

FEATURES OF THE JOURNALISTIC / MEDIA / PRESS DISCOURSE IN AGRICULTURE

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Abstract. This paper explores the defining features and functional roles of journalistic, media, and press discourse through the lens of English, French, and Romanian experts in discourse theory. The authors begin by clarifying the concept of journalistic discourse, outlining its theoretical foundations and emphasizing its central place in contemporary communication. Two primary forms are examined in detail: the interview and the reportage, both of which serve as key modes through which journalistic discourse operates. The paper further investigates the dynamic capabilities of journalistic discourse—its power to act on audiences, assign roles or meanings, construct identities, define social realities, ensure continuity, possess authority, include or exclude voices, level hierarchies, transform perceptions, and utilize linguistic tools for specific purposes. Through this multifaceted functionality, the authors highlight how journalistic discourse not only conveys information but also actively shapes public understanding and social structures. Importantly, the analysis does not overlook the dual nature of these functions, discussing both the positive contributions—such as informing, enlightening, and engaging audiences—and the potential negative effects, including manipulation, bias, or marginalization. By integrating perspectives from multiple linguistic and cultural traditions, the paper offers a comprehensive and nuanced view of the roles, risks, and responsibilities inherent in journalistic communication.

Keywords: journalistic discourse, interview, reportage, features

INTRODUCTION

Journalistic discourse (“a communicative act of particular linguistic phenomenon that requires some special norms and reflects on social, cultural, political, ideological aspects” – Chaal, 2019, 19) has become, since the 1970s, an object of study for political science (“the branch of knowledge that deals with the state and systems of government; the scientific analysis of political activity and behaviour” – English Oxford Living Dictionaries), sociology (“the study of the development, structure, and functioning of human society; the study of social problems” – idem), and sociopolitics (“the ways in which politics and relations of power are constituted through an authoritative discourse on the social.” – Ssorin-Chaikov, 2015) (Krieg, 2000, 75). It consists in any discourse that appears in audio, audio-video, and written media, and has two major forms – the interview and the reportage:

- the interview is “a meeting of people face-to-face, especially for consultation” (English Oxford Living Dictionaries), in which the focus of the journalist can be on care (“serious attention or consideration applied to doing something correctly or to avoid damage or risk” – English Oxford Living Dictionaries), honesty (“the quality of being honest [free of deceit; truthful and sincere]” – English Oxford Living Dictionaries), openness (“willingness to consider, accept and embrace new ideas, experiences, suggestions, or behaviors” – Definitions.net), or recognition (“acknowledgement of the existence, validity, or legality of something” – English Oxford Living Dictionaries) (Papanagnou, 2023);

- the reportage is “the reporting of news by the press and the broadcasting media; the factual, journalistic presentation of an account in a book or other text” (English Oxford Living Dictionaries): “[...] news reporting is a mode of rhetoric in the broadest sense of the word – a value laden, ideologically determined discourse with a clear potential to influence the media audience’s assumptions and beliefs about the way the world is and the way it ought to be.” (White, 2006, 37)

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The materials used in this paper consist in articles on journalistic discourse from three different cultural areas: United Kingdom, France, and Romania. The method used in this paper is content analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The journalistic discourse is characterised by the following:

- It can act on the social structure, but the social structure also acts on the media discourse (Breton & Proulx, 1989, in Paquette, 1998);

- It can assign certain functions to the actors of an event who make the news of the media: in the case of armed conflicts, for example, it is the combative, cultural, dramatic, dreamlike (according to which death, hand-to-hand combat, resistance to the enemy transforms the common man into an exceptional being) and social functions: It places the military in a classic narrative logic: physical distancing (military operation away from the country), misfortune (hostage-taking, war, rebellion), evil (discovery of genocide, defeat and its consequences, imprisonment, casualties), mediation that transforms the victim into the hero (combatants and their chief, conflict, conquest, resistance), repair of the original evil (peace, restoration of order), return of the hero alive or dead (ceremony, decoration, parade), recognition of the hero (the tribute of the nation); It presents the death of the soldier as the fulfilment of a passion in the religious sense of the term (Peillon, 1997);

- It can be a social fact that generates cultural, economic, political, scientific, etc. power relations with other social domains and with other actors, whose effects (dominance / submission, dependence / autonomy) allow the political role of journalism to be situated in relation to a hierarchical social system (Chanteau, 1998);

- It can be innovative by using anchoring (presenting and coordinating a TV or radio programme) practices (Costera Meijer, 2020);

- It can be metajournalistic, i.e., include “institutionalized publications such as decade-old journalism reviews, news and opinion columns, news analysis programs, and on various Internet-based outlets ranging from professional news organizations to individual blogs and Twitter feeds” (Carlson, 2014 and Haas, 2006, in De Maeyer & Holton, 2015) (Engelke, 2023; Perreault, Tandoc Jr. & Caberlon, 2023);

- It can be politically-oriented (Chaal, 2019; Chatti, 2020);

- It can be polyphonic (“producing or involving many sounds or voices” – English Oxford Living Dictionaries): a newspaper can gather extremely heterogeneous texts (Krieg, 2000);

- It can be sexist (“characterized by or showing prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination, typically against women, on the basis of sex” – English Oxford Living Dictionaries) (Neshkovska, 2022);

- It can build a normative-prescriptive type of information by turning from being informative (a discourse about fashion, catwalk, and fashion magazines) into being advertising and from being advertising into being ideological (it proposes a unique fashion model) (Courbières, 2002);

- It can define national categories: for instance, Romanians are defined with the help of cultural products such as literature, cultural personalities, songs, proverbs/thoughts, etc. and Europeans with the help of cultural products such as cultural personalities, literature, architecture, song, etc. – as expected, Romanians benefit from five proverbs / thoughts (among which “A sword does not cut a bent head”) and the Europeans from only two (Ștefănescu & Velicu, 2006);

- It can ensure the interference and the merging of two discursive types – the journalistic discourse (with colloquial expressions such as “to be a contrarian,” “to act tough”) and the philosophical-speculative discourse – into a mixed but functionally coherent discourse (Hoinărescu, 2021);

- It can have a commercial dimension (Carrier, 2023);

- It can have extra- and supra-textual effects (discourse structuration, discourse institutionalization and closure) (Carvalho, 2008);

- It can have its own internal logic (the actual characteristics of the discourse: the length and number of articles dedicated to a certain topic) and its own external logic (historical and socio-political events that can determine the characteristics of the discourse: demonstrations, draft laws, legislative, municipal, presidential elections, reforms) (Huybrechts, Reytrat & Youssef, 1998);

- It can have priority themes: for instance, the extent to which identity – European and national – is important (how it is used, constructed, received and/or assumed) in current Romanian society (Ștefănescu & Velicu, 2005);

- It can have several levels of communication – verbal, para-verbal and non-verbal – which must be convergent for the message transmitted to be effective in electoral media discourses (Apetri, 2006);

- It can include political speech: in the political speech of the press, we are dealing either with a speech of the press, or with a speech in the press of some non-journalist actors: however, it is not enough for the journalist’s speech to be credible, there must also be a third party that provides the content of the speech (Repentigny, 1981);

- It can level linguistic individuality by appealing to clichés, terms, or verbal stereotypes in fashion (for instance, There is potential..., We are on the barricades...) (Ardeleanu, 2014);

- It can promote fake news (“false information that is broadcast or published as news for fraudulent or politically motivated purposes” – English Oxford Living Dictionaries) (Alba-Juez & Lachlan Mackenzie, 2019);

- It can promote freedom (Rupar, Němcová Tejkalová & Seizova, 2019);

- It can turn a meta-discourse into a political speech: military metaphors still used in the sports press made a Romanian linguist draw the following conclusion (in which, by the way, he did not believe): “[...] the people who, on the eve of the outbreak of the war, wrote the sports chronicles in such a language, sprinkled with metaphors from the military vocabulary [adversary, artillery, bombardment, cannon, enemy, fire, hostility, plane, shell, shooting, target], served fascist imperialism and its servants in the country; they sought to provoke and maintain in the masses, by any means, the atmosphere of unrest and tension conducive to the outbreak of war” (Tohăneanu, 1949, 17; cf. De Fornel, 1993);

- It can turn into hate speech, a term that covers “all forms of expression that disseminate, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism or ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant descent” (Weber, 2009), that has its origins in elite discourse (Van Dijk, 1993), that manifests itself in forms such as conflictual speech, defamatory language, distortion, exaggeration, insults, stereotyping (Angi & Bădescu, 2014) in the public space and mass media (Sliusarenco, 2018);

- It can use all signs: the press operates “an integration of all signs [graphemes / letters, images]” (Miclău, 1977, 146).

- It can use figurative speech: “Building on the framing dynamics of figurative speech, journalistic discourse commonly resorts to metaphors to transcend opinion and dictate behavior.” (Chatti, 2020);

- It can use persuasion: “[...] persuasion can be used to heighten readers’ sensitivity to a given issue [“emotion which deepens and illuminates our understanding” – Cockcroft et al., 2014, in Alba-Juez & Lachlan Mackenzie, 2019, 19], or on the contrary, to manipulate their emotions, stances and beliefs [cf. Cicero’s *perturbatio*, in Alba-Juez & Lachlan Mackenzie, 2019, 19].”

CONCLUSIONS

Journalistic / media / press discourse has both positive and negative functions, as well as an intermediate function – positive / negative:

- Positive function: having its own internal logic the only function that cannot be both positive and/or negative;

- Positive / negative: acting on the social structure; assigning certain functions to the actors of an event who make the news of the media; being innovative; being metajournalistic; being politically-oriented; being polyphonic; building a normative-prescriptive type of information; defining national categories; ensuring the interference and the merging of two discursive types; generating cultural, economic, political, scientific, etc. power relations; having a commercial dimension; having extra- and supra-textual effects; having priority themes; having several levels of communication; including political speech; levelling linguistic individuality; promoting freedom; turning a meta-discourse into a political speech; using all signs; using figurative speech; using persuasion – functions that can be both positive and/or negative depending mainly on the policy of the medium;

- Negative functions: being sexist; promoting fake news; turning into hate speech – the only functions that are negative and that could never be also positive / negative, no matter the policy of the medium in which they appear.

This reality points, once again, to the importance of this communicative act of a particular linguistic phenomenon with special norms and which reflects (on) social, cultural, political, ideological aspects.

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