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Face Threats: A Pragmatic Analysis of Questions in Bulgarian Political TV Interviews

Introduction

Televised political interviews offer the public valuable insights into policy agendas and political roles, as well as politicians' competence, commitments, motivation and integrity. Politicians' performance in interviews is instrumental in shaping voters' attitudes and decision-making. With their dynamic exchange and challenging, often confrontational, question-and-answer format, televised political interviews offer opportunities to explore how a politician's image is constructed, asserted, maintained, or contested.

This paper focuses on the questions a select set of Bulgarian journalists typically use in interviews with Bulgarian politicians on TV. These questions are analyzed from a pragmatic perspective in terms of their potential to act as face threats by creating implicatures of politicians' incompetence, evasion of responsibility, and/or lack of integrity.

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Political interviews can be characterized as forms of direct interaction with an adversarial format. Typically, journalists act on behalf of the public and ask challenging questions, demand clarification, hold politicians accountable, and even hurl accusations against their interlocutors or the political groups they represent. Politicians, on their part, are often compelled to defend themselves and their actions in order to avoid damage to their reputation.

There is abundant research on the dynamics of political interviews, e.g., Bull (2003), Clayman and Heritage (2006), Andone (2010), Bull and Fetzer (2010). For example, Andone (2010) argues that the interviewer in a political interview

> […] acts as the representative of the electorate and the mass media. His main aim is not simply to obtain and impart information to the public on matters of general interest, but more importantly, to ask the politician to account for his words and actions. (pp. 34–35)

This brings up the issue of politicians' accountability and suggests that they are expected to answer difficult questions. As a result, the type of questioning used becomes a significant component in politicians' attempts to maintain face.

Forms of questioning in broadcast news interviews were studied by Clayman and Heritage (2006). These authors assess and compare questions at press conferences of US presidents Dwight Eisenhower, who served from 1953 to 1961, and Ronald Reagan (1981–1989), on the basis of four dimensions: initiative, directness, assertiveness and hostility. Their findings suggest that in the span of around 30 years, journalists' questions became more challenging, more confrontational, less respectful and less diplomatic.

The type of communication dynamic outlined above lends itself to an analysis from the perspective of facework and face-threatening acts. A research method within the field of pragmatics provides more valuable insights into interpersonal communication than political discourse analysis performed on a macro level. Moreover, as the analysis in this paper focuses exclusively on journalists' questions, the negotiation of power cannot be explored from a broader perspective. However, a detailed discussion of individual communicative acts sheds light on the aspects of face that are at stake in a political interview. For the reasons outlined above, the immediate area of analysis is specific linguistic mechanisms for performing face-threatening acts in the Bulgarian context, revealing the dynamic of face negotiation in broadcast political interviews. This allows for a more nuanced understanding of these specific aspects of communication in media engagements with politicians.

Facework in broadcast political interviews

Much research into human communication strategies is based on the notion of face, originally introduced by Goffman (1967). Later, face became central to Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness and the management of face-threatening acts. Face is conceptualized in terms of two sets of basic wants that one expects to be satisfied in one's interaction with other society members. Brown and Levinson define one's desire to be free and unimpeded in one's actions as 'negative face', while the desire to be approved, valued and liked by others is defined as 'positive face'. In human interaction, there are acts that threaten one's negative and/or positive face. In particular, speech acts like requests, warnings or advice put one's negative face at risk, whereas criticism, insults or disagreement may be damaging to one's positive face. Brown and Levinson argue that politeness involves the use of various linguistic strategies to manage these threats. If the speaker wishes to mitigate the impact of a face-threatening act, they can choose from an array of negative and positive politeness strategies, or indirect statements. The speaker can even decide to avoid the face-threatening act altogether by not saying anything. Alternatively, the speaker may act "bald-on-record" and perform the face threat without any attempt at mitigation. Political interview discourse is especially interesting to study within the framework of facework as it often features different types of face threats.

Face is also a key concept in Spencer-Oatey's framework for rapport management (e.g., Spencer-Oatey, 2000, 2002). A clarification is warranted at this point. While Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 61) define this concept as "the public self-image every member wants to claim for himself", Spencer-Oatey's interpretation of face caters for one's desire to be positively evaluated for not only one's personal qualities, but also one's social identities and roles. Along these lines, Spencer-Oatey considers face management as having two interrelated aspects:

- Quality face, which relates to one's desire to be positively evaluated in terms of one's personal qualities. Thus, quality face bears a strong resemblance to Brown and Levinson's concept of positive face.
- Identity face, which concerns one's desire to uphold one's social identities or roles. The interpersonal orientation of face is also emphasized by

non-Western linguists, such as Matsumoto (1988), Ide (1989) and Mao (1994). However, it is not part of Brown and Levinson's theory.

Politicians play a multifaceted role in human society. They represent their constituents, being expected to define visions and make policies that benefit them. They also act as leaders and must be able to work with opponents while upholding ethical standards. From this perspective, it can be argued that the identity face is especially relevant to the public image of politicians.

This public image is a complex of multiple dimensions, one of which is the different types of face. Bull et al. (1996) suggest that politicians attend to the needs of three faces: their own face, that of significant others, and that of the party they represent. These are compounded in an entangled manner, but for analytical purposes we can treat the study of face as a specific locus of research.

In the analysis further on in this paper, the notion of face will be used as conceptualized by Brown and Levinson (1987), with the additional aspect of social identity offered by Spencer-Oatey (2000). Within this framework, face will be described as positive, negative and/or identity face.

Facework and face-threatening acts in political interviews have been elaborately analysed by Elliott and Bull (1996), Bull and Fetzer (2010), Gnisci et al. (2022), to mention only a few. Gnisci et al. (2022) study face threats and equivocation by analyzing 32 hours of televised political interviews during a constitutional referendum campaign in Italy. The authors find that face-threatening questions account for 45 per cent of the sample. Elliott and Bull (1996) offer a list of 19 distinct ways in which questions can threaten face and put forward the notion that questions can have a face-threatening structure. Questions vary in both structure and content: there may be open-ended questions, closed-ended or yes/no questions, personal questions, confrontational questions, etc. Regardless of their type or structure, however, most questions contain presuppositions or generate implicatures which indirectly convey criticism or hostility. In a more recent study, Bull and Fetzer (2010) suggest that politicians in broadcast political interviews are primarily concerned with saving their positive face, although their negative face may sometimes be threatened as well.

One of the factors influencing the choice of communicative strategies in any kind of interaction is what Spencer-Oatey (2000, p. 29) terms "rapport orientation". Rapport, which is seen by Spencer-Oatey as harmonious relations between people, may be oriented towards four types of development, depend-

ing on how the speaker wishes to affect the relationship between him or her and the other interlocutor(s): rapport-enhancement, rapport-maintenance, rapport-neglect and rapport-challenge. A rapport-enhancement orientation involves a desire to strengthen harmonious relations. Rapport-maintenance is understood as protection of those relations. In rapport-neglect orientation, the speaker has no interest in the quality of relations. At the end of the spectrum lies the rapport-challenge orientation, which involves a desire to damage harmonious relations.

As can be seen from previous studies of political interviews, journalists often express outright criticism of what politicians do. They communicate the concerns of the public and hold politicians accountable on behalf of the public. Evidence shows that face-threatening acts of varying form and content are frequent discourse strategies employed by journalists in their interactions with politicians. Therefore, from a rapport management perspective, one could argue that political interviews typically have a rapport-challenge orientation.

Aim and objectives of the study

In the light of the above theoretical considerations, the overall aim of the study is to explore face-threats in televised political interviews in Bulgaria. The study offers an analysis of how rapport is challenged and what constitutes a face threat in the context of a political interview. More specifically, the analysis will address the following questions related to the form, content and pragmatic function of face threats:

- What types of questions are typically used in political interviews?
- What political, public, personal, or other issues do journalists address in their questions?
- What implicatures are created through journalists' questions?
- What aspects of face are usually threatened in a political interview?

It should be noted that the study will be limited to the interventions of journalists, which typically involve questions or statements and questions. Politicians' responses will not be dealt with, and no turn-taking will be analyzed

in that respect. An analysis of conversational exchanges between journalists and politicians could be a future step to expand the study, warranting a richer and possibly more interesting discussion.

Data for the present study

The data under analysis consists of 36 journalists' questions from three popular Bulgarian current affairs TV programs: *Face-to-Face* (*Лице в лице*), hosted by Tsvetanka Rizova; *More from Today* (*Още от деня*), with Nadya Obretenova and Pollie Zlatareva as alternating hosts; and *Panorama* (*Панорама*), produced and hosted by Boyko Vasilev. The first two shows are aired every day in the late afternoon, while the last is a weekly evening show, broadcast on Fridays. *Panorama* and *More from Today* are shown on *Bulgarian National Television*, which is a public television broadcaster. *Face-to-Face* is aired on the *bTV* network, the first private Bulgarian national television. The choice of TV programs is motivated by consideration of their hosts, all of whom are prominent journalists with established public images. The exploration of rapport-challenging strategies in the questioning styles of prominent Bulgarian journalists with long-standing careers reveals the prevailing practices within the journalist guild in Bulgaria in this dynamic, even tumultuous political climate. The period during which the raw data was collected spanned from 20 June 2023 to 28 February 2024. The politicians appearing in the programs were – and some of them still are – caretaker ministers, party leaders, members of the then National Assembly, including the speaker of Parliament, candidate mayors for the city of Sofia, a prosecutor from the Supreme Judicial Council, and a municipal councilor.

The questions were manually selected by the researcher after viewing multiple episodes of the three TV programs listed above as there is no ready-to-use dataset available of face-threatening acts in Bulgarian political interviews.

The examples, which were originally spoken in Bulgarian, have been translated into English by the author of this paper for the sake of clarity and understanding. The aim is to provide counterparts to the original utterances that are as literal as possible, yet meaningful. All mistakes remain the sole responsibility of the author.

Data analysis and discussion

The analysis will be geared towards answering the research questions outlined above. It will start by identifying the types of utterances made during the interviews, their structure and content, and the aspect of face at stake. Given the interrelated nature of face wants, the distinction made between different types of face is not definitive and is based on the most obvious aspects that are at stake in each example. The implicatures contained within and triggered by these utterances will be also discussed. Then, the types of threats will be analyzed in terms of whether they personally attack a politician or challenge the party which he or she represents.

This section is structured in the following way. Firstly, it mostly presents an analysis of six examples of journalists' interventions which the researcher found to be most representative of the various linguistic mechanisms used to perform face-threatening acts. The questions in the interventions are rapport-challenging as they convey criticism against (a) the professional competence of a politician; (b) the professional competence of a politician and his party; (c) the integrity of a politician; (d) the integrity of a politician and his party.

The discussion of the six representative examples is then followed by the summarized results of a quantitative analysis of the full dataset, i.e., all 36 examples.

By way of introducing the analysis that follow in this section, it should be noted that the examples discussed below will be prefaced by information about the name of the TV program, the name of the journalist, the name and affiliation of the interviewee, and the date on which the interview was broadcast. They are ordered in terms of the aspect of face under threat.

Example #1
TV program: *More from Today*
Host: Pollie Zlatareva
Interviewee: Tsoncho Ganev, deputy chair of the *Revival* party (партия *Възраждане*)
Date: 9 February 2024

Наистина ли сте конструктивна опозиция, има ли битка, която докарахте изобщо до някакъв успех?	Are you really a constructive opposition and is there a battle in which you have achieved any success at all?

What is first observed with this example is that it is a compound-complex sentence entailing not one but two closed-ended questions. Both questions target the collective image of the party which the interviewee represents, thus they address his identity face. It is also evident that both questions contain presuppositions that would be widely accepted as true: "Your party is in opposition", which was then the case and still holds true of the Revival party in Bulgaria; and "Your party wages political battles", which is something that can be expected of a political party, especially one in opposition. There is one more presupposition in the first question, which is in fact challenged in the way the question is phrased, and that is "You are a constructive opposition". By adding the adverb "наистина" (really) to the question "Наистина ли сте конструктивна опозиция?" (Are you really a constructive opposition?), the journalist casts doubt on the party's ability to influence the political process in the country.

The follow-up question further undermines the party's credibility by suggesting that it has never achieved success in its efforts. The implicature is created with the help of the adverb "изобщо" (at all) and further reinforced by the determiner "някакъв" (any).

Given the structure and content of the questions discussed above, it becomes evident that the journalist is expressing criticism against the party which the interviewee represents, thus threatening the identity face of her interlocutor. The threat also extends to the interviewee's negative face as he is expected to respond to the questions and dispel the doubts regarding the party's effectiveness.

Example #2
TV program: *More from Today*
Host: Pollie Zlatareva
Interviewee: Iskren Arabadzhiev, a member of Parliament representing *We Continue the Change* party (партия *Продължаваме промяната*)
Date: 22 February 2024.

Г-н Арабаджиев, предложихте да си поделите регулаторите наполовина, предложихте го на онези, които наричахте мафия. Има ли друго обяснение на това какво вижда всъщност обществото?	Mr Arabadzhiev, you proposed sharing [your influence over] the regulators equally, you made this proposal to those whom you called "mafia". Is there any other explanation for what society actually sees?

In this example the journalist acts bald-on-record and makes the assertion that her interlocutor's party is willing to partner up with people whom they previously called "mafia". Clearly, the assertion is a direct threat to the public image of the interviewee and his party. In the follow-up question, Iskren Arabadzhiev is challenged to refute the criticism by offering a different explanation of his party's behavior. He is held accountable before society, which can be seen as a threat to both his positive and negative face. The criticism is intensified by the presupposition that society sees the willingness of the interviewee's party to collaborate with the "mafia". The adverb "всъщност" (actually) emphasizes that engagement with the "mafia" is the obvious interpretation of what his party does. This calls into question the moral integrity of the interviewee and his party.

Example #3
TV program: *More from Today*
Host: Pollie Zlatareva
Interviewee: Andrey Tsekov, caretaker minister of regional development and public works
Date: 2 November 2023

И сега Вие искате да си затворим очите' да забравим' че държавата не е изпълнявала законите' които сама е написала' така ли?	And now you want us to close our eyes and forget that the government has failed to implement the laws it has written itself, right?

This example features an assertion followed by the discourse marker "така ли" ("right") to seek confirmation from the interviewee. It reveals several layers of direct accusation. It contains the presupposition that the government is breaking its own laws. The implicature created with this utterance is that the government is either incompetent or unwilling to fulfill its obligations. The caretaker minister, being part of the government, is responsible for the government's failure to fulfill its commitments. In addition, the minister is directly accused of trying to make the public not only ignore but even forget about this failure. In this way, he can be seen as manipulative and unethical towards the public. The use of "right" at the end of the utterance makes the discourse more provocative, thus the threat against the minister's public image becomes even more outright.

In line with the above, it may be suggested that the utterance damages all aspects of the minister's image and reputation. The accusations against the government target his identity face; the questioning of the interviewee's moral principles and the demand for an answer threaten both his positive and negative face. He is at risk of losing credibility and the public's trust and at the same time; he is challenged to act and deal with the accusations. Any confirmation would inflict further damage on the minister's reputation, while a denial would require compelling argumentation.

Example #4
TV program: *Panorama*
Host: Boyko Vasilev
Interviewee: Vasil Terziev, mayor of Sofia
Date: 10 November 2023

Но няма ли едно изкушение да разчитате повече на подмазвачите и на тези, които винаги Ви казват „да", отколкото на тези, които Ви критикуват и с това рискуват?	But isn't there the temptation to rely more on the sycophants and yes-men than those who criticize you and thus take a risk?

This utterance is structured as a negative closed-ended question. Such questions contain the presupposition that the assertion made is true. In this example, the presupposition is the following: There is a temptation to rely more on sycophants and yes-men than on those who criticize you and thus take a risk.

This negative yes/no question has a double role. Structurally, it creates the presupposition that the temptation stated above exists. Content-wise, it implies that the mayor does in fact rely on those who flatter him and ignores those who criticize him. This strongly suggests poor leadership qualities, a lack of decision-making skills, and an inability to deal with criticism and use feedback constructively.

With this utterance the journalist calls into question the professional competence and moral integrity of the mayor, thus posing a threat to his positive face, i.e., his desire to be liked and approved of by the public. The interviewee's negative face is threatened too as he is put in a defensive position and expected to make an effort to either take the blame or destroy the implicatures and save his reputation.

Although the utterance conveys criticism, the face threat is slightly mitigated with the use of "temptation". In this way the interviewee is granted the possibility of acknowledging the presupposition but destroying the implicatures of incompetence and low moral standards by saying that he has not yielded to the temptation. On the other hand, a question like "Don't you rely more on sycophants and yes-men…?" would have counted as a direct accusation and put the interviewee's image at higher risk.

Example #5
TV Program: *Panorama*
Host: Boyko Vasilev
Interviewee: Todor Tagarev, caretaker minister of defense
Date: 19 January 2024

В политиката Вие привличате и противников, но и приятелски огън. Намирате ли някаква грешка Ваша за това?	In politics, you are the target of both enemy and friendly fire. Do you find any fault on your side for that?

This example features a critical assertion followed by a question that demands explanation. The metaphor "to be under friendly fire" is borrowed from military discourse and alludes to the idea that the minister is a target of criticism not only by his opponents but also by his own supporters. This undermines his competence and credibility and exposes his vulnerability, thus threatening his positive face. The threat, however, is not bald-on-record as it is softened by the journalist using a metaphor. In this way, the journalist achieves his communicative goal of conveying criticism but makes the utterance less personal without throwing direct accusations or pointing to specific conflicting relationships between the minister and his allies. The metaphor also introduces a certain level of vagueness and ambiguity, which gives the addressee leeway to interpret the assertion on a less critical note.

Although the criticism in the assertion is mitigated by the metaphor, the follow-up question can be seen as aggravating the face threat. It is a closed-type question demanding a definitive answer followed by an explanation from the minister. Hence, it poses a threat to his negative face wants. Furthermore, the question generates the implicature that the minister owns responsibility for the situation and that he may be wrong in his action or inaction and therefore merits the criticism. This brings extra damage to the minister's positive face

and puts him in a position where he has to deny any personal mistakes and clear himself of responsibility.

Example #6
TV program: *Face to Face*
Host: Tsvetanka Rizova
Interviewee: Anton Hekimyan, candidate mayor from the *GERB-SDS* party[1]
Date: 5 October 2023

Вие казахте *БиТиВи* беше моят дом. Онзи ден казахте, че *ГЕРБ-СДС* е Вашето семейство. Много бързо, както се казва, свихте гнездо в друго семейство и в друг дом. Ако Ви се доверят софиянци и Вие станете кмет и получите по-добро предложение и решите в друго семейство да отидете, това как според Вас ще бъде тълкувано?	You said *bTV* was your home. The other day you said that *GERB-SDS* is your family. Very quickly you made a nest in another family and another home, as the saying goes. If you win the trust of the citizens of Sofia and become mayor but then get a better offer and decide to go to another family, how do you think it will be interpreted?

In this example the journalist's intervention follows a more complex structure. It opens with two contradictory statements made by the candidate mayor using the metaphor of home and family. One is that he finds his home with *bTV*, the TV station he used to work for before he decided to enter politics. The other statement, made after he joined the *GERB-SDS* coalition, conveys a similar idea that *GERB-SDS* is his family. After referring to these quotes, the journalist observes that the candidate mayor has quickly shifted to another family and home. The idea of a quick shift of allegiance is communicated through the metaphor of making a nest, which is in line with the previously invoked concepts of home and family. As in the previous example, the metaphor serves to mitigate the threat to the positive face of the candidate mayor. Nevertheless, an implicature is generated that the candidate mayor's behavior is unprincipled and governed by his own interests only. This implicature is sustained in the journalist's next move. She makes up a hypothetical situation where the candidate mayor wins the race, receives a better offer, and decides to move to another "family". Given this development, the journalist asks an open-ended question about the possible interpretation of such conduct. The question further implies that

[1] GERB-SDS is a Bulgarian two-party coalition between the Citizens for European Development for Bulgaria party and the Union of Democratic Forces. Previously, he used to work for bTV, one of the largest private broadcasting companies in Bulgaria.

another act of dishonesty will not be tolerated by the public. In this way, the candidate mayor is challenged to address a hypothetical situation which has not developed in his favor and take care of both his positive and negative face needs. The following table offers a summary of the utterance types, implicatures, and face threats found in the examples under discussion. The following table offers a summary of the utterance types, implicatures, and face threats found in the examples under discussion.

#	Example	Utterance type	Implicature	Type of face threat
1	Are you really a constructive opposition and is there a battle in which you have achieved any success at all?	Closed-ended questions casting doubt on the party's accomplishments	You are incapable of doing your job	Identity face
2	Mr Arabadzhiev, you proposed sharing [your influence over] the regulators equally, you made this proposal to those whom you called "mafia". Is there any other explanation for what society actually sees?	Bald-on-record assertion + a closed-type question demanding explanation	Your party is unprincipled	Identity face Positive face Negative face
3	And now you want us to close our eyes and forget that the government has failed to implement the laws it has written itself, right?	Informal tag question	The government is breaking the law You are immoral by asking us to close our eyes to the injustice	Identity face Positive face Negative face
4	But isn't there the temptation to rely more on the sycophants and yes-men than on those who criticize you and thus take a risk?	Negative closed-ended question seeking agreement	You are unethical	Positive face Negative face
5	In politics, you are the target of both enemy and friendly fire. Do you find any fault on your side for that?	Face-threatening assertion mitigated with a metaphor + a closed-ended question demanding explanation	You are incapable of doing your job	Positive face Negative face
6	You said BTV was your home. The other day you said that GERB-SDS is your family. Very quickly you made a nest in another family and another home, as the saying goes. If you win the trust of the citizens of Sofia and become mayor but then get a better offer and decide to go to another family, how do you think it will be interpreted?	Reference to statements made by the interviewee Face-threatening assertion mitigated by a metaphor Hypothetical open-ended question	You are immoral	Positive face Negative face

As mentioned above, the intention of this analysis has been to illustrate various linguistic and pragmatic strategies used by journalists to voice criticism against politicians and the parties with which they are affiliated.

From a quantitative perspective, the analysis of the full dataset shows that that closed-type questions are a preferred linguistic tool as they occur in 24 out of the 36 examples. It also becomes evident that 19 of the face-threatening acts target the competence of a politician and/or their party. Integrity is challenged in 14 journalistic interventions, while three questions address both competence and moral principles. Moreover, it can be argued that six of the questions pose a higher level of face threat as they attack both the positive and identify face of politicians. However, given the limited size of the dataset, the findings of this analysis cannot be used to identify general trends or patterns in the questioning style of Bulgarian journalists.

Conclusions

The examples discussed above illustrate the prominent pragmatic features of journalists' questions in televised political interviews in the Bulgarian context. On the basis of the analysis of all 36 examples from the dataset, it can be concluded that journalists typically use closed-type questions which often contain presuppositions challenging the interviewee's competence, willingness to take responsibility, and/or moral principles. In all cases where such questions are found, the politicians are not expected provide a simple "yes" or "no" answer but to give an explanation or justification of their actions. Negative tag questions are strategically formulated to provoke disagreement and put politicians in a defensive position. Open-ended questions are also used, aiming to not only simply extract factual information but also prompt reflection and consider the implications of certain actions and lines of conduct. Often, journalists employ a combination of structures, like statements of direct accusation or quotes followed by questions. Such strategies can be successful tools to enhance rhetorical impact and enable journalists to gain control over the discourse and challenge a politician's credibility in front of the public.

Criticism, be it direct or implied, is focused on two aspects of a politician's public image: competence and integrity. Politicians are held accountable for their personal misconduct or the faults of the party or formation they represent. In this way, they are put in the difficult position of having to attend not only to their personal face wants, but also to the social identity they have as members or allies of a political party.

From a broader perspective, and in line with previous research in other cultural contexts, it becomes evident that Bulgarian journalists' rapport-challenging

behavior has a role in shaping public perceptions of political authority. By employing a provocative questioning style, journalists often undermine politicians' leadership claims and capabilities and demand accountability for past and future actions. Future studies of political interviews in Bulgaria regarding their dynamics and politicians' responses could shed light on the strategies used by political figures to cope with face threats, restore their credibility and maintain public trust.

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Zagrożenia wizerunku. Pragmatyczna analiza pytań w bułgarskich politycznych wywiadach telewizyjnych

Artykuł analizuje rodzaje pytań, jakie dziennikarze zadają politykom w wywiadach telewizyjnych, z perspektywy teorii pragmatycznej, a w szczególności koncepcji „facework" (zarządzania wizerunkiem). Przeprowadzono badanie na małą skalę, aby odpowiedzieć na pytanie badawcze dotyczące tego, w jaki sposób techniki zadawania pytań stosowane przez dziennikarzy pełnią funkcję aktów zagrażających wizerunkowi, zmuszając polityków do wzięcia odpowiedzialności za swoje słowa i działania. Zebrano zbiór danych zawierający 36 przykładowych pytań zadawanych przez dziennikarzy i pochodzących z trzech bułgarskich programów publicystycznych. Przeanalizowano je pod względem formy wypowiedzi, stopnia bezpośredniości, implikatur oraz rodzajów zagrożenia wizerunku. Stwierdzono, że dziennikarze zazwyczaj zadają konfrontacyjne pytania i domagają się od polityków wyjaśnień dotyczących ich działań. Pytania te w głównej mierze godzą w pozytywny wizerunek i tożsamość polityków. Tworzone implikatury przekazują krytykę zdolności zawodowych polityków oraz ich integralności moralnej.

Słowa kluczowe: wywiad polityczny; zagrożenie wizerunku; pozytywny wizerunek; wizerunek tożsamościowy; kompetencja; integralność moralna; implikatura.

Face threats: A pragmatic analysis of questions in Bulgarian political TV interviews

The paper examines types of questions journalists ask politicians in broadcast interviews from the perspective of pragmatic theory, and facework in particular. A small-scale study was conducted to address the research question of how journalists' questioning techniques function as face-threatening acts to ensure politicians take responsibility for what they say and do. A dataset of 36 examples of journalists' questions was collected from three Bulgarian current affairs TV programs and analyzed in terms of utterance form, level of directness, implicatures, and types of face threat. It was found that journalists typically ask rapport-challenging

questions and demand explanations from politicians for their actions. The questions primarily threaten politicians' positive and identity face. The implicatures created convey criticism of the politicians' professional abilities and their moral integrity.

Keywords: political interview; face threat; positive face; identity face; competence, moral integrity; implicature

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