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Comprehensive analysis of multimedia storytelling in the modern information space

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Abstract

The object of this study is multimedia storytelling (as a genre) and its formats in Kazakhstan and French media practice. The theoretical basis of the study was the monographs and scientific articles of Kazakhstan and French modern media researchers on new digital formats of journalism as a . As a result, the percentage of stories where there are heroes in the text in the Kazakh and French media is not very different. In conclusion, storytelling's main characteristics should be considered the obligatory presence of history on a relevant topic and interpretation of history through the prism of the author's perception.

Keywords: Internet, Journalism, Mass Media, Genre.

Análisis exhaustivo de la narrativa multimedia en el espacio de información modern

Resumen

El objeto de este estudio es la narración multimedia (como género) y sus formatos en la práctica de los medios de comunicación de Kazajstán y Francia. Las bases teóricas del estudio fueron las monografías y los artículos científicos de Kazajstán y de los investigadores franceses de los medios modernos sobre los nuevos formatos digitales del periodismo. Como resultado, el porcentaje de historias donde hay héroes en el texto en los medios kazajos y franceses no es muy diferente. En conclusión, las principales características de la narración deben considerarse como la presencia obligatoria de la historia en un tema relevante y la interpretación de la historia a través del prisma de la percepción del autor.

Palabras clave: internet, periodismo, medios de comunicación, género.

1.INTRODUCTION

The availability and continuous improvement of information technologies contribute to the rapid development of new media, which, in turn, affect not only journalistic practice (choice of topics, the speed of preparation and publication of materials, hybridization of genres and elements of the article, etc.) but also journalism in general.

The logical transition of newspapers and magazines to the online environment allowed editorial staff to study and control the audience, new technologies began to appear, capable of reading indicators and providing information about users, reading time of the material,

number of views of a text, comment functions and much more. Thus, taking into account all these trends, there was a strong opinion that in the XXI century people will prefer short information notes to large journalistic materials – there is no time to read long texts, especially on the screens of tablets and smartphones. However, recent research in this area refutes such assumptions.

The variety of formats of storytelling is due to technical development, therefore, in different countries, there is a different quantity and quality of projects created. Thus, the relevance of the study is due to the growing popularity of multimedia storytelling both in new media and in online versions of traditional media. Of course, at present, the process of development and improvement of this genre has not yet been completed, new formats appear, and the old ones are modified to meet the needs of the audience. The aim of this work is to give a comprehensive analysis of multimedia storytelling as an actual phenomenon in the modern information space and find out by which parameters the multimedia longreads of Kazakh and French media differ, and according to which they have similar features. In connection with the aim, the following tasks were formulated:

1. To define the basic conceptual apparatus and formats of multimedia journalistic storytelling;
2. To develop criteria for the analysis of longreads as a multimedia storytelling format;

3. To compare the Kazakh and French approaches in the preparation and design of journalistic materials in the longread format.

2. METHODOLOGY

It is obvious that long before the appearance of writing, stories were told in each separate culture for entertainment, education, and reflection of moral values. Often the story was accompanied by improvisation. The earliest versions of storytelling include, for example, oral folk art: fairy tales, epic stories, legends, where the plot and heroes are key elements, as well as the subjective author's I. At the present time, storytelling is a method or way of transmitting information and certain meanings through storytelling. The storytelling technique is now used in many areas: literature, medicine and science, pedagogy and psychology, advertising and PR.

In this regard, it is obvious that modern storytelling has incorporated the features of the new journalism. First of all, this is a plot that develops according to the principle of the origin, development, and climax of a conflict. Secondly, it is a non-linear narrative structure. Thirdly, this is the author's presence in the material. Thus, we dare to assume that storytelling is a genre that relates not to news, but to publicistic or, according to Samartsev (2009), narrative journalism. In the context of journalistic creativity, there is such a thing

as narrative presentation - this is a phenomenon that combines the qualities of journalism and fiction: on the one hand, it touches socially significant topics, is distinguished by the factual accuracy of the information presented (Varakin, 2014; Samartsev, 2009).

Currently, as a result of the global process of digitalization, the most popular formats in journalism are multimedia storytelling. Let us examine them in detail. Digital storytelling is a new method of storytelling using new technologies. That is, besides the text, the material is supplemented by audiovisual components: images, video, audio, infographics, virtual reality, and so on. Digital storytelling is possible even in the absence of text when the content consists of a combination of several audiovisual components - while the story does not lose its narrativity. This approach is called visual storytelling. In one of the interviews, David Campbell, an expert in visual journalism and author of a study on the future of media, said that using the term visual narration, we say that it now best reflects what is happening in the media, but does not mean choosing a particular platform or tools for presenting journalistic material.

It should begin with the notion of the concept of format as such. In theory, journalism has not yet come to a consensus on what is a format and what is a genre. Lazutina (2016) identifies six variations in the use of the term format: format as a set of external characteristics of the subject of communication, which convey its size and shape features; format as type of publication; format as a kind of creativity; format as a type of creativity; format as a type of communication

channel; format as submission method. Based on this list, we will use the first definition of this concept. We have compiled our own typology of existing storytelling formats according to the peculiarities of their creation:

- Traditionally static;
- Traditionally dynamic;
- Multimedia-static;
- Multimedia dynamic.

The first two types are traditional media formats: static - these are stories printed in the press and stories presented through photographs and images, and dynamic - these are television formats, for example, documentaries and animated films. Digital storytelling formats can also be divided into static and dynamic. They are created on digital platforms, include several multimedia elements and are interactive, but depending on the form they have a mobile or static design. The main format of the multimediadynamic type of digital storytelling is considered multimedia longread. Being the first in a series of new visual digital formats, longread impossible to classify into any genre - rather, one should speak about its multi-genre. However, there are other opinions.

In the book *How New Media Changed Journalism*, Galustyan and Kulchitskaya (2016) attributed multimedia longread to a special format of journalistic media text. It should be said that by media text they understand the concrete result of media production addressed to a

mass audience. Galustyan and Kulchitskaya (2016) believe that the text of a multimedia longread can be made in various journalistic genres, from analytics to investigation. As proof of their opinion, the authors cite as an example of the analysis conducted by the American scientist Susan Jacobson, who showed that different genre models were found in 50 of the studied longread. In addition, longread differs from other media texts in its multimedia, in-depth study of one topic, careful preparation of the material, the collection of a large amount of information and often work in the field.

Bulaeva (2010; 2016) characterized the structure of longread as a multimedia narrative presentation (written narration), thereby proving that this format is a visual storytelling. Multimedia longread includes verbal, visual and audio components. It is based on text in combination with elements such as video, audio recordings, interactive graphics, and infographics, photo galleries, information games, 2D- and 3D-panoramas, and so on. It should be noted that any of the above elements will be present in any multimedia material, but they are in addition to the text and are not considered its main part. That is, when creating a multimedia longread, the journalist works through the material in such a way that the text, audio, and visual elements are inextricably linked. If you take away some of them, the structure of the material may collapse, and the general meaning will be lost (Kolesnichenko, 2015).

3. DISCUSSIONS AND FINDINGS

To compare materials in the genre storytelling in Kazakhstan and foreign media, we conducted a content analysis. The choice of articles did not depend on their affiliation to any particular edition; we operated on the readability of the material, the number of views and the level of professionalism with which the project was made. First of all, we have developed a number of criteria, which include characteristics of the multimedia history, as a format, and parameters of the media text. Investigating the selected materials from the point of view of storytelling, first of all, we have to analyze the text, because in a format like a multimedia longread, the main element is itself, and the audiovisual components are additions that help the reader dive into the story. The method of content analysis is presented in Table 1. (Rossiter, 2002).

For a full analysis, it is necessary to determine which genres are found in multimedia longreads, and whether they are mixed within the framework of one particular story - multi-genre. The latter type of composition was proposed by Grigoryan (2007) in his work he describes this type as alternation of examples and reportage fragments with information inserts. A parallel story is a type of multimedia longread composition proposed by O.R. Samartsev (2009) when the stories are united through the history and intersect with it at key points. We argue that storytelling implies narrativity. We put into the methodology of content analysis such criteria as the presence of the

author's I, since the story from the first person allows you to create the effect of immersion in the story.

Table 1: The method of content analysis of multimedia longread in Kazakh media

№	Category	The unit of analysis	The unit of account	Result (%)
Theme				
1	policy	text / heading	The presence of the words: policy, foreign policy, power, Parliament, Ministry of foreign Affairs, the opposition, elections	0%
2	economy		The presence of words: economy, investment, dollar, euro, rate, oil, bank	0%
3	culture		The presence of words: culture, art, architecture, photography, music, movies, books, literature	20%
4	social life		The presence of words: city, youth, society, veterans, refugees, migrants, religion, disability, transport, health care, ecology, crime, murder	20%
5	sport		The presence of words: sport, coach, athlete, football, hockey	20%

6	business		The presence of words: money, business, economy, investment, entrepreneur	0%
7	mixed		The presence of words from different topics	60%
Genre				
8	Reportage		The presence of the author's I	20%
9	Interview		Having a statement of facts on behalf of the person being interviewed.	10%
10	Analytical article	Text	Availability of actual data: dates, numbers, statistics.	30%
11	Essay		The presence of descriptive and figurative fragments.	30%
12	Chronicle		Availability of evidence expressed in short simple sentences.	20%
13	Report		Presence of facts in chronological order in one or two paragraphs.	0%
Composition				
14	linear	Text	Events in the text go one after another in chronological order.	60%
15	annular		Final returns (relatively speaking) to the beginning of the work.	10%
16	zigzag		The alternation of examples and report fragments with information inserts.	20%
17	Parallel story		Stories in the text are related at the theme level.	40%
The presence of the author's I				

18	pronouns	Text	Word	20%
19	verbs		Word	20%
The face of the text				
20	author from 1 person	pronouns, verbs	pronouns, verbs	20%
21	author from 3 person			100%
22	author from 1 person			40%
23	author from 3 person			10%

In this section of the research, 10 multimedia stories were published, published between 2014 and 2017 in the Kazakh media. We used materials from the following publications: Internet newspapers Zone kz, Tengrinews.kz, The Headlines, theNews.kz, Bestnews.kz, Dailynews.kz. These results lead to the following conclusions. It is practically impossible to single out one topic in Kazakhstan's multimedia longread, only in 30% it is possible to say unequivocally. More than half of the materials fell under the category of a mixed topic, which can characterize the text of

Kazakhstan's longread as multi-level: for example, the author writes on the subject of economics and business in the article *Mediterranean grief* (Soo et al., 2019).

The genre analysis of media texts did not allow us to single out one dominant genre used by Kazakhstani authors when creating multimedia longreads. However, our research proves the fact that the stories are presented in a multi-genre form. We noticed a close relationship between the genres used and the composition of the media text. In 40% of the materials, the authors used the composition of a parallel story, because of this, several genres are found in their media text.

The number of materials where the author's I is clearly expressed is 20%. This criterion is closely related to the face of the author, when the story comes from the first person – a journalist, it is also 20%. In all texts, the narration comes from a third person, when the author tells the reader a story, without participating in it. Storytelling from the first person of the hero is present in 40%, in this case it is the insertion of personal stories, experiences and emotions - this is what makes the reader emotionally immerse in the story (Ukhova, 2015).

In 30% of the studied materials were used hyperlinks and menu longread. The absence of such a navigation bar deprives the reader of the possibility of non-linear reading, thereby involuntarily making either read the entire text in order, or close the multimedia project. The presence of sub-chapters also helps to structure the text and divide it into semantic parts – by themes. The availability of reference

information or backgrounder was detected only in 30% of the materials. Despite the fact that additional information allows us to broaden the topic more widely, this way of visual design of the longread is not popular among Kazakhstani media. Most of the actual information is published in the form of infographics, they are found in 50% of the materials (Indriastuti, 2019). Table 2 is converted to percentages and presents the results of the content analysis of the French longreads.

Table 2: The method of content analysis of multimedia longread in French media

№	Category	The unit of analysis	The unit of account	Result (%)
Theme				
1	policy	text / heading	The presence of the words: policy, foreign policy, power, Parliament, Ministry of foreign Affairs, the opposition, elections	0%
2	economy		The presence of words: economy, investment, dollar, euro, rate, oil, bank	0%
3	culture		The presence of words: culture, art, architecture, photography, music, movies, books, literature	10%

4	social life	text / heading	The presence of words: city, youth, society, veterans, refugees, migrants, religion, disability, transport, health care, ecology, crime, murder	20%
5	sport		The presence of words: sport, coach, athlete, football, hockey	0%
6	business		The presence of words: money, business, economy, investment, entrepreneur	0%
7	mixed		The presence of words from different	70%
			topics	
Genre				
8	Reportage	Text	The presence of the author's I	10%
9	Interview		Having a statement of facts on behalf of the person being interviewed.	0%
10	Analytical article		Availability of actual data: dates, numbers, statistics.	40%
11	Essay		The presence of descriptive and figurative fragments.	80%
12	Chronicle		Availability of evidence expressed in short simple sentences.	0%
13	Report		Presence of facts in chronological order in one or two paragraphs.	10%
Composition				

14	linear	Text	Events in the text go one after another in chronological order.	80%
15	annular		Final returns (relatively speaking) to the beginning of the work.	0%
16	zigzag		The alternation of examples and report fragments with information inserts.	10%
17	Parallel story		Stories in the text are related at the theme level.	20%
The presence of the author's I				
18	pronouns	Text	Word	20%
19	verbs		Word	20%
The face of the text				
20	author from 1 person	pronouns, verbs	pronouns, verbs	20%
21	author from 3 person			100%
22	author from 1 person			0%
23	author from 3 person			0%

These results showed that in 60% of the texts it was impossible to determine the presence of only one specific topic. Note that we have analyzed two texts from a magazine with musical themes, and they are

included in 40% of those materials studied, where one topic is clearly expressed. Hence, the conclusion that in highly specialized publications it is easier to define the topic of multimedia longread, but at the same time, such media do not often create large projects, unlike large media corporations (Galustyan and Kulchitskaya, 2016).

Thus, the content of the French multimedia longread can be described as multifaceted, that is, with a predominance of several themes in one text; the predominant type of composition is linear; the author's narration comes from a third party, the presence of the author's "I" is practically absent. These results show that the themes of media texts of Kazakh and French authors are written on mixed topics, that is, in one material raises several topical issues related to some history. So, we can argue that modern storytelling formats allow us to reveal several topics within a single multimedia project of the publication, but this, in turn, requires a detailed study and immersion of the author himself into the story he tells.

In the French multimedia longreads, the dominant genre (80%) is an essay with large use of descriptive means, in contrast to the Kazakhstan editions, where it is difficult to single out any one genre. Despite the fact that, according to the researchers, there should not be a statement of facts on the basis of storytelling, the authors used multimedia data genres in the multimedia longread that we studied. Also, in Kazakhstani and French longreads storytelling is presented through the so-called multi-genre, when the author uses several genres when writing his own text. It should be noted that in the Kazakh media

multi-genre is stronger (70%) than in the French-speaking media (40%) (Yang et al., 2019).

Another feature of storytelling is the presence of a personal history. The percentage of stories where there are heroes in the text in the Kazakh and French media is not very different. Thus, a comparative analysis of the Kazakh and French multimedia longreads, as a storytelling format, gave the following results. In both Kazakhstani and French longread media texts are presented on mixed topics in the multi-genre format, the texts lack first-person narratives, but there are examples of personal stories presented through the characters. Also in both cases there is no possibility of non-linear reading. A distinctive feature is the volume of media texts, Kazakhstan's media texts are larger in volume, besides this, in Kazakhstan's longreads, the composition is mainly zigzag and parallel story, and in French, predominantly linear.

4. CONCLUSION

So, in this article we attempted a comprehensive analysis of multimedia storytelling as a relevant phenomenon in the modern information space. For this, the basic conceptual apparatus and formats of multimedia journalistic storytelling were identified, the features of story building were identified, and criteria were developed for the analysis of longreads as a format of multimedia storytelling.

Thirdly, we also developed our own method of content analysis of multimedia longreads, the materials of which were analyzed in accordance of the following characteristics (theme, genre, the presence of the author's I). Analysis of multimedia storytelling of Kazakhstan and French media, and further their comparison, became the main objectives of our study. As a result of the analysis, we can conclude that the Kazakh and French media do not have fundamental differences in the creation of multimedia storytelling products, however, there are features that should be noted. Speaking about the comparative analysis of the content, we noted that the authors of the Kazakh media lay the foundation of the multimedia production of the history of people, telling from a third person.

The author's I is practically absent in the texts, however, the compositions zigzag and parallel story used by journalists allow to insert fragments of the text when the narration comes from the first person of the hero. Unlike Kazakhstani journalists, French authors, when using a non-linear composition, often insert video interviews where the characters themselves tell the stories of their lives. In the French media, journalists also avoid the personal pronouns of the first person and try to keep the narration being above the story, and not one of its characters. According to the results of the study, we can assert that multimedia storytelling is a genre that includes a combination of several journalistic genres in the framework of one material. Especially it is necessary to highlight the fact that there are no specific laws of their use: in each of the materials analyzed by us, the authors used

different genres, starting from the idea, theme and design of the longread.

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