III. NUOMONĖ /
OPINIE I POGLĄDY

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IMAGERY AS DISCOURSE: APPROACH TO STUDIES

This article is intended to build a procedure for imagery discourse analysis and to apply it to samples of a particular discourse – that of the Polish Solidarity movement. The main assumptions underlying this aim are: that the discourse of a certain historical period keeps its content regardless of the nature of its manifestation and can be traced by analysing the art of the period, and that images are texts and, thus, are subject to text/discourse analysis. To elaborate a research program and to see the categories of such analysis, the author adapts the qualitative research procedure of the Grounded Theory to the study of imagery discourse, combining it with the categories and procedures of the Causal-Genetic Theory. This approach proves that images carry information of two types – thematic and cortege information. The thematic content of an image represents the physical context of historical events, actualizing a certain fragment of reality. The cortege content of an image represents and actualizes the addresser – addressee interaction. In the proposed research program, both of the content/ information types are under reconstruction. The whole procedure of imagery discourse analysis is presented as involving multistep categorization on different levels: categorization on the level of visual characteristics followed by categorization on the level of propositions, which in turn presupposes reconstruction of thematic and cortege propositions. Application of this procedure to the analysis of four pieces of art that represent the period of the Solidarity movement in Poland allows conclusions to be drawn about the primary categories of imagery discourse (colour, type of lines, characters and disposition) and their subcategories (opposition, universality, intertextual capacity, photographic accuracy, size and perspective). It also becomes possible to formulate some preliminary conclusions about the typical propositions of the discourse of the Solidarity movement.

    KEY WORDS: imagery discourse, discourse picture of the world, discourse picture of communicant interaction, discourse categories, Grounded Theory, Causal-Genetic Theory.

Introduction

Every nation goes through crises of self-consciousness. They are always connected with protest marches, hunger strikes, mass meetings and, as retaliatory measures of the authorities, repressions and limitations of all democratic freedoms. Such restrictions deprive researchers of the possibility to study such historical periods, leaving them only one option – to rely on interpretations of official documents and the evidence left behind by people after the events have passed. Neither the former nor the latter can serve as true samples of discourse. Documents lack emotions, while post-event evidence lacks facts. This paper, together

with the article by Łuczkiewicz (this volume), strives to discover, not post-event discourse that may, and very often does, convey already interpreted, processed and therefore false ideas and attitudes about a significant period in a country's history, but rather the very discourse of the historical period itself. In our research we turn to the works of those who are the "heralds" of their nation and time, who are always freer because they use the mask of symbolism – to the artists and their works. The historical period that we find interesting is that of the Solidarity movement in Poland. The main assumption that we base our research on is that the discourse of a certain historical period keeps its referential and pragmatic content regardless of the nature of its manifestation (M. Foucault). We thus see the possibility to study the discourse of the Solidarity movement by taking paintings created by Polish artists in the 1980s as our research material.

To approach the discourse of Solidarity, we first need to comprehend the very field – to elaborate a research program and to see its categories of analysis. We accept the qualitative research procedure developed in the Grounded Theory and adapt it to the studies of imagery discourse. The direct analytical techniques that we use in our synthesized procedure are: semiotic and symbol analysis, metaphor and myth analysis, thematic (theme-rheme and topic-focus analysis) and social-role analysis (interaction analysis), intertextual and self-identification analysis, space and time dimension analysis, knowledge- and attitude-bias analysis. To represent the knowledge gained through these analytical procedures, we use the categories of the Causal-Genetic Theory by Oukhvanova.

Methodology

We are not the first to make an attempt to contribute to the knowledge and understanding of a historical period by addressing its art. The pioneers of this research direction are Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault and Umberto Eco. We will not dig into a discussion of the works of the mentioned authors in this article, stating only that the possibility and topicality of the reconstruction of historical context through the analysis of its texts (understood in a wide way as manifestations of ideologies) is proven by the very fact of these authors' works and their popularity. The idea is so attractive that it underlies many works of fiction which have turned into bestsellers recently, such as *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown, *The Name of the Rose* by Umberto Eco, *The Father of Our Fathers* by Bernard Werber, etc.

The basic assumptions governing the methodology used in this article can be found in the discursive approach to images introduced by Kress and van Leeuwen in *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Designs* (1996). On the basis of the idea that images are not neutral, the authors derive an interconnection between images (as between any other mode of discourse) and ideology. Ascribing images the functions which correlate with Halliday's metafunctions of language and giving much attention to the form of visual communication, Kress and van Leeuwen's theory allows the following generalizations:

- being patterns of representation available for people, images encode experience visually;
- being patterns of interaction available for people, images allow people to do things to and for each other

through visual communication, as well as create certain relations between the authors and viewers of visual texts;

- being internally coherent with each other and with the context in which they are produced, images form texts;
- being material visual signs, images presuppose the usage of different tools and materials which in their turn contribute to meaning-making.

Considering paintings to be texts, one should accept their textual characteristics. According to Dressler and Beaugrande (1981), these characteristics (standards) are: cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality, and intertextuality. The analysis of pictures is an investigation against each standard.

These picture-texts are not just individual works, but reactions to the wider and narrower contextual events that surrounded the artists. They both *reflect* the context that surrounds the moment and place of their creation, and at the same time *create* the social context with the very fact of their being. In this way, works of art also represent the discourse of a particular historic period, being one of its constituent parts. The discourse approach can thus be used to study these contexts through analysis of the paintings themselves.

When paintings are treated as manifestations of discourse, we can apply different methods of discourse analysis to them. The existing approaches to image analysis give us a clue to different focuses of attention that provide the analyst with semantic categories that, in their turn, comprise a research matrix.

In his essay "Rhetoric of the Image," Barthes attempts to differentiate between the types of messages that an image contains in itself. Barthes's conception of the signification produced by an image includes three parts: the *linguistic message* (operating on the denotational and connotational levels), the *coded iconic message* (the totality of the messages implied by the very image), and the *non-coded iconic message* (the totality of literal referents depicted by the image). Barthes introduces two categories of analysis, ascribing the linguistic message that accompanies an image with two functions: **anchorage** ("the text *directs* the reader through the signifieds of the image... remote-control[ing] him towards a meaning chosen in advance" (Barthes 1977, pp. 39–40)) and *relay* ("text... and image stand in a complementary relationship... and the unity of the message is realized at [the] level of the story, the anecdote, the diegesis" (Barthes 1977, p. 41)). Two other categories that he points out are **the composition of an image** and the **naturalizing role** of reality replication.

The method of "dramatism" introduced by Kenneth Burke (1960), despite having been generated as an approach to the semantic dimension of language, can also be applied (and is actively used in advertising) to better understand the semantic potential of images. Following Burke's idea of the dramatic potential of every symbol (be it a linguistic or non-linguistic sign) in communication, we can accept the five central elements of dramatism as semantic categories for discourse analysis. The elements are: *scene* (the place where action takes place – its physical location and situation, time, social place, occasion, etc.), *act* (any motivated or purposeful action), *agent* (the person or group of people who act in the scene), *agency* (the tool, method, or means used by persuaders to accomplish

their ends, e.g., communication strategies), and *purpose* (the reason an agent acts in a given scene using a particular agency).

These approaches operationalize the analyst's task of taking things apart. They examine certain pieces of art in their singularity and utmost independence from others of their type. Examples of a different research direction – one aimed at a synthesis of knowledge about the discourse context – can be found in the works of Foucault (1994) and Eco (1998). Although these authors draw their conclusions and convey their analyses in hidden ways, we can definitely see that they are based on certain rationalizations and include quite a wide sample of objects under analysis, allowing the conclusions to cover the very class of these objects and their contexts.

We thus confront the necessity to look for an algorithm for the invention of a discourse theory. We must also look for an integrative approach to discourse analysis in conformity with the mentioned algorithm.

Aspects of Theory Building

In our search for a technique for theory generation we turned to the Grounded Theory of Glaser and Strauss (2001). This procedure takes the form of a step-by-step coding of the data from a text. Coding is the process of identifying and grouping data into categories. The first stage of analysis presupposes rough grouping and labelling of semantic categories that find their representation in the text(s) under analysis. Once the initial semantic groups are identified, their elements are subject to a more scrupulous analysis aimed at making subcategories that describe the mother category. The last stage requires identification of the central key category that is involved in each of the others and that "governs" the whole of the discourse.

In terms of discourse analysis this procedure doubles, while discourse has two layers to be scrutinized – one of *referential content* and the other of *cortege content*. According to the Causal-Genetic Theory of Oukhvanova (1998), the former deals with the information (knowledge and attitude) about a certain fragment of reflected reality and is mainly described in terms of those *themes* that are developed during discourse. The latter focuses on the information (knowledge and attitude) about the very situation of communication and is described in terms of *roles* – both social and communicative – that the participants of discourse take during interaction. Both themes and roles are reflected and constructed by means of linguistic and non-linguistic signs which possess meaning due to their relation in a paradigm (code of discourse) and in the syntagma (linear discourse, speech development). The set of themes raised in a particular discourse and the specific way these themes are interconnected and evaluated structure the fragment of reality they reflect in a certain way, thereby constructing the sign reality: a *discourse picture of the world*. The set of roles that the participants of a discourse are ascribed within that discourse can differ from the actual roles of the physical subjects (addresser and addressee) of communication, and make up a picture of *cortege interaction* that is specific to the type of discourse. In this way, the two discourse pictures cover all the categories provided by Burke (both the discourse pictures are to be described in terms of scene, act, agent, agency and purpose) and Barthes (each reconstructed discourse picture is a result of close attention to both referents of images,

to the "language" used to signify them, and to the composition of signs used in the image), and consider all the text standards provided by Dressler and Beaugrande. The present research sees reconstruction of the discourse picture of the world as a tool to decode the events, the physical context of the Solidarity movement, while reconstruction of the discourse picture of cortege interaction is treated here as a means to decode the social context of that time.

The peculiarity of picture/imagery discourse in terms of its thematic and cortege contents arises from the linear model of addresser–addressee interaction in this type of communication. Of course, in the long-term perspective, a kind of feedback from the addressees is possible in this type of communication, but more typically the situation of discourse is limited to the act of seeing/glancing/looking and can be depicted as follows:

TEXT / IMAGE = addresser = code → message → addressee

This scheme demonstrates the key role of the image in this type of discourse. It is image that we associate with the addresser (what we know about an image is its title, the artist's name and the date of its creation, e.g., we say "I saw a Repin."). At the same time, image is nothing but code. We do not perceive the process of drawing, we can't observe the addresser's behaviour, thus we are given only the result of his/her discourse in code. The core thing here is that visual tools allow us to see the actualized behaviour of the artist and this imagery code plays the role of communicant itself. It communicates some message that we understand (or don't understand) in terms of the depicted reality (the discourse

picture of the world) and the personality of the artist and his intention towards us (the discourse picture of cortege interaction). We never know if the message that we decipher equals the message that the addresser intended to send, but that is beyond our interest in this article. What matters here is that imagery signs carry information of two types, allowing us to state that:

*being grouped according to their **visual properties**, imagery signs represent **semantic categories** of visual discourse that potentially split into two subcategories – one that actualizes **a fragment of reality** (thematic subcategory), and one that actualizes **the situation of addresser-addressee interaction** (cortege subcategory).*

For all of the abovementioned reasons, the procedure of the Grounded Theory grows more complex when applied to picture/imagery discourse, because the initial material that a discourse analyst deals with is of a non-verbal nature. There are no propositions for direct consumption, thus the first stage of analysis presupposes categorization according to the *most vivid* (*sensu stricto*) characteristics that potentially carry meaning. Only then may the propositional analysis with identification of the actualized senses take place. This stage turns out to be even more complex with the implementation of the discourse picture notion, for the researcher must look for both thematic and cortege propositions. Only after this preliminary verbalization of actualized senses does it become possible to reconstruct discourse pictures of the world and discourse pictures of cortege interaction in terms of their subcategories. Thus, the generation of a holistic discourse theory turns into a long process that involves multistep categorization on different levels: categorization on the level

of images and categorization on the level of propositions.

Categories of Imagery Discourse

It cannot be predicted what exact thematic and cortege propositions there were in the discourse of the Solidarity movement; however, we can make a hypothesis about the primary categories of imagery discourse that can potentially contain them. Our preliminary observations made us think of the following categories of content-laden visual elements: colour, lines, characters, and disposition. Every category contains a set of elements of a similar nature which all together actualize this or that idea about the depicted world and about the author–observer interaction. In order to see how these categories of imagery discourse actualize their referential and cortege potential, we undertook a pilot research of four pictures. All of them belong to the Solidarity period and are representative of its discourse. They are:

1. *One hundred years of solitude* by Zbigniew Maciej Dowgiałło (1983);
2. *Old friends* by Jarosław Modzelewski (1988);
3. *Hallo* by Jacek Staniszewski (1986);
4. *Being thankful to a horse* by Krzysztof Skarbek (1985).

Colour and Lines. In terms of **colour**, the pictures do not show any unanimity in palette. However, we can definitely notice that within individual works the colours make *oppositions*. And due to these contrasts, we realize that the depicted world is in disharmony with its inhabitants (this is a referential proposition concerning the discourse of Solidarity). The theme of the

background events that surround the main characters (social context), the theme of these characters and the theme of their aversion become evident. Their contrasting relations stand out from the oppositions red – yellow in *Hallo*, yellow – other colours in *Being thankful to a horse*, blue – black in *Old friends* and blue – yellow in *One hundred years of solitude*. **Lines**, together with colour, make up the specific language of paintings and can be treated against the same criterion. The opposition of different types of lines in each picture (smooth lines – sharp, even – irregular, thick – thin and long – short) also speaks for the actualization of the theme "social context – characters." The character of this opposition is of course different in each painting, though it is not the purpose of this article to decipher the meaning of the colours and lines in each picture. We merely attempt to point out the tendency that turns these visual elements into thematic categories of imagery discourse.

As for their being cortege categories, we should notice the ***universal*** meanings of some colours and lines (and their oppositions) used in the paintings. People all over the world associate red with blood and danger, yellow with sun and life. We perceive the opposition of blue and black as the opposition of light and darkness, while blue and yellow are taken as two diametrically opposed colours (which may thus be said of the ideas encoded by them). Sharp lines denote hazard and risk, while smooth lines bring feelings of safety. This universalism of the codes of colour and line makes *any* viewer involved and contributes to a quite clear understanding of the main intention of the author. Because of this, we can state that the discourse of the paintings under analysis is open. The

One hundred years of solitude
by Zbigniew Maciej Dowgiałło
(Stanisławski 2006, s. 32)

authors are narrators who want to be heard and understood, so they choose a simple, easy to comprehend "language" and push their audience to vivid conclusions. The audience invited by such a code includes everyone who can "see/hear," not to mention those who deliberately "look/listen" (these are pragmatic propositions concerning the discourse of Solidarity).

Characters. The characters depicted in the paintings evoke referential meanings due to their *intertextual capacity*. Here we should mention that the *verbal cues* that accompany the pictures (be they their titles or any words depicted in the paintings) do help to better understand the painters' view of the world. Although intertextual associations are quite a subjective matter, references to shared knowledge and common myths add to a more or less precise reconstruction of a painting's discourse picture of the world. In those under analysis we can see that the characters are interacting with each other. We can reconstruct the idea of this interaction thanks to the images and/or to the title, and every time we face a ridiculous situation when this reconstructed interaction contradicts

the ideas about it that we get from our life experience. In *One hundred years of solitude* we see two creatures fighting and notice that the idea of solitude (emphasized by the title) has nothing to do with the depicted bloodshed. In *Hallo*, seven beauties with a variety of hairstyles invite you to talk on the phone, although this variety contradicts the identical pose they all take – the one used for eavesdropping – and the burning telephone receiver. In *Old friends,* the idea of friendship is supported by the common myth of dog's devotion to man, and is at the same time destroyed by the very image – the "old friends" are looking in different directions. From the title of *Being thankful to a horse*, we might expect any expression of gratitude but the one shown – the man is carrying the horse. The characters in these four paintings actualize one more theme of the discourse that can be expressed in the following *referential proposition* typical of the discourse of Solidarity: "The events that are happening
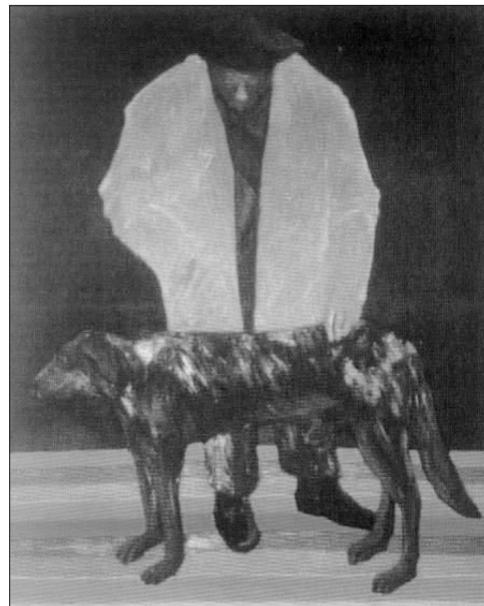
Old friends by Jarosław Modzelewski
(Stanisławski 2006, s. 21)

contradict common sense."
More detailed analysis of the
intertextual capacity of each
character in every painting
would reveal more referen-
tial propositions, though our
analysis was deep enough to
show that this category is a
thematic one in imagery dis-
course.

Hallo **by Jacek Staniszewski**
(Stanisławski 2006, s. 28)

Through careful attention
to the category of character,
a researcher can also add to the under-
standing of the author–viewer interaction.
Here we see the important role of the ***pho-***
tographic accuracy with which an art-
ist depicts his characters. The *pragmatic*
propositions of the Solidarity discourse
stand out from the fact that in the paint-
ings, the characters are all schematic, not
personified, not familiar to the audience.
It is clear that the authors did not intend

to astound viewers with their skills of
making perfect portraits or landscapes. It
is as if the artists emphasize their social
roles rather than their professional identi-
ties with such a "deliberately inaccurate"
style; they over-stress the ideas expressed
in their works. As for the addressees, such
behaviour of the artists bestows on them
the role of active co-creators of meaning,
free to load the images with their own per-
sonal intertextual reminiscences.

Disposition. It is clear enough that the
disposition of the characters emphasizes
the hierarchy of themes in imagery dis-
course – the central place in a picture is to
be given to its central idea. Here the ***size***
of the depicted subjects/objects also plays
a decisive role. It is noticeable that in all
the paintings under analysis, the central
position is given to characters that denote
humans who are alone: a single receiver
that stands for a phoning person in *Hallo*,
a yellow creature in *One hundred years*
of solitude, a man in a blue jacket in *Old*
friends, and a horse carrier in *Being thank-*
ful to a horse. Each of these reconstructed
individuals is depicted against a hostile
background. This allows us to speak of
another theme (referential proposition) in
the discourse of the Solidarity movement:
"The loneliness of an individual (or disu-

Being thankful to a horse
by Krzysztof Skarbek
(Stanisławski 2006, s. 49)

nity of people) in a hostile social/historical context." With this we reveal the thematic potential of the category of disposition.

As a cortege category, disposition proves itself mainly through the notion of **perspective**. What is the place that the artist chooses for him/herself and for the viewer? Are they in the thick of things or are they just detached observers? In the paintings the viewers are given no perspective: no scenery (almost plain backgrounds), very close views of the central characters, no markers of time. It seems as if the depicted situations are brought so near and so close to the author and the viewer that they must co-create their real surroundings, their "here and now." We may thus conclude that the roles of the artist and the addressee prescribed in the discourse of Solidarity by means of disposition are the roles of direct participants in the depicted events.

Conclusions

This short overview allows us to make two groups of conclusions. The *first* one concerns imagery discourse and its categories. We have seen that the visual elements of discourse, being grouped together on the basis of some common characteristic, reveal both thematic and cortege meanings. It is possible to reconstruct the referential and pragmatic propositions of discourse out of the categories of colour, lines, characters and disposition. Each category can be described in at least two subcategories that differentiate between referential and cortege potential. The categories of colour and lines can be interpreted in terms of the oppositions that exist between the elements of the category (which reconstructs the thematic content of discourse) and in terms of the universality of meaning that the el-

ements carry (which reconstructs the cortege content of discourse). The category of characters is supported by the subcategory of intertextual capacity, which reveals thematic content, and by the category of photographic accuracy, which reveals cortege propositions. The category of disposition proves its two contents through the subcategories of size (thematic subcategory) and perspective (cortege subcategory).

We do not insist on this subdivision of the initial discourse categories; we merely state that this division proved itself effective in our research. A different study (a deeper one, or aimed at different tasks) may disclose other categories (in addition to the ones proposed) and their subcategories. In this article we wanted to show the potential of the elaborated discourse analysis technique and the established categories in the reconstruction of discourse pictures of reality by distinguishing between the discourse picture of the world and the discourse picture of addresser–addressee interaction.

The *second group* of conclusions covers exactly the discourse picture of reality actualized in the discourse of the Solidarity movement. Our preliminary research has revealed the following referential propositions about the discourse picture of the world actualized in the discourse: the social and historic context is hostile to people; the events that are happening contradict common sense; people in these hostile surroundings are isolated and must face all of their problems alone.

The discourse picture of addresser–addressee interaction is manifested in the following pragmatic propositions: painters address everyone who can "see/hear;" their intention is not to impress viewers with their mastery, but to force the audiences

to notice the referents of their paintings; the addressees are co-creators of meaning; together with the artist, they are direct participants in the depicted events.

To build a complete model of the discourse of the Solidarity movement is a matter of more profound research that should involve (as its first step) a thorough analysis of individual (piece) works by the artists of that period. The techniques proposed here, together with the synthesized categories of discourse pictures, could also be applied to this type of analysis. In this connection, the article by Łuczkiewicz (this volume) can be regarded as an example of the approach considered here.

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Zainteresowania naukowe: badania nad dyskursem, semiotyka

DYSKURS OBRAZÓW MALARSKICH: PROCEDURA ANALIZY

Streszczenie

Niniejszy artykuł zawiera opis procedury analizy obrazów malarskich jako odrębnego typu dyskursu. Analiza ta opiera się na procedurach i kategoriach teorii znanej pod nazwą *grounded theory* (teoria ugruntowana), jak też teorii kauzalno-genetycznej. Takie syntetyczne podejście pozwala nie tylko traktować obrazy jako teksty, ale i twierdzić, że teksty te niosą w sobie treść dwóch typów – tematyczną (referencjalną) i *cortege* (pragmatyczną).

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PAVEIKSLŲ DISKURSAS: ANALIZĖS METODAS

Santrauka

Straipsnio tikslas – sukurti paveikslų diskurso analizės metodiką ir pritaikyti ją konkretaus „Solidarność" judėjimo Lenkijoje diskurso analizei. Pagrindinės iškelto tikslo prielaidos: pirma, konkretaus istorinio periodo diskursas išlaiko savo turinį nepriklausomai nuo jo prigimtinio pranešimo, jis aptinkamas analizuojant atitinkamo laikotarpio meną; antra, paveikslai yra tekstai, tad gali

Treść tematyczna obrazu odzwierciedla sytuację komunikatu, konstruowaną przez obraz-tekst, tj. aktualizuje fizyczny kontekst dyskursu tego okresu historycznego, do którego należy obraz. Treść *cortege* wyraża bezpośrednią sytuację interakcji artysty i odbiorcy jego dzieła. Proponowany program badawczy uwzględnia rekonstrukcję treści obu typów i występuje jako sukcesywna kategoryzacja semantycznych elementów obrazów początkowo na poziomie ich charakterystyk wizualnych, a następnie na poziomie aktualizowanych w nich propozycji – tematycznych i *cortege*. Wyniki takiego badania mogą pomóc w lepszym rozumieniu wydarzeń historycznych. Materiał badawczy stanowią obrazy polskich artystów plastyków, powstałe w okresie Solidarności. Na podstawie omawianej analizy przeprowadzono weryfikację kategorialnego aparatu badań dyskursu obrazów malarskich, ponadto zrekonstruowano niektóre propozycje typowe dla dyskursu okresu Solidarności.

być tiriami pasitelkus teksto/ diskurso analizę. Siekdama nusakyti tyrimą ir numatyti analizės kategorijas, autorė paveikslų diskursą analizuoja taikydama pagrindimo teorijos (Grounded theory) kokybinio tyrimo metodiką, derina ją su kauzalinės-genetinės teorijos kategorijomis ir metodais. Taip įrodoma, kad paveikslai perteikia dvejopą – teminę-referentinę ir pragmatinę informaciją. Teminis paveikslų turinys perteikia fizinį istorinių įvykių turinį ir aktualizuoja tam tikrą realybės fragmentą, o pragmatinis turinys reprezentuoja siuntėjo-gavėjo sąveiką. Siūlomas būdas leidžia rekonstruoti tiek turinio, tiek informacijos tipus. Visa paveikslų diskurso analizė yra daugialypė įvairių lygių kategorizacija, t. y. regimųjų bruožų lygmens kategorizacija ir su ja susijusi propozicijų kategorizacija suponuoja teminės ir pragmatinės propozicijų rekonstrukciją. Šis metodas buvo pritaikytas keturių meno kūrinių analizei, kurie reprezentuoja Lenkijos „Solidarność" judėjimo periodą. Tai leidžia daryti išvadas apie pirmines paveikslų diskurso kategorijas: spalvą, linijų tipus, bruožus ir dispoziciją, taip pat apie jų poklasius: opoziciją, universalumą, intertekstualumo gebą, fotografinį tikslumą, dydį ir perspektyvą. Šio metodo taikymas taip pat leidžia daryti preliminarias išvadas apie tipiškas „Solidarność" judėjimo diskurso propozicijas.