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Establishment Of Procedures In The Creation Of Extended Multimedia News Reports

ABSTRACT

The authors deal with the issue of transformations and the establishment of news journalism genres in the online media environment, with a focus on extended multimedia news reports. They emphasise that the technical and technological platform of online media creates fertile ground for the modification of genres sourced from conventional media. According to them, the multi-platform essence of online media and the hybridisation trend in genre-based approaches are a suitable foundation for the formation of extended multi-platform news. They raise the question of whether it is possible at the end of the second decade of the new millennium to formulate a premise under which an extended multimedia news report has specific typological characteristics and established creative procedures. They reach a clear conclusion based on qualitative analysis completed on a selection of extended multimedia news reports from the portals sme.sk and pravda.sk. They state that it is appropriate to talk about a stable structure as well as established procedures in the creation of extended multimedia news reports.

KEY WORDS

Journalistic genres. News genres. Extended multimedia news report. Circular economy. News journalism processes. Recycling. Values. Criteria.

1. Introduction

The developmental phases of classical media and the journalistic genre types within them confirm a great degree of stability in the processes of depicting objective reality, and of course also in the choice of linguistic and stylistic means. While news journalism genres are known for the fact that their compositional structures, language and style are established in clear stereotypical schemes¹, it is impossible to deny their continuous developmental transformations. These are based on a number of factors, such as the type and typological characteristic of the media, relevance, and therefore a preference for certain themes from a newsroom or societal perspective, editorial changes within the editing process, the media's popularity in a specific developmental epoch of the media or the mental outlook in the socio-cultural environment. The mental outlook of society as a whole is very closely related to how journalists approach the representation of reality within the news, along with their editorial priorities and the degree of their professionalism.² The mental outlook of every group of people also speaks to the extent of their willingness to accept, for example, the tabloidisation of the news, the hybridisation of news genres, the publication of various hoaxes, conspiracies, manipulated news and the like.³

Given the broader context in which news journalism genres are formed, it is clear that the new era of journalistic work is influenced by the rise and establishment of online journalism.⁴ There is no denying the fact that online news did not appear out of nowhere and instead it built on the tradition of creating news genres in the classical media.⁵ Despite the fact that online journalism followed the procedures of older classical media, it found its own ways

¹ Stereotypical schemes include preference for established usages when constructing reports and when selecting linguistic and stylistic means. Within the construct of such stabilised creation of news genres, Mistrík speaks of a downward progression or downward perspective (see MISTRÍK, J.: *Štylistika*. Bratislava : Slovenské pedagogické nakladateľstvo, 1989, p. 469.). However, we note that the above perspectives are subject to development and to a large extent their selection is underpinned by the peculiarities of individual genre types as well as the creative abilities and intentions of individual journalists.

² Editorial priorities in this sense includes the outlook of the newsroom towards serious societal, political, economic and cultural matters, which are reflected in the selection of key events, and how and the manner in which they are processed. The professional prerequisites for a journalist include adequate higher education in a relevant academic program, knowledge and skills for writing in individual journalistic genres, and adherence to the generally valid principles of journalistic ethics (compare to HUDÍKOVÁ, Z.: *The convergence of media and journalism*. In *SGEM 2017: 4th International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on Social Sciences and Arts: Science & Humanities Conference Proceedings. Volume I: Human Geography, Media and Communications, Information and Library Science, Demography and Women's Studies*. Sofia : STEF92 Technology, 2017, p. 133-140.; MISTRÍKOVÁ, Z., ŽITNÝ, M.: *Úloha médií v boji proti korupcii, etika v médiách, korupcia v médiách*. Bratislava : Róbert Vico, 2001, p. 7-24. [online]. [2020-07-05]. Available at: <https://www.transparency.sk/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/030807_uloha.pdf>.).

³ See PRAVDOVÁ, H.: *Mediálne a kultúrne rámce multiplatformovej žurnalistiky*. In PRAVDOVÁ, H., RADOŠINSKÁ, J., VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: *Koncepty a praktiky multiplatformovej žurnalistiky. Slovensko v sieťach digitálnych diaľnic*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2017, p. 52-64.

⁴ J. Višňovský differentiates between Internet journalism and online news journalism. According to him, Internet journalism conceptually included the publication of journalistic expressions and other materials in various forms in the Internet environment (websites, social media, RSS channels, emails, etc.). Online news journalism is specific in that it enables the presentation of news reports in a non-linear fashion and it is up to the recipients to decide if they will read them and when (VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: *Internetová žurnalistika*. In *Slovník vybraných pojmov z mediálnych štúdií. Klúčové termíny v súčasnej mediálnej komunikácii*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2016, p. 95.).

⁵ The term classical media covers periodicals, radio and television. Please note that this term is not rigidly defined in media studies and the authors typically alternate it with the term traditional media, which provides the desired level of contrast with so-called new media or media operating on the Internet, especially with respect to alternative media (see for example FIDLER, R.: *Mediamorphosis: Understanding New Media*. Thousand Oaks; London; New Delhi : Pine Forge Press, 1997.; MANOVICH, L.: *The Language of New Media*. Cambridge : MIT Press, 2001.; DEUZE, M.: *Media life*. Prague : Karolinum, 2015.; GÁLIK, S.: *Influence of Cyberspace on Changes in Contemporary Education*. In *Communication Today*, 2017, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 30-39. ISSN 1338-130X etc.).

of providing news interpretations of the depicted reality. Based on numerous indicators, online news journalism may be said to have many positive and comparative advantages compared to journalism in classical media. According to Bednář, these primarily include interactivity as a new form of communication with recipients by using information linked together via hypertext⁶, the free choice of information on offer and flexibility, with online inputs and overlapping formats.⁷ Undisputed advantages of journalism in the online environment are the creative opportunities that may be leveraged within the multi-platform essence of the communicated information. It is clear that multi-platform journalism⁸, thanks to its technical, technological and creative capacities, has elevated the Internet medium to the pedestal of the dominant medium during a period of more than two decades.⁹

Journalists modified common news genre templates taken from classical media. They adapted them to the new technical and technological possibilities of digital communication and the characteristics of the Internet environment. When creating news texts, they count on the ability to combine text, photographs, auditory or audiovisual statements. This leads them to certain schematic procedures, towards conciseness or, vice versa, towards writing exhaustive texts or towards making a conscious effort to make the texts clearer by using subtitles, infographics, etc. It is also important to apply a critical distance from the agenda that the journalist is working with.¹⁰ The creation of completely new genres can be observed in addition to the extant genres taken from the classical media and modified to the conditions

⁶ Hypertext (HTML) means hypertext markup language. The term „hyper“ refers to the extension of the original version of the text with additional information. The user „clicks“ on complementary, clarifying and similar texts, enriching his overall knowledge (CHATFIELD, T.: *Digitálny vek. 50 myšlienok, ktoré by ste mali poznať*. Bratislava : Slovart, 2013, p. 9). HTML offers quick orientation and navigation in a huge number of information packages located on Internet networks. It makes it possible to reciprocate information in textual, auditory or audiovisual form. „Hypertext Transfer Protocol (http) is a protocol for transferring HTML documents between servers and Web services clients. It enables worldwide interconnection of hypertext documents and serves as a primary communication tool in the WWW environment.“ (VRABEC, N.: *Komunikácia v ére internetu*. In MAGÁL, S., MATÚŠ, J., PETRANOVÁ, D. (eds.): *Masmediálne štúdiá v kocke*. Trnava : Fakulta masmediálnej komunikácie UCM, 2013, p. 500.)

⁷ BEDNÁŘ, V.: *Internetová publicistika*. Prague : Grada, 2011, p. 29.

⁸ Its creative basis is the connection of various components realised through digital technologies, such as text, photographs, drawings, graphics, animations, auditory or audiovisual elements (compare to HARDCUP, T.: *Oxford Dictionary of Journalism*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2014.; GERSHBERG, Z.: *Multiplatform Journalism*. In ALLEN, M. (ed): *The Sage Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks : Sage Publications, 2017, p. 1037-1040.; VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J., RADOŠINSKÁ, J.: *Online Journalism: Current Trends and Challenges*. In PEŇA ACUÑA, B. (ed.): *The Evolution of Media Communication*. Rijeka : InTech, 2017, s. 3-22.; RADOŠINSKÁ, J.: *Multiplatformové novinárstvo v kontexte mediálnej kultúry*. In PRAVDOVÁ, H., RADOŠINSKÁ, J., VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: *Koncepty a praktiky multiplatformovej žurnalistiky. Slovensko v sieťach digitálnych diaľnic*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2017, p. 107-182.; VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: *Paralely digitálneho novinárstva a jeho rozmach v kontexte rozvoja informačných a komunikačných technológií v spoločnosti*. In PRAVDOVÁ, H., RADOŠINSKÁ, J., VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: *Koncepty a praktiky multiplatformovej žurnalistiky. Slovensko v sieťach digitálnych diaľnic*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2017, p. 183-272.; GARCÍA, F. S., BRAVO, O. A., MARTIATU, R. Y.: *The Cyberjournalism that we Make and the One that we Want – Cyberjournalistic Praxis: The Case of Mass Media in Matanzas, Cuba*. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2020, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 73-84.; ŠVECOVÁ, M.: *Webová žurnalistika*. Trnava : FMK UCM, (CD), 2017. etc.)

⁹ Two factors function as evidence of the dominance of multi-platform journalism on the media market. The first is traffic to sites and ad packages that surf the pages of successful online media or web magazines (compare to *Výdavky do internetovej reklamy 2019*. [online]. [2020-09-08.] Available at: <<https://www.iabslovakia.sk/vydavky-do-reklamy/vydavky-internetovej-reklamy-2019-sk/>>. The second factor points to the adaptation of classical media to the means of expression in a multi-platform format. As an example, television news now includes references to the home television station's website, etc. According to Carr, this trend can be seen in periodicals as well. It is much more structured, and image material prevails at the expense of text, and effective visualisation on pages is a priority (CARR, N.: *The Shallows. What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*. New York : W.W. Norton, 2010, p. 232-234.)

¹⁰ Compare to: SILVERBLATT, A.: *Media Literacy and Critical Thinking*. In *International Journal of Media and Information Literacy*, 2018, Vol. 3, No.2, p. 71, ISSN 2500-106X.

of the new technical-technological platform. These are mainly blogs on the web or so-called hybrid genres that are not fixed with respect to their genre templates because they apply different genre elements and techniques. After more than two decades of online news, its genre fixation remains an open question. Journalistic content in the online environment is arranged in hypertext and communication is established through a non-linear combination of symbols and images.¹¹ This study primarily focuses on the modification of classical extended news and we monitor its degree of stability in terms of preferred journalistic practices in its creation. We ask the question of whether it is possible at the end of the second decade of the new millennium to formulate a premise under which an extended multimedia news report has specific typological characteristics and established creative procedures.

2. Establishment of compositional procedures and content structures in multi-platform news genres

2.1 Universal applicability of news values, criteria and procedures

The news journalism genre may be identified through a certain model structure of the journalism department. This means that it follows a template procedure on the basis of which the author builds the news report. Of course, the extent to which the resulting text, audio or video message deviates from the basic scheme depends on the situation, the medium and the personality of the creator. However, it is clear in the case of news creation that genre features remain decisive, i.e. they determine the choice of title, composition (including linguistic and stylistic means), the method of verbal interpretation and the manner by which images are captured and edited in the case of electronic media.¹²

A specific portion of journalism as a whole may be identified as news based on certain genre characteristics. Clearly, in both the environment of professional journalists and among the general public, news has a clear function: to inform. This is the reason why its defining frameworks are established in the theory of genres. For example, one can agree with Osvaldová and Halada, who offer a generalised definition of news based on the starting points of several authors. They state that it is the oldest journalistic field and strictly characterise it as factual, accurate, complete, timely and emotionally neutral information about an event or phenomenon.¹³ Similarly, Harcup in his glossary of basic journalistic terms assigns the role of providing information about current events to the news. Selection is based on various criteria, such as interest, relevance, topicality, unusualness, etc. The selection and prioritisation of acceptable information is conditioned in each newsroom upon preferred reporting values.¹⁴ In our opinion, they have two positions: universal and pragmatic.

In the case of universal values within news, the views of researchers overlap, although the terminology and their numbers tend to be different. A. Predmerská states that there is a whole set of defined news values based on an analysis of various author's starting points.

¹¹ Compare to: GÁLIK, S. Philosophical Reflection of the Influence of Digital Media on Current Education. In *Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)*, 2020, Vol. 60, No.1, p. 102, ISSN 1994-4160.

¹² See TUŠER, A.: *Ako sa robia noviny*. Bratislava : EUROKÓDEX, 2010.; TUŠER, A. a kol.: *Praktikum mediálnej tvorby*. Bratislava : PEVŠ, 2010.; VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: *Aktuálne otázky teórie a praxe žurnalistiky v ére internetu*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2015.; RUß-MOHL, S., BAKIČOVÁ, H.: *Žurnalistika*. Prague : Grada publishing, 2005.; PRAVDOVÁ, H., KOLTAIOVÁ, A.: *Problematika periodickej tlače*. Trnava : FMK UCM Trnava, 2007.; RUSNÁK, J.: *Textúry elektronických médií: interpretácia a vývoj*. Prešov : Filozofická fakulta Prešovskej univerzity, 2010. And others.

¹³ OSVALDOVÁ, B., HALADA, J. a kol.: *Praktická encyklopedie žurnalistiky a marketingové komunikace*. Prague : Nakladatelství Libri, 2007, p. 239.

¹⁴ HARCUP, T.: *Oxford Dictionary of Journalism*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 197-198.

The differences are mainly in their naming as different terminology is used to refer to similar phenomena. Among the most important and most frequently recurring news values are novelty, proximity, continuity, personalisation, surprise, entertainment, relationship with elite nations, and relationship with elite people.¹⁵ From our own experience and observations¹⁶ we know that pragmatic news values, meaning those which are preferred in practice, are created in editorial practice based on the typological characteristics of the media themselves, value and ideological aspects, and editorial tasks in the selection of topics, priority information and their processing.

The creation of news genres requires more than a universal or pragmatic relationship towards news values from journalists; it also requires knowledge of basic news attributes. News would be unable to meet its basic genre criteria without them. A. Tušer summarises, clarifies and justifies them. He includes timeliness and currency, professionalism, objectivity, readiness, conciseness, and comprehensibility.¹⁷ We believe that the six basic news attributes defined by Tušer determine exactly what a news report should contain to bring the expected benefits to recipients. Within the context of the very core art of compiling a news report, we emphasise the criteria of conciseness and comprehensibility, which are very closely related. All unnecessary information, excursions and diversions should be purged in an ideal news report. These can confuse the recipient and unnecessarily flood their mind with irrelevant information. Redundancy in terms speaks more about the author's lack of professionalism and a high degree of stylistic colouring. An exception is redundancy in radio or television news. In these formats, supporting information must be repeated to ensure better retention among the recipients. Conciseness is related to a preference for efficient, streamlined sentence structure and the use of material and accurate linguistic means. News values and criteria preordain the selection of a procedure for constructing a news text. The most widely used is that which follows the inverse pyramid principle, i.e. the logical approach¹⁸. In practical terms, this involves configuring the information in a sequential manner, from the most important to less important. The construction of a news report is subject to the rules determining the sequence for working with facts and in drafting the macro composition of the text. The headline is the first to provide vital information about what happened. The beginning of the body of the text either repeats this information or expands upon it using important facts. However, it must be noted that the structure of a logical news story is based on a template in most classic, serious media. A. Tušer offers her standardised model. It confirms the rule of an ironclad sequence and is intended to serve as inspiration to potential journalists. It recommends putting a new event at the very beginning of the report, then devoting two to three paragraphs to further details on the current situation, followed by a section potentially covering behind-the-scenes details, and finally additional information on new developments, background or possible future developments. In such a composition,

¹⁵ PREDMERSKÁ KAČINCOVÁ, A.: *Spravodajstvo v periodickej tlači: žurnalistické žánre*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2017, p. 44.

¹⁶ We have formulated a premise regarding the application of pragmatic news values based on our own practical experience in newsrooms and the criteria applied when selecting themes suitable for publication.

¹⁷ TUŠER, A.: *Ako sa robia noviny*. Bratislava : EUROKÓDEX, 2010, p. 129-130. Objectiveness is considered a basic journalistic prerequisite and is closely associated with professionalism. It speaks of the manner in which information is verified and to impartial and non-partisan reporting. However, the degree of the subject's involvement is questionable and therefore Vojtek is relatively sceptical with respect to this criterion, stating that a journalist's story is simply „a subjective reflection of objective reality“: (VOJTEK, J.: *Žánre anglicky písaného novinárstva: S ukázkami*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2012, p. 7.).

¹⁸ Within professional literature, three basic approaches to the compilation of news reports are found: chronological, logical and emphatic or dynamic (compare to TUŠER, A.: *Ako sa robia noviny*. Bratislava : EUROKÓDEX, 2010.; PREDMERSKÁ KAČINCOVÁ, A.: *Spravodajstvo v periodickej tlači: žurnalistické žánre*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2017.; RUP-MOHL, S., BAKIČOVÁ, H.: *Žurnalistika: Komplexní průvodce praktickou žurnalistikou*. Prague : Grada Publishing, 2005.; HUDÍKOVÁ, Z.: Emotions a key element of news reporting. In *Current issues of science and research in the global world: proceedings of the international conference*. Leiden : CRC Press, 2014, p. 161-169.; PRAVDOVÁ, H., KOLTALIOVÁ, A.: *Problematika periodickej tlače*. Trnava : FMK UCM Trnava, 2007. etc.).

a journalist should look for answers to the basic news questions of who? what? when? where? how? and why?¹⁹ S. Ruß-Mohl and H. Bakičová in their recommendations to journalists formulate a number of principles to be followed during the creation of news materials. According to them, the most important information should be right at the beginning, but it is necessary to ensure that information about what happened is presented first and not where it happened or the implications. They also recommend using indirect speech, paraphrasing, avoiding redundancy of information, paying attention to the mixing of genres, as well as to publishing subjective opinions, feelings, etc.²⁰ It should be emphasized that these principles, when designing a news report, also form a characteristic platform of the news journalism genre, and the extended news report in particular. It is also clear that they refer to the establishment of news values, criteria and related procedures in the creation of individual outputs in the editorial practice of most classical media. As of yet, the question as to what extent these values, criteria and logical procedures are established in the current editorial practices of online media within the creation of extended multimedia news reports remains unsatisfactorily answered.

2.2 Establishment of procedures and content structure in the creation of multimedia news reports

The establishment of news values, criteria and procedures in the construction of news stories in multimedia news appears to be quite clear at first glance. It is necessary to emphasise that in the case of genres adopted and modified genres by online media, including the extended news report, their goals and tasks are identical to news genres in traditional media. They provide answers to basic news questions with the ambition of publishing information that enriches and illustrates a depicted event or situation. Similarly, criteria should be applied in online media according to which extended multimedia news reports should meet the same criteria and be the bearer of specific values, such as novelty, proximity, continuity, personalisation, surprise, entertainment, relationship with elite nations, relationship with elite people, professionalism, alertness, conciseness, intelligibility, etc.

The fact remains that certain distinct peculiarities and a diversity of procedures in the construction of news reports exist within the creation of news in multimedia journalism genres. These are characterised by greater structuring, the texts are more divided using subtitles and infographics, and they may be briefer or more extensive²¹. Another fact must also be taken into consideration. This is the need to continuously update the event due to the need to inform the audience immediately²². Something that was published ten minutes ago may no longer be current as the event continues to evolve and old information loses its informational value²³. This fact significantly influences the manner of working with information and, quite naturally, the actual construction of a news report. Authors strive to increase the complexity of their story and use combinations to accomplish this objective. Ultimately, this can lead to a fragmentation of the usual logical process through the use of hyperlinks, photos, videos, and podcasts.

¹⁹ TUŠER, A.: Prejav v tlačových médiách. In TUŠER, A. a kol.: *Praktikum mediálnej tvorby*. Bratislava : PEVŠ, 2010, p. 93-94.

²⁰ RUß-MOHL, S., BAKIČOVÁ, H.: *Žurnalistika: Komplexní průvodce praktickou žurnalistikou*. Prague : Grada Publishing, 2005, p. 54.

²¹ Unlike journalism departments in periodicals or news programs on electronic media, the output of journalists in online media is not limited by scope or minutes.

²² The need for immediate information and continuous updating of an event is based on the technical and technological possibilities offered by online media in the Internet environment, as well as from the competitive struggle between individual media. The medium able to bring the latest information first succeeds in this environment.

²³ ONDRÁŠIK, B.: Internetová tvorba (online). In TUŠER, A. a kol.: *Praktikum mediálnej tvorby*. Bratislava: Eurokódex, 2010, p. 333.

On the other hand, it is an excellent method of supplementing or expanding the basic or original texts in an impressive way.²⁴

The desire for complexity and efforts to provide information to the audience as flexibly and quickly as possible leads, in our opinion, to simplification of work with text and images. Hybridisation in the form of interweaving different genre approaches, deliberate mixing of various statements, hypertext links, etc., and is a natural consequence of this effort among multimedia journalists. However, we believe that hybridisation is both a significant and a legitimate way of depicting a real event within the confines of online media. We do not consider this much greater degree of hybridisation of news genres than in the current classical media to be negative; rather, it is one of the characteristic methods of constructing an extended multimedia message.

According to Osvaldová and Tejkalová, the genre awareness of the recipients and their expectations from the published information also oblige journalists in online media to label genre types, such as news, commentary, interviews, etc.²⁵ The composition of an extended news report is therefore, despite its hybrid intertwining of genres, expected to combine text, images, etc., based on the usual logical procedure. At the very least, this involves the publication of the most important information at the beginning of the news report and the gradual insertion of additional or testimonial information, such as press conferences, opinions of actors obtained from social networks, etc. The author can also summarise the most important facts or return to key information at the beginning of the news report by adding information about possible developments of the event or its unexpected reversal. This means that an online journalist also counts on the ability to further supplement, clarify, extend, etc., their statements using hypertext links. These provide a nearly infinite opportunity to expand upon the basic news report with additional information, context, details, causes, retrospective, chronology of the development of the event, etc. The possibility of unlimited space does not bind the journalist but, on the contrary, allows them to fully develop their text in all its epic breadth, to realise their observations by describing details, or apply and combine different genre approaches.

This is the reason for the difficulty in answering the question as to what extent these values, criteria and logical procedures are established in the current editorial practices of online media within the creation of extended multimedia news reports. Despite this, we believe that on the basis of an analysis of selected multimedia messages, it is possible to formulate a premise according to which the current form of an extended multimedia news report has specific typological characteristics and established creative procedures.

News reports on two relevant topics in Slovakia were selected to test the formulated premises. We focused on two events, the processing of which met the criteria for extended multimedia news reporting. One of the decisive elements in making this selection was the social and political significance of the underlying event. We focused on the application of news values, the use of methodological procedures (chronological, logical and emphatic), and the fulfilment of the basic characteristics of an extended news report: answers to the 6 news questions, a description of the course of events, the use of direct and indirect speech, and language. We also examined elements used in the online environment: links to related articles, links to relevant words, and the use of photos and videos. We also observed the graphical arrangement of the individual elements as well as the subtitles. The following topics were selected as model examples: dismissal of the director of the Social Insurance Agency (9 September 2020) and election of the chairman of the Slovak National Party (12 September 2020). One topic was created by processing reports from news agencies TASR and SITA. The second topic was processed in-house by both portals.

²⁴ PRAVDOVÁ, H.: *Manažment, marketing, redigovanie vo vydavateľskej a redakčnej praxi. Periodická tlač, online médiá*. Trnava : Univerzita sv. Cyrila a Metoda, Fakulta masmediálnej komunikácie, 2015, p. 220.

²⁵ OSVALDOVÁ, B., TEJKALOVÁ, A.: *Žurnalistika v informační spoločnosti. Digitalizace a internetizace žurnalistiky*. Prague : Karolinum, 2010, p. 109.

2.3 Case studies from the portals sme.sk and pravda.sk

The first event we selected for model analysis was the dismissal of the director of the Social Insurance Agency in September 2020. This is a domestic political issue that is exacerbating disputes between the coalition and the opposition. The reason is that the Social Insurance Agency is an important social institution through which the social insurance system is provided, and specifically its five separate insurance schemes: health insurance, pension insurance - old-age and disability insurance, accident insurance, guarantee insurance and unemployment insurance. It therefore contains two inherent and sensitive sub-topics. The first is that it is an interesting financial institution through which large sums are collected and distributed. There is also a very intimate emotional connection to the perceived satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the country's overall social security system. The second significant sub-topic is that the director of the Social Insurance Agency was a nominee of the Smer-SD party, and the former minister of transport, against whom the opposition had objected. Therefore, the topic itself has a political aspect in addition to the economic and professional aspects. As this is a domestic topic, there was no problem to generate original content as all activities related to the dismissal of the old and the appointment of a new director took place in Bratislava, where the newsrooms of both portals are located. Both portals, sme.sk and pravda.sk, decided to use combined information from the TASR and SITA news agencies to process their in-house news reports.

Case study 1A: *Vážneho odvolali z funkcie šéfa Sociálnej poisťovne, obráti sa na Ústavný súd.* (Source: *Vážneho odvolali z funkcie šéfa Sociálnej poisťovne, obráti sa na Ústavný súd.* [online]. [2020-09-09]. Available at: <<https://ekonomika.sme.sk/c/22484528/vlada-odvolala-vazneho-z-funkcie-sefa-socialnej-poisťovne.html>>.) 9 September 2020 at 10:51 am (updated 9 September 2020 at 5:07 pm) SITA, TASR.

The main topic of the article is the dismissal of the director of the Social Insurance Agency. The title itself provides factual information and the material consequence of this action taken by the government (*Vážneho odvolali z funkcie šéfa Sociálnej poisťovne, obráti sa na Ústavný súd -- 'Vážny dismissed as head of the Social Insurance Agency, will file suit with the Constitutional Court'*). There is a short, single-sentence lede under the title which indicates who will be the outgoing director's successor (*Vážneho nahradí Juraj Káčer -- 'Juraj Káčer to replace Vážny'*). The first part of the text under the main title provides the date and reason for dismissal of the director in general and the name of his successor. The second section contains a subtitle (*Krajniak očakáva modernizáciu poisťovne -- 'Krajniak expects insurance agency modernisation'*) where the name and appointment date of the new director are specified along with the expectations of his superior, in this case, the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. In the third section, once again delineated by a subtitle (*Káčer sa vzdá postu viceprimátora Bratislavy -- 'Káčer resigns as deputy mayor of Bratislava'*), the new candidate, and his background, is presented briefly. Another two sections, each marked with a separate subtitle (*Nadlimitná zázka pre Bonul, Chyby v rozpočte -- 'Above-threshold contract for Bonus, Budget irregularities'*) are devoted to the reasons for which the director was dismissed and the problems facing the Social Insurance Agency. They are much more extensive than the previous sections. The next part (*Kto je Juraj Káčer -- 'Who is Juraj Káčer'*) provides details about the new director and doubts as to his ability to cope with this new position due to his preoccupation with other positions. The final, again extensive part (*Vážny sa obráti na Ústavný súd -- 'Vážny will file suit with the Constitutional Court'*) presents the reaction and additional steps taken by the former director, and the chair of his political party.

In terms of composition, the text is composed of 5 subtitles, and each sub-topic is introduced with a separate subtitle except for the first. Every section represents a single paragraph that is physically separated from the others by a space. A large photograph of the main actor involved

in this topic is shown under the main title and the single-sentence lede. The article provides a photo of the new director, and the TASR news agency is identified as being the source of both photos. The newsroom also used a video, with the entire press conference organised by the chair of the Smer-SD party and the dismissed director on this specific topic posted with a total length of approximately 43 minutes. The newsroom placed the video at the end of the article and the Smer-SD website is shown as the source of the video. The text also contains a hypertext link to an article about Bonul, a company associated with an above-threshold contract with the Social Insurance Agency. A logical approach was used in the presentation, with the latest information provided at the beginning of the report, what happened: the director of the Social Insurance Agency was replaced, who replaced who, and the reasons were specified, and then explained in detail subsequently. At the end we learned of the reaction and the steps taken by the dismissed director. All 6 of the basic news questions were answered: who, what, when, how and why; in addition, the consequences were mentioned – the intention of the director to file suit with the Constitutional Court. An answer to the question of where was omitted because it simply was not pertinent. Formulations were presented in the third person, and direct speech was used commonly, with a few instances of indirect speech. The notional lexicon was used in the statements, the sentences were mostly simple, factual, impersonal, often used suffixes and indefinite ones.

From the point of view of the evaluation of news values, we can state that the report represents the basic news values characteristic of the news in traditional media. This is a very important societal event because its activities affect every person in the country. It provides interesting information about the background of the appeal (alleged mistakes on the part of the director, his intention to file suit with the Constitutional Court) and about the new successor (his profile and number of positions, doubts over whether he can handle the time that will be required in his new position), as well as the minister's idea of how institutions should function. This is a current event as it took place on the day the report was published. The report was prepared objectively: the reasons for the dismissal and the response from the dismissed director (although in another part of the report) were presented, as well as the reservations of the opposition representative to fill the post of new director without conducting a search to identify candidates to fill the position. The text was very often based on direct quotations from the actors involved in the event. The wording was clear and understandable, the report was concise and contained all the basic information.

Case study 1B: *Odvolali Vážneho z čela Sociálnej poisťovne. Nahradí ho Káčer.* (Source: *Odvolali Vážneho z čela Sociálnej poisťovne. Nahradí ho Káčer.* [online]. [2020-09-09]. Available at: <<https://spravy.pravda.sk/domace/clanok/562357-kabinet-odvolal-vazneho-z-funkcie-generalneho-riaditeľa-socialnej-poisťovne/>>.) TASR, SITA 09/09/2020 at 10:55 am, updated: 2:16 pm.

The pravda.sk portal used information from both Slovak news agencies, TASR and SITA, but presented them in the reverse order. The structure of the report, which works with the same sources, is partially different. A large photo of the main actor, the dismissed director, follows the title, basic information about the sources and the time of publication. The portal is the author of the photo and not one of the news agencies. This is followed by a 3-sentence lede that provides the essence of the report: the 3 brief sentences state what happened, why, and the ambition of the new director. It is interesting that a link to the video of Robert Fico's and Smer-SD's entire press conference (sourced from the Smer-SD party and ~43 minutes long) immediately follows the lede. This is followed by a quote from the main material regarding the dismissal of the director of the Social Insurance Agency, similar to that on the sme.sk portal. The next paragraph provides information on who will replace him and who that person is. After a subtitle (*Krajniak: Očakávam, že zo SP bude proklientská a moderná inštitúcia -- 'Krajniak:*

I expect the Social Insurance Agency will be a client-oriented and modern institution”) there is another video, from the press conference held by the Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family regarding the issue at hand and lasting ~ 24 minutes. The reader then learns about the reasons for the dismissal, arguments made by the government (a past decision issued by the Constitutional Court) and the Minister’s idea of how the Social Insurance Agency should operate and its tasks. This section contains a link to an article on the former director’s plan of action and its options, as well as the reaction of his party’s chairman to this topic (*Fico: Odvolanie Vážneho bude predmetom súdneho skúmania -- ‘Fico: Vážny’s dismissal to be reviewed by the court’*). This is followed by another subtitle (*Káčer: Budem sa snažiť, aby v krátkom čase bolo vidno aj výsledky -- ‘Káčer: I’m going to try and deliver visible results in short order’*) and a part focused on who the new director is and his priorities. The final part, once again introduced by a subtitle (*Pellegrini: Ide o personálne rozhodnutie vlády -- ‘Pellegrini: It’s a governmental personnel decision’*) contains two sub-topics. The first are the responses from two representatives of the newly created Hlas-SD party. The second mentions the scandal around the dismissal of the Social Insurance Agency’s director and his complaint to the Constitutional Court and its decision. This text contains another link at the words „komunálny politik Káčer vzdal funkcie viceprimátora Bratislavy“ (*‘local politician Káčer resigns as Deputy Mayor of Bratislava’*), which is linked to an article about Bratislava’s new Deputy Mayor Zdenka Zaťovičová, who is set to replace Káčer (9 September 2020 at 1:16 pm, updated: 2:13 pm).

The text is divided into a smaller number of sub-topics, a total of 3, which are introduced with subtitles. As was evident, all three subtitles are in the form of direct statements, and specifically opinions. Videos and photos from in-house sources were more widely used. The newsroom used a logical approach and answered all 6 of the journalistic questions. Similar to the sme.sk portal, basic information about the change was presented, followed by the reasons and expectations about the future importance and operation of the institution as a whole, with responses from representatives of one opposition political party provided at the end. The organisation of the text on the pravda.sk portal is different, and the topics are concentrated into blocks, or subtopics, and the topical paragraphs in them are composed of multiple sentences, most of which are developed and longer (including when citations are used). In the choice of direct and indirect speech, in addition to factual formulations, we also find emotional expressions (*neprichádza s „krvavými očami“ -- ‘he’s not come to clean house’ (translator’s note: meaning to issue mass redundancies)*). Compared to the sme.sk portal, it can be seen that the pravda.sk newsroom relies more on citations than sme.sk and they are incorporated without abbreviation, which results in less editorial work. The author’s text is of a notional character and overall, it can be assessed as factual and impersonal.

Also in this text we find the application of news values: timeliness (the topic is published on the day of the event), relevance to society (decisions and distribution of benefits depend on the quality of management at the Social Insurance Agency), professional processing (the reader learned all the information on the background of the appeal, as well as on the new successor), conciseness and clarity. We do have one objection with respect to comprehensibility: sometimes sentences that are too long complicate the understanding of context.

The second topic on which we want to substantiate our claims is the topic of electing the chairman of the Slovak National Party, abbreviated as SNS. Again, this is a sensitive societal topic, because one of the candidates, the current chairman, has evoked a variety of reactions given his past performance as speaker of the Slovak parliament, his statements to the media, and personal scandals. Again, we looked at how both news portals handled this relevant and socially sensitive topic. In this case, the editors opted for the author’s elaboration, in one case in combination with TASR documents.

Case study 2A: *Danko obhájl post šéfa SNS, po vyhlášení výsledku část členov na protest odišla.* (Source: *Danko obhájl post šéfa SNS, po vyhlášení výsledku část členov na protest odišla.* [online]. [2020-09-12]. Available at: <<https://domov.sme.sk/c/22487084/danko-obhajil-post-predsedu-sns.html>>.) 12 September 2020 at 2:27 pm (updated 12 September 2020 at 2:52 pm) TASR, Daniela Hajčáková.

The main topic is a meeting of the Slovak National Party, SNS, and the election of a new chairman. The topic itself is divided into three sections, with two subtitles provided directly in the article itself. Immediately after the main title, which announces that Danko defended his position and some of the members left in protest, there is a one-sentence lede that states Anton Hrnko was interested in the position of chairman. Information then follows as to when the text was published, updated and source information (TASR and the author of the article). Below that is a large photograph of the face of the election winner, Mr Danko, sourced from the SITA news agency's database (which is interesting, as the agency was not listed as the source from which it was drawn). The place of the event is then identified. We then learn of the answers to the basic questions of what happened, where and with what main outcome, who the challenger was and how the election turned out (who received the most votes). The text then provided voting details (the answer to the question of how), and therefore who nominated candidates, when the old-new chairman made his decision, words from the losing candidate on the outcome and what happened after the outcome was announced (representatives from Žilina and other locations walked out of the meeting and in brief, what kind of reaction is expected from them). The first subtitle appears (*S politikou chcel skončiť -- 'He wanted out of politics'*) and opens the section about the victor. In five paragraphs, we learn about what he said after failure in the general election (taking of political responsibility), as well as the current similarly low preference ratings. The text continues, writing about an increase in his activity in advance of the party elections (travel to different regions and statuses on Facebook) as well as reactions to them (ridicule). This is followed by an illustration of one of his statuses with text and photos and a link to his profile. Some specific supporters of the old-new chairman were identified at the end of this section, along with the supporters of his opponent in brief. The last and most extensive section is focused on statements from his opponent and on reviewing changes in their relationship. In the introduction after the next subtitle (*Obrátil sa proti Dankovi -- 'He turned against Danko'*) it was recalled that the chairman's opponent was initially one of his defenders and only became a critic after the failure in the elections and the emergence of the Dobytkár ('Cattleman') scandal and its ties to SNS. The essentials of the scandal and how SNS is allegedly connected are explained in the next paragraph. Hrnko distances himself from these connections. In the final paragraph, he argues about negotiations with Kvietik, but on a different topic.

The report has a logical structure. Basic information about the key event, the election of the chairman of the SNS party at its general assembly, the outcomes and background information are all provided at the beginning. The second part is focused on motives behind the old-new chairman's activities. The final part is devoted to his opponent. The paragraphs are more extensive, alternating between one and two or three-sentences. The sentences are mostly developed. Direct and indirect speech is used appropriately. The formulations are mostly factual and impersonal. Only one photograph and one link to a Facebook profile are provided in the text. There are five direct links to articles about the candidate, chairman, and an indirect reference to other articles about the SNS chairman under the article itself.

In terms of the application of news values, we can certainly speak of timeliness (on the day of the election), relevance (an indication of the future and developments in SNS), professionalism, as well as objectivity (information about the course of the election and the motives of the candidate and his opponent). The wording is concise, factual and comprehensible.

Case study 2B: *Danko naďalej velí SNS, jeho odporcovia hovoria o fraške.* (Source: *Danko naďalej velí SNS, jeho odporcovia hovoria o fraške.* [online]. [2020-09-12]. Available at: <<https://spravy.pravda.sk/domace/clanok/562729-danko-opat-veli-sns-jeho-odporcovia-hovoria-o-fraške/>>.) Eva Štenclová, Pravda 12 September 2020, 9:22 pm.

The manner in which the topic is processed differs from the sme.sk portal. This is indicated by the title itself (*Danko naďalej velí SNS, jeho odporcovia hovoria o fraške* -- 'Danko continues to lead SNS, his opponents say it's a farce'), where the author used figurative statements (*velí SNS* -- 'commands SNS') and relays the opinion of those dissatisfied with the outcome (*odporcovia hovoria o fraške* -- 'opponents say it's a farce'). Information about the author of the article and the date and time of its publication follow after the main title. A photograph of the winner of the election, about whom the author created the article, is then presented. After the photo, there is a three-sentence lede expressing the essence of the report, who won the SNS party elections, who the opponent was and what his supporters did, as well as the location of the elections and how journalists were not allowed in to the assembly itself. Following the lede is a two-minute video of a dissatisfied member of the party with a comment regarding his mental state (an angry R.R.) and a transcription of his primary thoughts. This is followed by a description of events with elements of commentary in the form of adjectives, figurative expressions, as well as specific statements (direct speech - two paragraphs) from an SNS representative from Senec, who was also not let into the building, just like the media („*vchodové dvere mali pod kontrolou*" -- 'they were watching the entrances', '*urastení ochrankári*' -- 'muscle-bound bodyguards', '*stojí na opačnej strane „barikád"*' -- 'standing on the other side of the barricades', '*fandí Hrnkovi*' -- 'supports Hrnko', and „*celý snem je fraška*" -- 'the entire assembly is a farce'). We also learn of how many party members attended the assembly. On the right side, the reader is presented with statements from Mr Hrnko (introductory sentence: *Hrnko po sneme SNS: Skončilo sa to tak, ako som predpokladal* -- 'Hrnko after the SNS assembly: It ended up as I expected'). A link to the article is on the left side (*Danko je opäť predsedom SNS. Rafaj hovorí o kolektívnej samovražde* -- 'Danko once again SNS chairman. Rafaj says it's collective suicide'). This is followed by an approximately minute-long video statement from the winner, Mr Danko, with a text: *Predseda Danko: Budú ma trhať médiá a opozícia nenávidieť* -- 'Chairman Danko: I'm going to get ripped apart by the media and hate from the opposition'. There is a subtitle beneath the video (*Rafaj: Politická kultúra dostal facku* -- 'Rafaj: This is a slap in the face to political culture') and the second, more extensive part of the article is based on the reactions of those who are dissatisfied. In the introduction to this section, the reader learns of the voting results, with old-new chairman, his opponent, abstentions, and those who didn't vote. The paragraph ends with a description of events occurring after voting (*vychádzali rozhorčené skupiny straníkov* -- 'an outraged group of party members stormed out'). The next three paragraphs are based on the direct and indirect speech of SNS party member Rafaj. The quotes and paraphrasing are relatively expressive statements that he uses (*som v šoku, mám pocit, že delegáti schválili kolektívnu samovraždu, normálni ľudia vyvodlia zodpovednosť, politická kultúra dnes dostala veľmi tvrdú facku, konkrétni ľudia, ktorí si nedovedia na špičku svojho nosa, šéfom parlamentu, aj vlády, je alfasamec, človeku sa chce normálne plakať* -- 'I'm shocked, I feel that the delegates approved a kind of collective suicide, normal people would take responsibility, political culture today got a very hard slap, specific people can't see the tip of their noses; the head of parliament, even the government, is an alpha-male, it's enough to bring someone to tears'). One paragraph is devoted to a comparison of Danko and former chairman Slota, and indictment of the representatives who elected him chairman. This passage is followed a more than two-and-a-half-minute video of the unaccepted representative from Senec with the following sentence: *Ján Rohák považuje snem za frašku* -- 'Ján Rohák considers the assembly a farce'. Room is then provided for another dissatisfied representative in the three paragraphs below the video. In them, he accuses the president of non-patriotism, a bad election result, promises

of a different way of electing representatives to the assembly (originally other conditions that were supposed to bring higher numbers of representatives), and trips to the regions before the assembly. The last part of the article starts again with a video. The video covers the failed opponent for the chairmanship. The video is shown with text: *Anton Hrnko: Výsledok som predpokladal* -- 'Anton Hrnko: I expected this outcome'. He says that he expected the outcome based on what he saw going on and described his decision on the form of his activities in the party. Over the last two paragraphs, the chairman thanks his opponent and responds to the process (*„Som hrdý na to, že tento snem bol pripravený tak, že ani jeden z delegátov nevzniesol žiadnu výhradu“* -- 'I am proud of the fact that this assembly was so well prepared that none of the delegates raised any objections') and describes his expectations and plans (*„Od pondelka ma čaká trhanie médií a nenávisť opozície“, „...bola SNS alternatívou pre voličov – vzoprela vláde Matoviča, Sulíka a Kollára. Urobím všetko pre to, aby som ich zastavil,...“* -- 'I'm going to get ripped apart by the media and hate from the opposition beginning on Monday', '...SNS was an alternative for voters – it was in defiance of the Matovič, Sulík and Kollár government. I'm going to do everything in my power to stop them ...').

In this case, the author used an emphatic approach. The main line of the report is based on the statements of dissatisfied critics of the newly elected chairman and the interesting things they said. Not once in the article is a representative who elected the old-new chairman addressed. On the other hand, we also learn about the feelings and ideas of the winner of the election and factual information about the election. All six news questions were answered: what happened, where, when – the SNS assembly in Liptovský Mikuláš on Saturday, how – what happened there – including statements from those dissatisfied with the outcome, an explanation of why it turned out so (the old-new president bypassed the regions) and what consequences it will have (potential secession of the opponent's supporters). The sentences are formulated clearly and are mostly developed. The author uses a lot of direct speech from the dissatisfied. The emotional atmosphere in the assembly is amplified by using videos with expressions of dissatisfied representatives and the opponent himself. A video of the chairman is presented for balance. A photo is only used at the beginning, along with a link to his Facebook profile.

In terms of news values, the report applies timeliness (the article was published on the day of the election), comprehensiveness (all available moments of the election are mapped), and clarity (the recipient has both direct speech and videos). Objectivity is questionable, as no supporter of the old-new president is addressed and the report is tabloid rather than factual. From the point of view of the professionalism of processing, we can also state that direct speech is overused, which sometimes degrades comprehensibility.

3. Conclusion

We can state that there are established processes for the construction of news reports and they have a stable structure based on long-term observations, analysis and studies of news reports on online news portals. These are based on classic journalistic formats and exploit the advantages of the Internet environment. The most commonly used is a short or extended news report, which also provides a deeper insight into the issues being processed. A „*minute-by-minute*“ chronological format is used if there is a need to provide a more detailed overview of developments in the current situation over time. An extended report takes the form of an inverted pyramid, and typically begins with the most important information (a logical approach). Subsequently, more detailed circumstances of the event are presented (how and why it took place) and broader contexts (statements of others, consequences, reminders of similar events or relevant moments of the topic) are presented after. The text is typically divided into 3 to 5 subtopics. Each of the subtopics is labelled with a subtitle, which provides the reader with a basic overview of the events. The text is structured into topical paragraphs (2 to 3 sentences,

and occasionally an individual sentence), divided by spaces, which facilitates quick reading when scrolling. Sentences are mostly developed, but are not long sentences, and simple and developed sentences alternate in longer paragraphs. Newsrooms very often work with citations, but in some they leave them very long, which retards the perception of information. Textual information is always provided with an expressive photograph of the most important actor or situation. To increase persuasiveness, videos are also used (more often in some periodicals), which are presented in full form, often without post-production editing. Links to relevant related pages (approx. 2) are listed on the margins of the basic text, after the first third. The texts mostly use the news values of timeliness, objectivity, professionalism and comprehensibility.

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