

FROM “ENLIGHTENMENT” TO “SEDUCTION”

The evolution of persuasive strategies in Polish magazines for the youngest children (in the last two decades of the twentieth century)

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ABSTRACT

In this paper authors made a review of the strategies used by the editors of magazines for children. They showed their methods of presenting cognitive and educational contents in the eighties and nineties of the twentieth century. The changes and developments which took place in this field were caused by the political changes. The magazines for children published in the era of the Polish People's Republic required from the reader careful reading, intense concentration and a lot of patience. From the point of view of the young generation which likes colored, original and interactive media the magazines issued in that period may seem boring. In turn, the conviction created by pop culture that “what is boring cannot be important” limited the scope of contents to prepared sensations, commonness and banal uniqueness. After 1989 publishers in their search for new forms of winning over the youngest readers produced new multimedia magazines combining in a single issue traditional version (paper form), television (programme form) and online (web page). In order to make magazines more attractive in the spirit of unification to make them “magazines for everyone” meant that the seduction of the reader was no longer done by the contents, but by attachments, such as gadgets and “online continuations”. It was the most pronounced direction of the metamorphosis of the magazines for the young readers in the process of adapting the press to the realities of the consumer society which has begun at the end of the eighties of the last century. It was the price paid for the dream of making the

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magazines as popular as possible and enticing a large number of readers. At the same time it was a chance for the editors to survive in the world of hard economic reality.

Keywords: magazines for children, persuasive strategies, history of children's press

1. Introduction

A child is a special recipient because as a reader expects pleasant, attractive and useful contents and as an immature member of society requires continual educational actions and axiological care.¹ This immaturity is the object of numerous formative measures provided by educators, creators of culture, and "engineers of souls". They are designed to "enlighten" the young readers (educational and upbringing function), to attract them or even "seduce" them providing pleasant, modern contents in a color form (ludic function). Magazines for children are produced by adults. It is important to analyze their objectives which decide about the conception of a particular magazine and its issues (pragmatic aspect). It seems that three main objectives are pursued: to bring up and educate the readers, to shape their views and their pro-social attitudes, as well as to meet their expectations, by offering the pleasure of reading and thus "winning them over". Therefore we can talk about a specific use of persuasive strategies being a complex of methods and measures aimed to affect the child for a specific purpose.² These strategies are a result of changes in culture and civilization. They not only illustrate a growth of cognitive consciousness of the youngest readers, a change of the trends in upbringing, but also, what is of particular importance for the author of this paper, provide a guide in the evolution of the socio-cultural relationships between an adult (initiator of educational cultural events) and a child (recipient and reviewer of these events). This indicates that some significant shifts in the specifics of the transmission of cultural models took place in the last two decades of the twentieth century. The shifts ran from post-figurative culture in which adults imposed traditional models of the transmission of values and education, which may be called "enlightenment," to pre-figurative culture, in which adults pandered to young readers' tastes,³ which basically boiled down to the principle of "seduction".

In this paper we review the strategies used by the authors of the magazines for children to win over young readers through the ways of presenting cognitive and educational texts in a particular period, namely in the eighties and nineties of the twentieth century. The changes concerning this matter resulted from the political changes which led to the abolition of censorship and the progress of moral liberal-

¹ The best example of this is the fact that literature for children is called (in Poland) "the fourth literature" or "the separate literature" due to its specificity.

² *Vide:* definition of *persuasion* (*perswazja*): "explaining something to somebody, encouraging or discouraging somebody". Universal Dictionary of the Polish Language 2005, p. 99.

³ Terminology: cf. Mead 1970, p. 117.

ism. Until that time the basic function of magazines for children was to broaden the young readers' knowledge about the world and to shape their system of values. It was also desirable to activate the readers and develop their pro-social attitudes by conducting a dialogue with them. At the end of the nineties a special emphasis was put on the cognitive and ludic functions explicitly taking care of a modern media character of the magazines combining words and images which situated them among the other mass media, such as television and the Internet. Before we make a study of these phenomena let us have a look at the development of the magazines for children in Poland.

2. *Whether to teach, entertain or sell? A few words about the history and functions of the magazines for children in Poland*

Initiated in the twenty first century magazines for children were used primarily to shape the readers' patriotic and moral education. The magazines were home manuals aimed for noble and bourgeois recipients (cf. Waksmund 1984) as evidenced by the statement of Klementyna z Tańskich Hoffmanowa, the first editor of the magazine *Rozrywki dla dzieci* (*Entertainment for Children*): "There shall be in them [...] moral teachings and national memories, because they are the best to feed young souls". Texts in the magazines fulfilled mainly the educational function, explicitly expressed in this phrase addressed to the readers: "Dear children [...] in advance learn to be thankful and nice to people".

In the first half of the nineteenth century Stanisław Jachowicz created a magazine in which the educational function was realized by cognitive and entertaining contents, such as fairy tales and didactic poems. His magazine *Dziennik dla dzieci* (*Daily for Children*) contained information about current events, local news, children's literary works and invitations to take part in competitions. However there were no continuators of the novel character of the magazine and the periodical published in the second half of the nineteenth century lost the character created by Jachowicz, because as Danuta Żebrowska (2009, p. 72) wrote: "positivism slogans of organic work and work at the grass roots appeared" exposing the upbringing and educational functions and limiting cognitive contents to the Church calendar and secular one.

Post-positivism magazines were oriented on journalism and tried to open themselves to the readers, for example by introducing the section "Listy" (*Letters*). However it was in the two decades between the First World War and the Second World War that an essential breakthrough in the character of the magazines for children took place. In Poland 322 periodicals for children were being published in 1934. They were suited to the age of the children: the youngest children, children learning to read, children who could read and older children. They were of different specialization types: information, school, scout, religious, professional, travel and entertaining magazines. According to Józef Białek, "in

the interwar period magazines for children and teenagers played an important role in shaping moral and esthetic attitudes of the young readers, as well as in forming a new model of literature for children" (Białek 1987, p. 188). They played educational role as well by supporting the process of school education. The educational function was realized in the aspect of patriotic and religious model: "God, the nation, the state", constituting the essential profile of the pre-war magazines. The ludic needs of the youngest readers were treated marginally by providing some sensational and travel cartoons, e.g. *Karuzela (Roundabout)*, *Republika (Republic)*, *Mickey Mouse Weekly*. The editors' conviction of the need of conducting a dialogue with the young readers entered the public consciousness as proved by the publication of magazines for Polish children abroad during the Second World War, e.g. *Słoniątko Indyjskie (Little Indian Elephant)* published in the Near East.

After the Second World War the model of magazines for children was shaped by the political changes. The ideological and educational functions were realized in the aspect of socialist patriotism by presenting chosen state holidays and selectively treated history. Cognitive aspects were realized in a safe non-contradiction to the ideological model. The press was in the hands of state authorities and the number of magazines for children was reduced. Only a few magazines were issued, namely: *Miś (Little Bear)*, *Płomyczek (Little Flame)*, *Świerszczyk (Little Cricket)* for the youngest, and *Świat Młodych (The World of the Young)*, *Na przelaj (Across Country)*, *Filipinka, Płomyk (Glimmer)* for teenagers.

In the eighties, as a result of a gradual abolition of censorship the publishing offer was extended and new magazines appeared. The year 1990 was a caesura for the Polish media including literature for children. Some major changes took place in the publishing system due to the abolition of censorship and the control system of the press and publications. The disintegration of a state-owned newspaper monopoly RSW Prasa-Książka-Ruch and new normative acts enabled the establishment of private publishing companies, civil or limited liability companies, which began to "liberalize" the magazines for children. On the one hand some magazines deemed to be important were still published, but on the other hand the publisher of magazines for children "Nasza Księgarnia" (*Our Bookshop*) became a company which limited itself to publishing only *Świerszczyk*. *Miś* and *Płomyczek* were taken over by other publishing houses, and *Płomyczek* was suspended. The number of issued copies of the magazines for children dropped tenfold because of the economic situation and the appearance of numerous, sometimes ephemeral new periodicals aimed to win over new readers demanding magazines for reading for entertainment. The "old" magazines were recommended by teachers and used mainly in kindergartens and schools.

In addition to *Miś*, a magazine for the youngest children, new periodicals started to be issued: *Ciuchcia (Choo-Choo Train)*, *Domowe Przedszkole (Home Nursery School)*, *Dumbo*, *Ulica Sezamkowa (Sesame Street)*, *Ja i Ty (Me and You)*, *5-latek (5 Year Old)*, *6-latek (6 Year Old)*, *Zabawa (Fun)*. They were a written continuation of popular television serials. For children starting their educa-

tion the following magazines were being published: *Świerszczyk* (*Little Cricket*), *Abecadło* (*Alphabet*), *Bęc* (*Bounce*), *Brzdąc* (*Toddler*), *Już czytam* (*I Already Read*), *Kaczor Donald* (*Donald Duck*), *Mały Mistrz* (*Small Master*), *Pentliczek* (*Loop*), *Supelek* (*Little Knot*). The magazines were of different profiles, from educational to entertaining. Between the years 1990–1995 about 138 new magazines for children and young people were being published. The criterion of the readers' age was changed into the criterion of specialization, so magazines with cartoons, TV serials, crosswords and magazines on nature, technology and hobbies, as well as, magazines aimed to teach foreign languages started to appear on the publishing market. However this rich publishing offer was soon verified by the market. After a period of the boom caused by the readers' admiration for their colorful form, friendly language with words and phrases used by them in the yard or at school, and lack of an electronic alternative, the magazines were verified by the readers' tastes. Only a few survived in a clash with a flood of ludic productions and TV cartoons, such as *Donald Duck*, *Scooby Doo*, *Barby*, *Cartoon Network*, *Klinika dla Pluszaków* (*Clinic for Soft Toys*). *Świerszczyk*,⁴ well known by young readers, was one of few magazines which survived. However *Miś*⁵ and *Plomyczek*⁶ disappeared from the publishing market. It happened despite the fact that they were considered the most valuable periodicals in this category of the

⁴ *Świerszczyk* (*Little Bear*) – periodical for 6–8 year old children, published since 1945 as a weekly and since 1992 as a biweekly. It was published by Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza “Czytelnik” and then by “Nasza Księgarnia” (1951–2005). At present the periodical is published by “Nowa Era”. During the long time of its existence *Świerszczyk* underwent many metamorphoses. In the times of the Polish People's Republic the periodical was subordinated to the political strategy and ideological pressures. In the sixties and seventies the editors tried to transform the periodical into a literary magazine. The subject matter was focused on the promotion of authors and literature for children. In order to attract young readers the magazine promoted their debuts and published excerpts from Polish and foreign literary works. In the eighties, according to Joanna Papuzińska, the magazine “contained more and more journalistic materials, fictionalized reportages, information, interviews and photographs. The editorial form of the magazine was changed due to an expansion of illustrative materials” (Papuzińska 2003, p. 386).

⁵ *Miś. Przyjaciel Najmłodszych* (*Little Bear. Friend of the Youngest*) – biweekly published by “Nasza Księgarnia” since 1957 and created by Stanisław Aleksandrak, the editor of *Plomyczek*. Until 1989 *Miś* was the sole magazine addressed to kindergarten children published on a mass scale, up to 300 thousand copies. The concept for the magazine was created by Czesław Janczarski, the first chief editor of *Miś* who published his literary works in it. The author together with the illustrator shaped the image of *Miś*. The name for the mascot for the magazine *Miś Uszatek* (*Little Bear “Uszatek”*) was proposed by children in a competition organized by the editors. Little Bear “Uszatek” the main host of each issue became the readers' favorite character. After Czesław Janczarski's death Little Bear “Uszatek” was replaced by new characters created by Barbara Lewandowska: Widzimiśiek, Pocopotek Bajbajek, Wiedźwiadek, Michalina, and the characters created by Danuta Cwetsch: Rodzina Misiaków (*the Misiaks*). In the nineties the magazine underwent an important evolution; its layout was changed, better quality paper was used and the whole magazine was colored.

⁶ *Plomyczek* (*Little Flame*) – magazine for the youngest readers (8–10 year old) was established in Warsaw in 1922. The magazine was correlated with the school curriculum. After the Second World War it became a magazine published on a mass scale and had a science popularizing character. It was partly literary and had extended sections for communication with the readers. Until 1980 the texts in the magazine were adapted to the syncretic natural and historical calendar, anniversaries and

readers' age (Olszewska 1996). We have chosen these most valuable periodicals for analysis to illustrate the evolution of changes concerning magazines for children. We have analyzed the magazines published at the turn of the eighties and nineties of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty first century.

3. *Winning over young readers*

As described above the peculiarity of the press influence on young readers in the analyzed magazines was based on the principles of pedagogy. It led to a gradual abandonment of the duty-order model of presenting educational texts. Instead cognitive contents adjusted to the readers' intellectual level were introduced in a pleasant and often amusing form.

3.1. *Educational and ludic strategy*

In *Miś*, *Świerszczyk* and *Plomyczek* the most often used ludic strategy, reaching out to the readers through fun, was combined with the educational strategy (the need to develop the readers' cognitive and emotional sphere). The educational contents were transmitted in the form of fun, and learning was done through the child's emotional involvement encouraged by the editors to perform tasks. For example, in *Świerszczyk* from 1982 No. 35(214) we read: “On the pages of the «Razem z nami» (*Together with Us*) all children will be able to learn, play, think and smile because the thoughts, smiles and letters you will learn are the key to get knowledge about the world”. Persuasive impact was of intellectual – rational nature. The publisher explained their attitudes and showed the benefits of reading namely acquiring knowledge about the world (Karwat 2001). In *Świerszczyk* published in 1982 there were two sections of mental entertainment character: “Razem z nami” (*Together with Us*) and “Abecelin”. In the latter section the readers could take part in the adventures of the characters and help them solve their problems. In this form the reader acquired knowledge from different domains: nature, mathematics, music, the Polish language, e.g. collocations.

The last page of the magazine offered children a chance to perform several fun tasks: puzzles, rebuses, magic squares, homonyms. These tasks helped the readers to improve their perceptiveness and logical thinking. They also helped the readers to enrich their vocabulary. In spite of all these innovations the magazine was less attractive than the magazine published in 1999 (because of the predictability of texts, schematicism of its contents, its form as well as black and white photographs).

school and public holidays. *Plomyczek* underwent a considerable transformation after 1989 as it was freed from ideological influences stronger than in *Świerszczyk* due to the differences in the age of the readers. The periodical became a multi-functional magazine “which realized a number of functions: cognitive, esthetic, educational and entertaining” (cf. Olszewska 1996, p. 24).

In comparison, in the magazine issued in 1999 one can see that the editors increased in the transmission of educational contents the number of ludic elements – e.g. section with puzzles called “Łamigłównki”. This section was extended to 3 pages and contained more tasks in comparison with the magazine published in 1982. The section contained over a dozen crosswords, orthographic and arithmetic riddles, pictures for coloring, cutouts, jumbled words and phrases, tasks to complete words with missing letters, simple mathematical problems such as additions and multiplications. The authors took care of the form and methodology of cognitive contents, as exemplified by the interesting presentation of idiomatic phrases. For example the meaning of the idiom “to burn bridges behind oneself” was explained in the form of a comic strip consisting of three cartoon stories. Others, for example proverbs became topics of the regular column “Quiz”, which also enabled interaction with the readers, who sent their solutions to the editorial office and received prizes.

A new column, entitled “Psychozabawa” (*Psychofun*) was introduced. It was designed to allow the readers to find their personality traits. The titles were constructed as questions addressed to the readers, e.g. “Are you superstitious?”, “Do you have friends?”, “Do you like reading?”. This form was designed to narrow the distance between the readers and the authors and suggested an individual treatment of the readers. Solving the psycho-tests the readers were expected to make resolutions (volitional activity), and transfer the test results to everyday situations, for example make them more tolerant towards other people’s mistakes, and have proper relations with peers and show their empathy. The results of the psycho-tests, as suggested by the editors, should have an impact on the readers’ behavior. Discreet didacticism concerned many activities of children’s moral duties, savoir vivre and the polite use of language. For example the child was expected to behave properly during visits to the parents’ friends. The advice included a following comment: “Try to find pleasure in these visits. Do you talk with your parents’ friends? They certainly have something interesting to say”.

It is also worth noting that the editors took care of the holistic development of the readers taking into account children’s different tastes and preferences as exemplified by the column “Kolorowe zabawy” (*Colorful Plays*) with proposals of manual, artistic, culinary plays, allowing children to develop their creativity through making cutouts, bonding elements, cooking, sculpturing and painting. The magazine contained instructions how to make original stationary, a lamp from melons, stamps from vegetables. Original tasks, richly colored and interesting drawings were designed to encourage the reader to perform tasks. The ludic goal was provided in the form of board games attached to each copy of the magazine and the sections “Dowcipy” (*Jokes*) and “Horoskop” (*Horoscope*) were modeled on the magazines for adults.

Świerszczyk from 1999 had a rich educational and entertaining offer. Its contents were designed to develop child comprehensively within the scope of integrated education. The editors were paying more attention to shared “discovering”

of cognitive contents rather than presenting them in the authoritarian manner. The readers were encouraged to independent verification of provided information, organizing pieces of information and using them freely. The readers were also instructed how to investigate the truth about reality. Step by step the child has become a respectable partner in the process of education and has been treated as such by the editors.

The ludic and educational contents were exposed in *Plomyczek* in a slightly different manner, as it was a magazine for older children. The analysis of issues of this magazine from 1979 and 1999 has shown a similar trend in the process of winning over the readers, starting from primitive endeavors to win the readers' attention to the exposure of the contents they are likely to find interesting. The contents were presented in an accessible and attractive way combining texts with color pictures. In the issue from 1979 the educational contents were presented in the form of realistic and fictional stories, reports, information notes in two sections: "A to ciekawe!" (*That's Interesting!*) and "Komputer profesora Cojaka" (*Professor Cojak's Computer*). They played an important role in the intellectual development of the readers, as they provided information about the world, showed various natural phenomena, cultural events, news from Poland, though less often news from foreign countries, and thus shaped the readers' worldviews. The editors adapted the form of the contents to the readers' age. The easy to understand language used in the texts and attractive ways of presenting them promoted popularization of knowledge.

The texts on historical events shaped the readers' patriotic feelings and the sense of their national identity. In accordance with the state's policy only selected historical events were presented e.g. the Second World War, the Warsaw Uprising, the announcement of the Manifest of the PKWN (Polish National Liberation Committee). Nevertheless the editors managed to include the history of the soldiers of General Władysław Sikorski in "Kanonier Żołnierz" (*Cannoneer*).

In the magazine issued in 1979 the educational function was often subordinated to the ideological function through almost all verbal and pictorial forms, e.g. a photograph of Lenin in a group of children. The magazine highlighted the economic achievements of the Polish People's Republic (PRL), including LOT airlines, production of Polish cars, setting up new factories. Photographs showing hungry and poorly dressed children in Africa and Tibet were accompanied by photographs of well dressed Soviet children to prove that children in the communist countries have the best living conditions.

The two preferences of the editors, namely education and upbringing dominated over the ludic element. Humor and entertainment were only a marginal addition to the main articles (e.g. puzzles, crosswords, language games, magic squares and all kinds of fun exercises).

Plomyczek contained more illustrations and photographs than *Świerszczyk*. Most of them were black and white and only some were in color. The magazine was dominated by illustrations and humorous drawings. The magazine also con-

tained photographs depicting events of the past, e.g. the Second World War, as well as, current events, e.g. decoration of individuals with the Order of Smile, the ceremony of opening the Child Health Centre. The photographs were used to show different places in Poland and foreign countries, including photographs of factories and monuments rebuilt after the war and landscapes. Photographs were of particular importance in the column “49 podróży po miastach wojewódzkich” (*49 Travels to Provincial Cities*), which described the development of these Polish cities. In this way *Plomyczek* popularized sightseeing.

In the nineties (issue from 1999) the educational-ludic offer underwent a dynamic transformation and expansion. The section of “Akademia LiteratURY” (*Academy of Literature*) was designed to develop the young readers’ literary creativity. They were encouraged to write literary works. The best texts were later published by the editors of the magazine. The section also included information on different forms of expression, advice and hints concerning selected genres. The magazine contained also reviews of films and books written by the readers and in the column “Debiuty” (*Debuts*) the readers’ poems were published.

The section “Akademia dziennikarstwa” (*Academy of Journalism*) was aimed to involve the young readers in creative activities, such as publishing their own magazines. There the readers could find advices and hints how to write, edit and distribute their magazines.⁷

The form of popularization of knowledge in *Plomyczek* changed as well.⁸ The section “A to ciekawe!” (*That’s interesting!*) was given a new artistic shape. Knowledge was delivered in an attractive way. In texts which included color photographs the reader could find interesting articles on different matters, such as the achievements of the human thought, material culture, nature, historical events, customs in different countries.

In accordance with new trends and children’s interests, a new section was added “Komputerowe dyrdymałki” (*Computer Piffles*) devoted to computer technology. The authors used simple, colloquial language to communicate with readers but they maintained the proper level of language by restraining from using slang used by the youth, unlike other authors who used it in order to attract and lure young people (Kajtoch 1999, p. 79).

After 1989 *Plomyczek* intensified its strategy of activating its readers. The columns „Porozmawiajmy”, “Masz problem ... napisz do Niki”, “Z torby listonosza”, “Poznajmy się”, “Akademia literatURY” (*Let’s Talk, Have You Got a Problem?... Write to Nika, Out of the Postman’s Bag, Let’s Meet, Academy of Literature*) con-

⁷ *Plomyczek* 1999, No. 10, p. 13.

⁸ The cognitive function was realized in the section „Nasza encyklopedia. Wiadomości ważne i mniej ważne” (*Our Encyclopedia. Important and Less Important News*). It should be emphasized that *Plomyczek* still propagated sightseeing by providing popular science articles and reportages showing the most beautiful places in Poland and in foreign countries in the sections: “Z czterech stron świata” (*From the Four Corners of the World*) and “Podróże egzotyczne” (*Exotic Travels*).

tained various competitions.⁹ They were aimed to make the reader perform different kinds of activity: emotional, verbal, intellectual and receptive (to receive the message) (Baluch 2006, p. 14). *Plomyczek* mobilized its readers to perform diverse pro-social actions, i.e. to collect wastepaper, save money in the School Savings Bank (Szkolna Kasa Oszczędności – SKO), lead a healthy lifestyle, get involved in the life of their class and school. *Plomyczek* according to the description of Alicja Baluch “was programmed for an active reception by the reader” (Baluch, 2008, p. 57). The described method of affecting the readers carried out an important educational function and shaped attitudes and personalities of the readers.

The magazine provided humor in the column “Śmieję się z nami” (*Laugh with Us*) and fun, psycho games, horoscopes, puzzles, crosswords and riddles recommended by the company GRANNA (they were the first heralds of commercialization). Humor was an essential element of artistic activity which fulfilled the therapeutic function relieving the readers’ stress and reinforcing their positive emotions. Following the trends of pop culture the magazine was enriched with interviews with the readers’ favorite film stars, actors, singers and athletes. The page “Nasi ulubienicy” (*Our Favorites*) was about the life of celebrities and idols. Entertainment was a significant component of the new *Plomyczek*.

Miś, a magazine for the youngest children, was faithful to the principle “teach by playing”. The ludic aspect was used to develop each sphere of the child: cognitive, motor and emotional. A good example of this are the sections “Co my na to” (*What Are We Going to Do about It*) and “A my sami” (*And We Alone*) in the magazine from 1988 completely devoted to educational objectives. The entertainment aspect was used to transfer knowledge and develop the readers’ perceptivity asking them to solve simple mathematical problems, play with stickers and cutouts and solve puzzles. A regular part of each issue was a cardboard insert – cutouts, introduced in 1975.

In *Miś* in the nineties of the last century the mental entertainment was placed in the following sections: “Zapytanka” (*Questions*), “Zgadywanka” (*Guesses*), “Zabawy” (*Plays*) and “Zagadki” (*Riddles*).

The editors encouraged the readers to solve puzzles and gave prizes to those who sent correct solutions. Warm and vivid colors used in drawings, as well as a mixture of realism and fairy tales were aimed to attract the reader’s attention with a more successful result than the black and white drawings in *Miś* issued in the previous decade. There were also competitions mainly on works of art, e.g. “Moje ulubione zwierzę” (*My Favorite Animal*). The magazine published a list of winners and their best works of art. In *Miś* in 1997/9 a competition for the most

⁹ Correspondence columns are a special form of communication, as they narrow the distance between the editors and the readers and build up partnership relations allowing the readers to confide their problems. The editors use persuasive tricks in order to invite the readers and encourage them to take part in competitions, social activities, writing literary texts, letters, etc.

beautiful cover for the magazine was announced. It was to mark the 40th anniversary of the magazine.

An interesting proposal encouraging children to read with adults was contained in the section with a rhymed title “Poczytajcie sobie razem, Babcia – słowa, ty – obrazek” (*Let’s Read Together, Grandma – Words, You – Pictures*) combining texts with pictures to activate children. This section stood out because of its richly colored illustrations and letters. It was continued till the magazine was no longer published.

In the issues in the nineties advertisements started to be published, but not in every issue. They were designed to encourage the readers to watch films for children. A photograph from a particular film was shown with a short text inviting the readers to see the film, e.g. “Have you watched this film ? If not, then you must watch it. If you have watched it, then you must watch it again from a video tape cassette”. A novelty in the nineties was “Misiowa encyclopaedia” (*Bear’s Encyclopaedia*) – a section for cutting out elements of a booklet and collecting them. Undoubtedly this was to encourage the readers to systematic acquisition of the magazine and was one of the marketing gimmicks with the overriding objective of “tying” the reader with the magazine. To each copy of the last issues of *Miś*, following the trend of high volume popular press, a gadget was attached in order to increase the sale of the magazine.

3.2. Strategy of literary convention

Another way of affecting the readers for educational purposes was providing them with excerpts from belles-lettres, genre conventions and linguistic means of expression. This measure was used in the eighties to diversify the forms of transmitting the contents in a given magazine and showing high culture and thus to raise the status of the magazine making it a valuable source of contact for the readers with culture.

Miś always promoted children’s literature and published award winning literary works written by its readers. The magazine was trying to make its readers sensitive to the written word and tended to provide a literary type of education. The magazine introduced children into the world by describing their environment and dealing with matters close to the readers: home, kindergarten, backyard, peers, parents, grandparents, love, friendship, animals. The editors published texts about children, animals and toys, with illustrations of everyday problems which were always successfully solved. The magazine showed the correct relations with peers and family and gave advice how to help others and enjoy every minute of life. A strategy of exerting influence on children’s emotions by literary texts was continued uninterrupted during the time when the magazine was issued. The texts in *Miś* created a climate of warmth and enjoyment and could perform an important function in the aspect of mitigating children’s fears and tensions and making their first failures less painful as they provided a positive message

of the value of the common good, harmonious cooperation in a group, respect for elders and peers. They also provided advice how to fix one's mistakes. The host of the magazine in 1988 was bear Pocopotek whose adventures described in short stories with drawings were published in every issue of the magazine. In the nineties children met with the family Misiaks (*What's new at the Misiaks*). The history of the family was being presented in several parts with short texts. *Miś* had its cartoon characters, Hipopopo (*Pan Hipopopo – Mr Hipopopo*) and Gapiszon (*Gapiszonowe co nieco – Gapiszon's something*). The adventures of this funny hippo were presented in the form of comic strips, usually in two parts, and the adventures of Gapiszon were accompanied by one sentence texts. The author of the comic strips was a well known draughtsman Bohdan Butenko and the drawings were at a high artistic level. After all, illustrations played a leading role in the magazine. The iconic character of *Miś* resulted from the readers' age and children's "visual thinking" (Baluch 2008, p. 57).

Miś promoted books for children by exhibiting the photographs of their covers. The issue from 1988 shows that the magazine had a fixed structure for the presentation of literary contents, for example on the cover and title page among dominant colored illustrations were poems and short artistic forms. On the back cover various genres were presented: interviews, reports from meetings, letters to a writer/illustrator, etc. A high artistic level of the magazine was a result of the best Polish artists: Bohdan Butenko, Ewa Salomon, Ewa Skarżyńska, Janina Krzemińska, Bożena Truchanowska, Krystyna Michałowska and Hanna Grodzka-Nowak.

In the nineties the magazine continued the good tradition of providing good illustrations and avoided presenting Disney cartoons. Noteworthy was a skillful combination of traditional and modern elements manifested in colorful layout of the magazine with works of art produced by senior and young Polish graphic artists. Undoubtedly this form of the magazine was to the liking of kindergarten teachers and those parents who cared about the development of artistic tastes by their children and wanted to keep them away from fashionable pop culture. The question is whether children liked the magazine. In order to answer this question one would need to perform an extensive and difficult to carry out research due to the fact that the artistic tastes of contemporary children have been shaped by surrealistic cartoons.

The strategy of literary convention dominated the pages of *Świerszczyk* in the eighties (the issue from 1982 was analyzed), because as Żebrowska remarked "the magazine was for a long time a literary periodical as it published poetry for children, stories, fairy-tales, serialized novels" (2009, p. 82).¹⁰ Literary texts were adjusted to the seasons, holidays and the school year, for example the issue in

¹⁰ It is worth mentioning that the editors of the magazine published and popularized excerpts of novels written by Polish and foreign authors (mainly Russian, Czech, Hungarian, Italian and Swedish).

January was devoted to grandmothers (Grandma's Day) and the issue in April to Easter. Following the model of secular education religious contents were omitted, though in poems and stories there were some references to non-Christian symbols, rites and customs, for example decorating Easter eggs, baking *mazurek* (frosted cake traditionally eaten at Easter), *śmingus dyngus* (the custom of dousing girls and women with water on Easter Monday). The topics in the poetry and prose presented in the magazine concerned the children's micro and macro world: peers, family, school, nature, fun. The literary texts presented axiological contents encouraging the readers to cultivate interpersonal values, such as friendship, kindness, sympathy, generosity and family ties. Literary articles in *Świerszczyk* were designed to meet the children's basic needs, that is, as A. Baluch (2003, p. 25) points out, the pleasure derived from reading (stories), expressing emotions (poetry), satisfying cognitive curiosity (popular science literature), mental entertainment (books, toy books, riddles, rebuses), dreams and fantasy (fairy-tales, poetry).

One can venture to say that *Świerszczyk* brought up a generation of people keen on reading. The section "Nowości książkowe" (*New Books*) contained proposals of valuable books submitted by their publishers. A note about a book contained short bibliographic information and a single sentence description of the book's content.

Plomyczek like *Świerszczyk* until the political transformation tended to be a literary magazine as it promoted belles-lettres and its genres. On the other hand journalistic genres appeared on its pages only occasionally. Values which constituted a significant component of children's literature were provided to the readers by literary texts, the characters and plot. Authors both in their prose and poetry works taught their readers diligence, obligingness and responsibility. They showed that non-compliance with the rules led to stigmatization. The sphere of the sacred was totally disregarded. An analysis of the issue from 1999 shows that after the political transformation *Świerszczyk* became a coloured magazine. The magazine was dominated by journalistic forms: report, information, commentary, memo, interview. The range of literary texts was limited to stories about everyday matters concerning teenagers and they became less attractive. The analysis of issues of the *Świerszczyk* from 1979 and 1999 has shown that important changes took place on the market of press for children as a result of the political transformations. Magazines for children were influenced by popular culture and western patterns of culture. The texts were shortened, especially that of high literary value, and serialized. There was also an increasing number of photographs and illustrations.

Magazines published in the times of the Polish People's Republic required careful and patient reading and from the point of view of the contemporary young generation preferring colored, multi channel, original and interactive media, may seem boring. The pop culture conviction that "what is boring is of no importance" limited the scope of the contents to sensations and exposure of trivial extraordinariness. After 1989 the editors seeking new ways of interaction with the young-

est readers created a new specific multi-medial form of new magazines combining the traditional paper form with television and Internet forms. Here are some examples.

4. *Magazines and gadgets*

The magazine *Ciuchcia* with its characteristic subtitle *Not only for well-behaved children* was created as a result of great popularity of the TV programme starring Kulfon and Monika. It was addressed to a wide audience of children aged 5–9 years. The editors used attractive means of communication with the readers giving them showy gadgets. Each copy of the magazine included a DVD or a CVD disc and a photograph of a well known celebrity. Under cover of colored message the literary texts written for children by contemporary authors were “smuggled”, such as poems and stories. However they accounted for a small percentage of contents in comparison with a complex mental entertainment section containing puzzles, crosswords and illustrations devoid of artistic expression and similar to television images. The magazine was given a commercial form modeled on glossy magazines for adults. It was dominated by cartoons showing the adventures of Kulfon and Monika. Educational contents, including English lessons, were also provided in the form of cartoons. Full-page advertisements of sweets, toys, films, along with garishness of photographic materials made the readers think that they were watching an entertainment programme.¹¹ We should notice the educational intentions of the publishers implemented in the sections: “Z Kulfonem po świecie” (*With Kulfon Around the World*), “Pani Kredka” (*Ms Kredka*), “Książka przyjacielem Kulfona” (*Book, Kulfon’s Friend*). The modern form of the magazine illustrates the principle that children’s literature is to be primarily a wide ranging lucrative venture. Similar trends can be found in *Domowe Przedszkole* (*Home Nursery School*), a monthly (1993–2000), which presented characters and contents from the television programmes and *Przyjaciele z Zielonego Lasu* (*Friends from the Green Forest*), a weekly with educational ambitions published in the period from 1999 to 2001 and inspired by the TV series – “Zwierzęta z Zielonego Lasu” (*Animals from the Green Forest*).¹² The magazine had its website where all

¹¹ This magazine was designed for children who have not yet learned to read and therefore the contents of the magazine were to be read to them by their parents. The sections for exclusive use by adults were a novelty, e.g. specialists’ advice how to solve children’s problems such as for example divorce of their parents. The central part of the magazine was filled with advertisements and the section “Życzenia” (*Wishes*) presenting photographs of children sent by parents with birthday and name day wishes. The last page of the magazine had a section “Hop! Do szkoły” (*Hey! Let’s Go to School*) intended to provide mental entertainment.

¹² On the indicated website we can read: “Witaj, tu Sowa (*Hello, This Is the Owl*). The magazine *Przyjaciele z Zielonego Lasu* (*Friends from the Green Forest*), is a mine of information, so if you would like to catch up with me I invite you to the reading” [<http://zsl.pl/czasopismo.html>; 13.09.2013].

issues could be found in the pdf format. The graphic design of the magazine, similarly to the *Domowe Przedszkole* (*Home Nursery School*) and *Ciuchcia* (*Choo-Choo Train*), was inspired by TV pictures. The cognitive contents were enriched with ludic forms announced by the editors as follows: *In each issue of the magazine there is a cartoon being a next sequence of the adventures of animals from the Green Forest, there are many attractions, pages for coloring, games, plays and "do it yourself" materials*¹³.

The online version of the magazine created a possibility of contact with readers and enabled readers to contact each other. It had a forum with readers' opinions, suggestions and comments and "chats" as well as enabled readers to download music and pictures to be displayed on the computer screen. It would be difficult to prove that the online version was a result of the instrumental treatment by the editors. Rather it was a result of the requirement of modern multimedia and a means to make the reader attentive to the content of the magazine. This is more understandable because the real world and the virtual one are for today's young people just different versions of the same reality.

This manifestation of the young readers' specific participation in culture was not blameworthy, however the economic calculations made the market "court" young readers concerning their preferences for television and the Internet. They led to a significant depletion of the opportunities that helped to shape children's development. This led to the situation where the magazines had to be more attractive and stand out in the "flood" of comic books. In order to have an impact on potential readers the magazines were advertised as periodicals for "intelligent children and their parents"¹⁴ as intelligent parents choose only the best magazine for their intelligent children. They did it somewhat in spite of the modern prefigurative trends in culture according to which the child has a great impact on the adults' consumer choices¹⁵. The dilemma whether to buy a magazine or a gadget becomes anachronistic as you can get both in a single copy of a magazine.

5. Conclusion

The directions of the evolution of the persuasive strategies were mainly associated with the project of making reading magazines more attractive. There were two kinds of motivation: ideological, which exploited the principle of post-modern aesthetics in accordance with the modern trend called "zeitgeist", and closely connected with it the cultural motivation of a strictly mercantile type. They were

¹³ *Vide*: [<http://pl/zzzl.pl.czasopismo.html>; 12.03.2013].

¹⁴ *Vide*: [<http://www.educram.pl/prenumerata-czasopism/kumpel>; 14.04.2014].

¹⁵ M. Melard, a French children marketing specialist, in an interview with the *Le Monde*, said that children make their parents purchase things, because they are better oriented in novelties than their parents. More than a half of all technical innovations, ranging from games, DVDs and PDAs and mobiles are purchased because of children (Kropiwnicki 2003).

used to boost the sale of the magazines. In order to make the magazines more attractive for the readers, in the spirit of unification, and make them “magazines for everyone” meant that no longer the contents were important but rather additions, such as gadgets and “online continuations” to “seduce” the reader. It was the most pronounced direction of the metamorphosis of the magazines for the young readers in the process of adapting the press to the realities of the consumer society which has begun at the end of the eighties of the last century. It was the price paid for the dream of making the magazines as popular as possible and enticing as many readers as possible. At the same time it was a chance for the editors of the magazine to survive in the world of hard economic reality.

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STRESZCZENIE

Od „oświecenia” do „uwodzenia”. Ewolucja strategii perswazyjnych w czasopismach dla najmłodszych w ostatnim dwudziestoleciu XX wieku

W artykule omówiono kierunki ewolucji strategii perswazyjnych w czasopismach dla dzieci pod koniec XX wieku, które wiążą się głównie z koniecznością uatrakcyjnienia „projektu”

odbioru danego czasopisma. Motywacje są dwie: ideowa, która każe wyzyskiwać zasady postmodernistycznej estetyki w myśl przystosowania się do wymogów zachodniej nowoczesności, mody czy po prostu tzw. ducha czasu, oraz związana z tym ściśle – kulturowa, kojarzona z wyznacznikami kultury masowej, co ma przełożenie czysto merkantylne – podnosi sprzedaż tytułu. Uatrakcyjnienie czasopism w duchu ujednoczenia (pisma dla każdego), by stały się atrakcyjne dla małych konsumentów, oznaczało więc „uwodzenie” nie tyle wartościową zawartością, ile kolorowymi dodatkami, plastikowymi gadżetami, wirtualnymi „ciągami dalszymi”. Dominującą funkcję dydaktyczną zastąpiła funkcja ludyczna. Był to więc najbardziej wyraźny kierunek metamorfozy pism dla najmłodszego czytelnika w procesie dostosowywania się prasy do realiów społeczeństwa konsumpcyjnego, w jakim od końca lat osiemdziesiątych XX wieku zaczęły one funkcjonować. Jest to cena, jaką trzeba było zapłacić za (bynajmniej nie romantyczne) marzenie o umasowieniu, które dawało szansę na przetrwanie w świecie twardego rachunku ekonomicznego.

Słowa kluczowe: czasopisma dla dzieci, strategie perswazyjne, historia prasy dla dzieci