religious belief or sexual approach. But despite this, hate speech and verbal violence on our TELEVISION screens are shown in significant quantities through character quotes that are included in news content, as well as in the talk-show formats ubiquitous in almost all audiovisual operators, or why not in other categories that include television programming.

Following the regime changes at the end of the last century, Albanian society was engulfed by a high degree of politicization. The form of media reporting, which creates vast spaces for political communication, has undoubtedly played a role in this, unfortunately accompanied by mutual accusations and ongoing violence. Exposed to such communication, Albanian society has shown a high level of politicization. From an analysis that can be made of media content that includes hate speech, among many other things that may exist, we note the following dimensions of its use.

Firstly, the hate speech conveyed by the characters involved in the stories reported targets specific groups or individuals. "In all the definitions that are made of hate speech, they emphasize that it is based on particular characteristics of different groups, such as ethnicity, religion, etc.¹⁴⁰

Secondly, this kind of language is intended to incite hatred and violence. As above, all definitions of this phenomenon focus on the violence that this language can follow.

Thirdly, hate speech aims to organize attacks or actions that may emanate from the emotion it arouses in different audiences.

Conclusions and recommendations

First of all, it's important to consider that the literature on hate speech in television content is limited, and that this field requires in-depth studies on the impact of this phenomenon on audiences.

Despite individual care and attempts to shirk responsibility for transmitting messages containing hate speech, the Albanian media allow them to find ample space and time for television. The biggest problem in this respect is the case in live broadcasts, which can be both in informative editions, as well as in real-time broadcasts.

From a qualitative analysis of television content in general, it is noted that newsrooms, but also teams involved in specific programs, require greater self-regulatory efforts focused on dealing with events that convey hate speech.

Regulatory authorities should define a clearer strategy for dealing with such cases, reinforcing the necessary measures in line with practices in developed countries. Despite all the skeptics of this suggestion of censorship of media freedom, we must remember that reporting based on ethical principles is not censorship for the media.

Finally, and most importantly, Albanian television should set up ethics committees, which are very important in these media times.

- Politics produces more hate speech in the media, but this fact does not exclude the role of journalists as an important link in preventing and limiting the emergence of this phenomenon. Journalists should be more careful and selective in the information they transmit, whatever the source.

-To combat hate speech, we need to set up and operate ethics committees as self-regulatory media

¹⁴⁰ Fortuna, Paula, dhe Sérgio Nunes. 2018. «A Survey on Automatic Detection of Hate Speech in Text.» ACM Computing Surveys. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1145/3232676>, 5

tools.

-Raising awareness and educating journalists through a variety of training courses are also essential.

There is a need to further improve university curricula in subjects dealing with this phenomenon, such as university. In media ethics (special modules) etc. Reflecting the rapid changes in the media environment. In addition to raising awareness among journalists, further studies are needed, where the focus is not just on journalists, but also on audiences in conditions where there is increasing interactivity between the media and the public.

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