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# AUDIOVISUALS IN ONLINE NEWSPAPERS – CONTENT AND FUNCTION ANALYSIS OF VIDEOS IN NEWS STORIES

## 1. Introduction

The development of web technologies has exerted a considerable influence on news media. Technology has been observed to have enhanced various transformations in the dissemination of news, the cost and access to information, and what is equally important, in the news forms and genres (Ward 2002; Boczkowski 2004; Kolodzy 2006). This influence is clearly reflected in the evolution which the standard genre of a news story has undergone recently. The typical structure of a news story, with a headline, lead and main story, enhanced by a visual element in the form of a photograph, has evolved into the so-called 'multimedia package' (McAdams 2005; Stevens 2011) – a news story in the form of a single multimedia product, composed of text, picture, sound, film and interactive components. This convergent format is more and more frequently applied in newspapers and on news platforms, due to the opportunity it gives to provide the coverage of the events in an attractive and all-encompassing form.

The use of multimedia is particularly significant, as it allows the combination of different means of presentation of the news, different conventions, and story-telling devices, thus influencing the structure and content of news stories (Dunn 2005: 151). As Kolodzy (2006: 206) claims, "multimedia can provide an audience with a story that is not as effectively understood if told only with text; it adds another dimension to reporting and presenting the news not available in print." As a result, the news story becomes an intersemiotic entity, where the layers interweave and complement one another, providing different sides, angles and meanings to the story.

The standard multimedia components accompanying news stories encompass images, infographics, photographs, and videos. From among the multimedia components presented above, it is the videos that have recently gained in significance in online newspapers.

The addition of audiovisual components to news stories is associated with the power of the visual, the potential impact it may exert, and many functions audiovisuals may fulfill. What is also significant is the process of the reception of a visual message. To wit, the information expressed by means of visual representation, may be processed more easily and is transferred to the receiver more quickly than a written message (Wolny-Zmorzyński 2007: 61). Also the meaning potential of the visual should not be underestimated. Audiovisuals, as El Refaie (2003: 89 quoted in Wojcieszak 2009: 477) states, may be more suited than verbal texts to implicitly convey affective meanings.

However, despite the popularity and attractiveness of multimedia components, not much attention has been given to the influence of multimedia on story-telling practices in online newspapers. The analysis offered here aims at investigating the audiovisual content in online news and the relationship of videos to news stories. The empirical material comes from news stories published over two months (February and March 2012) by three leading German, British and Polish dailies respectively: *Die Welt*, the *Guardian*, and *Gazeta Wyborcza*, and investigates 130 news stories from each newspaper. The inclusion of newspapers from three different cultural backgrounds is designed to help evaluate the international character of the tendencies in structuring the news.

Specifically, the analysis aims at accounting for the following phenomena:
- the content of the audio-visual components – what is shown in the videos, the participants, the setting, the themes covered;
- the relationship between the textual and audiovisual message;
- the news values underlying the audio-visual components.

The working hypothesis is that due to the role of the visual on the internet and widespread presence of multimedia online, more and more news stories will be supplemented with an audiovisual component. In addition, it may be posited that the videos will be used to enhance the newsworthiness of the events as well as the impact and value of the news story itself.

## 2. Audiovisuals in the press

The audio-visual components of news stories, being a relatively recent addition, have received little attention so far. Previous research on visual communication in the press focused predominantly on the investigation of news images.

## 2.1. News images – function

Photographs and images in the press have become a stable component of news stories due to their considerable meaning-potential and the effect they can produce on the readers. News images constitute such a significant element of a news story, because they may perform different functions and may convey a range of both explicit and implicit meanings. The primary functions of photographs involve the following (Perlmutter 2003; Caple 2007; Wolny-Zmorzyński 2010):

- informative – photographs present objective, verifiable information about an event;
- expressive – photographs reflect the involvement and the commitment of the photographer, as well as the photographer's approach to the photographed entity;
- impressive – photographs are designed to impress the viewers, to influence their emotions and views, to attract and inspire the receivers;
- aesthetic – photographs carry aesthetic value.

The informative role is considered the primary function of press photography. Photographs are used to render the news more concrete, accessible, and understandable. For the journalists, they serve as a means to enhance objectivity, as they give the appearance of authenticity and factuality of coverage (cf. Fulton 2005; Wolny-Zmorzyński 2010).

The research on press photography has also focused on the investigation of the factors which may influence the reception of information in a visual form. The studies have demonstrated that the following aspects and components of a visual representation are particularly significant and have the highest impressive potential:

- personalized information – images showing individuals are said to be more appealing to the audience; as the analysts show, the viewers find it easier to understand the situation of a single individual rather than of a group;
- dramatic content – dramatizing the visual message; the publication of images showing unusual, sensational events enhances the power of the image;
- illustrative content – photographs which confirm what happened are judged as more valuable by the public (Wolny-Zmorzynski 2010: 230-31).

These components have been observed to play an important role in enhancing the attractiveness of the photographs.

## 2.2. Text-image-sound relations

In the press, news photographs are as a rule juxtaposed with text, entering as two different means of expression into a range of relations. As Wojcieszak

(2009: 460) observes, a lot of research concerning these relations was based on Barthes' (1977) study of the relations of *anchorage*, *illustration*, and *relay*. In Barthes' terminology *anchorage* describes the relationship in which a text supports an image, clarifies its meaning and helps interpret the visual information, *illustration* describes the situation in which an image performs a supportive role to text, while *relay* refers to a mutual reinforcement between image and text.

The analyses of news stories and press photographs have shown that similar relations may be found between the verbal and the visual elements. For instance, it has been demonstrated that images illustrate, sometimes also explain events, and perform a supporting and complementary role to text (Griffin 1999; Martinec and Salway 2005; Zelizer 2005; Zelizer 2010).

Wojcieszak (2009) studied the relationship between the iconic, linguistic and audio messages in television news broadcasts. She identified six categories of the relationship – polysemy reduction (the text can reduce multiple interpretations of an image and direct the audience to certain readings), meaning attainment through sound (text acquires connotation through audio narrative), reinforcement (one mode is used to amplify the idea conveyed by another), contextualization and acquiring meaning (images are supplied with meaning by audio and verbal narrative), contradiction (the verbal, visual and audio messages may contradict one another), and slogano-symbolism (use of slogans incorporated into visual symbols).

The studies described above demonstrate that the channels of expression may enter into diverse relations, in which each of the components may perform a more or less significant function and may contribute to a greater or lesser extent to the overall meaning of the message.

## 3. Audiovisuals in online news stories

The analysis of the news stories conducted for the purposes of this study suggests that there is a difference between the newspapers with respect to the frequency of audiovisuals accompanying the news stories. The highest number of videos was found in the news stories of *Die Welt*, where videos supplemented 64% of the stories. In the *Guardian* and *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the videos were supplied in 53% and 12% of the news stories, respectively.

In the analyzed collection of news stories accompanied by a video component, the textual message represented the basic means of expression and the main carrier of content. Thus, the texts can be seen to contextualize the videos, clarify their background and in this way lend the basis for their interpretation. The videos perform the role of an addition or a complement – the question is what kind of content is supplied and how this content is related to the written text.

Though it is difficult to provide a clear-cut classification of the audiovisuals due to a considerable variety in the purpose and subject-matter of the videos, a few major categories of content supplied to textual news stories may be distinguished. The analysis of the corpus of the news stories and the videos and of the relationship between them has shown that there is an analogy to the relations which hold between an image and text, as described above. The analogy concerns the composition and subject-matter of the audiovisual components and their relation to the textual layer of a news story. The investigation of the content of the videos and their connection with the written story makes it possible to single out the following major and most frequent types of relationships:

- reinforcement;
- elaboration;
- individualization;
- promotion.

Each of these relationships influences the overall meaning of the news story and underlines or expands on a different component of the textual layer.

## 3.1. Reinforcement

Reinforcement, as defined by Wojcieszak (2009: 467), refers to the relation in which one mode of presentation strengthens the meaning of another. Wojcieszak (2009) identified examples in which such relation occurred between audio and textual modes, as well as audio and visual modes of presentation.

In the analyzed corpus, reinforcement has been found between the audiovisual and textual layers of the stories as well and has proved to be one of the most frequent functions of the videos. The audiovisuals serving this function have been found in 44% of the news stories of the *Guardian*, 21% of *Die Welt*, and 26% of the stories in *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

In this case, the videos were used to reinforce and emphasize the impact of the textual layer of the news stories. This relation occurred predominantly in the news stories concerning tragic, dramatic events, such as accidents, disasters, attacks, and military actions, for instance in the news stories which reported on the war in Syria, attacks in Iran or in Iraq, a gas explosion in Kazakhstan, and a terrorist attack on a Jewish school in Toulouse, France. The relationship may be illustrated with the examples (1) and (2) discussed below:

(1)    News story: "Libya apologizes for the desecration of British war graves" (The *Guardian*, 04.03.2012).

The report provides news on the act of desecration of British graves in Libya. The textual part of the story is structured in the following way:

- information on the apology issued by the Libyan officials;
- information on the video and its content;
- description of the damage done to the grave;
- general data on the cemeteries in Libya;
- extracts from the statements by the Foreign Office minister and spokespersons of the National Transitional Council, as well as by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission about the restoration of the graves;
- information on the groups suspected of the demolition;
- statement by a Libyan militiaman condemning the act.

The story is accompanied by a 3.48-minute amateur video which shows the action of destroying the graves. In the video we may see men armed with guns, hammers and sledges among the graves of a cemetery. The video records how the men damage and break the graves, while other people observe the scene.

The textual part of the news story provides a rich description of the event, touching upon various issues and angles of the story. The text also provides a description of the content of the video, and in this way of the incident itself. The readers may find out that "the video shows more than 30 armed men kicking down the gravestones of British servicemen while others use sledgehammers to break the cenotaphs." The text, with the description of the visual content, gives the reader quite a comprehensive account of the incident. In this way, the text may be considered sufficient for the reader to get an idea of what happened and to envisage the scene of the event. Yet, the additional audiovisual account of the incident may be seen to definitely amplify the impact of the message. By watching the video, the user is given a chance to see the extent of the damage done to the graves, the force with which the graves were destroyed, as well as the determination of the vandals to destroy the cemetery. The viewer may hear the sounds of anger, the shouts of the vandals, as well as the sounds accompanying the destruction of the graves. The fact that the video appeals to these senses makes its impact more powerful and its reinforcing potential stronger.

The headline of the other news story that serves as illustration is provided in (2) below:

(2)   News story: "Kony 2012: Campaigner's meltdown brought on by stress says wife" (The *Guardian*, 17.03.2012).

The story was devoted to the arrest of Jason Russell, the co-founder of the Invisible Children Charity. The textual layer of the story describes the incident, with the information structured in the following way:

- description of the incident – Russell's arrest;
- description of the background of the incident – media attention given to the Invisible Children Charity after the publication of videos concerning Joseph Kony (the leader of the Lord's Resistance Army);

- statement by Russell's wife on her husband's distress;
- general information on the functioning of the charity;
- description of Russell's co-workers' reaction to the incident.

The audiovisual material which is supplemented to this report is a 0.12-minute video which shows Russell running nude along the streets of San Diego before he was arrested. The scene shown in the video focuses only on the most sensational, dramatic moment of the story. The emphasis on presenting the main hero in such circumstances clearly shows that the video was designed to amplify the sensational nature of the event. The audiovisual material does not supply any significant details of the story, nor does it expand on the textual layer. The sheer length of the video additionally suggests that its purpose was purely to reinforce and dramatize the coverage.

The videos accompanying the investigated stories can be seen to provide a visual reinforcement of the events. The visual layer is exploited to make the textual coverage more evocative and impressive (cf. Wojcieszak 2009: 467). By offering a visualization of the events or the consequences of the disasters, they help the viewers envision the scene of events, see the events, and experience them more directly. The videos support the textual coverage and thus may be considered as a means of authenticating the story.

As far as the relation between the textual and the visual layer from the point of view of the degree of informativity, the text provides the core discussion of the events, an all-inclusive presentation of the event, often supplemented with further analyses and interpretations discussing different sides and angles of the story. The videos added to the reports are on average relatively short and focus on the core event described in the textual layer. Evidently, the videos are applied to highlight the sensational, dramatic, outrageous and horrifying aspects of the event in question. This relationship between the modes accords with Barthes' and Hartley's claims that "journalism aims to visualize extremes" (quoted in Wojcieszak 2009: 467). Visualization of the drama, namely, of the aftermath of a tragedy constitutes the basic function of such videos. The editors make use of the powerful nature of the visual – its impressive potential – in order to move and make an impact on the readers.

The videos may be seen to enhance the central news values behind such events, i.e., the news values of negativity and conflict in particular. Since they cover news on unusual, controversial subjects, which may produce a strong impact on the viewers, the audiovisuals can also be used to enhance the news value of novelty and surprise (cf. Bell 1991: 155–60; Machin and Niblock 2006; Cotter 2010: 69).

## 3.2. Elaboration

Another role of the analyzed videos involves elaborating, i.e., expanding upon the textual layer. The main purpose of such videos is further exploration of the topic in question and extension of the content of the newscast – the videos provide additional information, enlarge on the main theme of the news story at length, and/or develop selected threads of the stories in order to achieve the completeness of the coverage. The videos which performed this role have been found in 53% of the news stories of *Die Welt*, 23% of the *Guardian*, and 34% of the stories in *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

Two major sub-categories may be distinguished in this group – the audiovisuals providing a single-thread development of the story and those comprising an extensive, multiple-thread elaboration on the textual layer.

The videos of the first type specified and elaborated on the key point of the event described in the news story. In these cases, the text provided the gist of the story, while the video presented a full coverage of an event. The following video may be seen to perform the function in question:

(3)    News report: "Pope arrives in Mexico pledging to fight 'evil' drugs trade" (The *Guardian*, 24.03.2012).

In this news report, which concerns the Pope's visit to Mexico, the gist of the event is provided in the textual form, while further details are given in the video. The text reports on the event and provides the following information:
- information on the arrival;
- the most significant extracts from the Pope's statement – quotes concerning the fight against violence and crime;
- information about the people gathered to welcome the Pope, and extracts from the statements of the people.

The video, by contrast, offers a full coverage of the event – the recording (1.43 min) comprises the greetings, the full recording of the Pope's official statement and the subsequent press conference. In this way, the video specifies selected details mentioned in the textual layer of the report and complements the news provided in the text.

As far as multiple-thread development is concerned, the audiovisuals analyzed here extend the content of the textual coverage, developing it in various directions. The videos performing the function of expanding on the story frequently assume the form of complex analyses of the topics. In the analyzed corpus, the videos comprised formats resembling TV documentaries or feature programs, in which emphasis is placed on a deepened presentation of the topics in question, supplemented with expert and journalistic analyses and interpretations. (4) provided below illustrates the videos exemplifying this approach:

(4)     News report: "Rząd uzgodnił reformę emerytur. Obliczyliśmy, ile
        wyniosą wypłaty" ['The government has agreed on the pension reform.
        We have calculated the payments'] (*Gazeta Wyborcza*, 30.03.2012).

The text reports on the government's decision of accepting the policy con-
cerning pension reform in Poland. Specifically, the following details are given:

- news on the government's decision;
- basic information on the reform – the amount of future pensions for aver-
  age men and women;
- information on the previous regulations concerning pensions in Poland.

The video added to the story presents an all-encompassing discussion of
the reform. The video provides an interpretation of the consequences of the
reform, as well as the presentation of the advantages and disadvantages, with
economic and financial consultancy for future pensioners.

The audiovisuals in this category complement the textual layer by develop-
ing selected threads of the reports, and by supplying additional content for the
readers interested in the subject in question. The textual layers of the reports
in this case provide the most significant information and details needed to
obtain a general view of the events reported on. The audiovisuals may be seen
as supplements for the viewers interested in the subject or obtaining further
information on the events.

In this group of audiovisuals, in contrast to the previous category, we may
observe that the emphasis is put on a different selection of news values. The
values foregrounded in the elaborating videos encompass mainly prominence,
proximity and personalization. The videos in question elaborated on the events
concerning well-known politicians and public figures, and were devoted to the
issues of importance to a particular community or nation (cf. Fowler 1991: 15;
Cotter 2010: 69).

## 3.3. Individualization

Another function of the videos and the relation to the textual layer is associated
with individualization of the coverage. The concept of individualization, as de-
fined by Fulton (2005), involves adding to the news story a personal perspec-
tive of the immediate participants of the events. According to Fulton (2005:
237), it is typical of news stories to "associate events with specific individuals."
This strategy, "invites us to understand events in the news through the perspec-
tive of individuals affected by those events" (Fulton 2005: 238). The tendency
towards individualization of news stories has been emphasized in numerous
analyses, and is nowadays considered an important marker and determinant
of news programs (Fulton 2005: 238). The strategy to present a human side of

the events, to highlight stories of individuals, has been considered particularly powerful in enhancing the newsworthiness of the stories. This important value and potential of individualization result from the impression of authenticity it lends to the stories – the individuals in the stories "are attributed with social roles, personal qualities and actual utterances that convey their feelings and intentions" (Fulton 2005: 238), which enhances the realism and dependability of the stories. Portrayal of other people is supposed to have considerable impressive potential as well, as it "engages feelings, attitudes and emotions" on the part of the viewer (Hall 1997: 226, quoted in Wojcieszak 2009: 474).

Within the analyzed corpus, audiovisual supplements were used as a means of enhancing the degree of individualization of a news story. The videos accompanying selected news stories comprised accounts given by the heroes of the events or the people involved in the stories. Audiovisuals serving this function were identified in 18% of the news stories of the *Guardian*, 14% of *Die Welt* and 13% of the stories in *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

Among the audiovisual materials performing this function we may find videos accompanying the news reports illustrated in (5) and (6):

(5)    News story: "Student arrested for filming buildings wins police payout" (The *Guardian*, 19.03.2012).

The news story provides information on the result of a legal action taken by an Italian student against the London police. The textual layer of the story presents the following aspects of the story:
- the background of the story;
- the event itself – Simona Bonomo's arrest and the release;
- the legal action against the police undertaken by Bonomo and further development of the case.

The video (8.13 min) supplemented to the report highlights the perspective of the main character of the story. In the movie, Bonomo recounts the story herself and presents her view on the events. The individualization is clearly reflected in the prominence given in the movie to her personal story, and the emphasis put on her feelings and experiences.

(6)    News story: "Shrien Dewani: judges halt extradition on mental health ground" (The *Guardian*, 30.03.2012).

The text provides news on the events concerning the story of Anni Dewani, a woman murdered in Cape Town in 2011, and Shrien Dewani, her husband suspected of complicity in the murder. The story focuses on the court's decision concerning the extradition of Dewani from Great Britain to South Africa. The text provides the following details:

- background of the story;
- extracts from Anni Dewani's family's statement concerning extradition;
- information on the health condition of the accused Shrien Dewani, and the consequences a potential extradition might have on his health.

The video accompanying the story focuses on Anni Dewani in particular and presents her family's view on the events and the court's decision. The video clearly exemplifies the focus on an individualized perspective as it highlights the personal tragedy of the family, and the feelings and intentions of the people involved.

The quotation of individuals, ordinary people involved in the events, helps the journalists to obtain a true-life, honest coverage, and ensure that the coverage reflects reality (Wolny-Zmorzyński 2007: 79). This strategy, in particular, helps to distance the authors and shift the perspective from the journalist to the speaker, and in this way enhances the neutrality of the coverage, offering, as Fulton (2005: 239) claims, "an impartial account of what happened, uninfluenced by the personal views of the journalist." The strategy can, however, perform a significant persuasive role. The selection of particular characters presented in the videos and the perspectives shown may fulfill an impressive function, and serve as a means of encouraging the users to accept only the selected perspective shown (Fulton 2005: 239).

A great many of the videos in this category, featuring individuals as the main heroes of the movies, reflect an emphasis placed on the coverage of the so-called human interest stories focusing on average citizens and the presentation of the anthropocentric perspective in the news. In this way, the videos enhance the news values of personalization in particular (cf. Fowler 1991: 15). As Fulton (2005: 238) emphasizes, individualization helps shift perspective on the people since the events are reported from a personal rather than an institutional standpoint.

## 3.4. Promotion – complementary trailers

A further category of videos, present mainly among Polish news stories, comprised audiovisual elements in the form of movie trailers, scenes from movies, television shows, music clips, or music concerts. Videos serving this function have been found in 5% of the news stories of the *Guardian*, 4% of *Die Welt*, and 17% of the stories in *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

The audiovisuals of this kind can be illustrated with the following examples:

(7)    News story: "Teatr Telewizji znowu na żywo. Po *Boskiej* czas na *Skarpetki*..." ['Theatre on TV live again. After *The Divine Comedy*, it's time for *Skarpetki*'] (*Gazeta Wyborcza*, 27.02.2012).

The story informs about a planned live transmission of a theatre play on television. The report provides background information on previous popular transmissions of theatrical plays on television and describes details about the technical aspect of the next transmission.

The video is a TV trailer of the play, presenting selected scenes from the play and providing basic information on the play in the background.

(8)     "Metallica wolna. Czy wpuści płytę do internetu?" ['Free Metallica. Will it put the CD online?'] (*Gazeta Wyborcza*, 02.03.2012).

The news story presents a report on a planned release of Metallica's new album. The text provides information on the group's work on the recordings. The main focus of the story is the distribution of the future album; the plans for making the recordings available for downloading from the internet are also discussed. The information is supplemented by extracts from a statement by Lars Ulrich, member of the band.

The video added to the story comprises music clips of older songs by the group. Analogously to the previous example, the video cannot be seen to perform any role apart from promotion, enhancing interest in the group, and familiarizing the viewers with their music.

The news stories in this category comprise predominantly reviews or reports on cultural events. In these cases, the videos may be seen as components complementary to the texts, serving as an additional illustration and promotion of the reviewed content, and/or entertainment for the readers. The videos do not clarify the text or provide further details concerning the news, nor do they individualize or reinforce the coverage in any way.

The stories may be seen to enhance the news values of proximity and unambiguity, as they provide information on future events which may be considered relevant by the community of readers (cf. Fowler 1991: 13; Cotter 2010: 69).

## 4. Conclusions

The summary of the major properties of the videos and the categories analyzed here are given in Table 1:

The categories and functions of the audiovisuals discussed here interweave in various ways – the videos offer complex presentations of the topics, in which, for instance, reinforcement may be combined with individualization.

Furthermore, as the frequencies provided above demonstrate, some differences can be observed among the newspapers in the type of videos offered:
- *Die Welt* – elaborating videos dominate, as well as feature programs, presenting complex analyses of the phenomena in question;

**Table 1**. Audiovisuals in news stories – relation to text, features, functions and values

| Relationship | Feature | Function | News values |
|---|---|---|---|
| reinforce-ment | amplification of negative events<br>emphasis on drama/tragedy<br>picturing of catastrophic, shocking scenes<br>emphasis on sensationalism | informative:<br>provide evidence<br>capture the critical moment of<br>the reported event<br>picture the scene and the participants<br>impressive and persuasive:<br>influence the users' feelings<br>influence the users' views | negativity<br>conflict<br>timeliness<br>amplitude |
| elaboration<br>single-thread development<br>multiple-thread development | development of the textual content<br>provision of additional details summarized in the story<br>expansion of the textual content<br>development of various threads mentioned in the story | informative:<br>provide evidence of an event<br>picture the scene and the participants<br>provide the minutiae of an event | timeliness<br>personification<br>prominence<br>proximity |
| individual-ization | focus on average people<br>focus on human interest<br>emphasis on personal, intimate opinions | impressive and persuasive:<br>influence the viewers' feelings<br>influence the viewers' opinions<br>story telling | personification<br>negativity |
| promotion | advertisement of the content<br>introducing the content in question<br>entertainment | impressive and persuasive:<br>influence the viewers' attitude to the content promoted<br>aesthetic:<br>provide an artistic experience<br>influence the viewers' senses | proximity<br>unambiguity |

(Own source)

- The *Guardian* – by contrast, emphasis is placed on a visual coverage of incidents, accidents, affairs – reinforcement and footage directly from the scene play the most significant role. In the British news stories, a strong tendency towards individualization by means of audiovisuals can also be seen;
- *Gazeta Wyborcza* – elaboration on the key event and promotion in the form of trailers has proved to be the most frequent.

Because of the complexity of the subject-matter of the videos, further research is needed to provide a fuller description of the audiovisuals and to account for other forms of interplay between the textual and audiovisual modes.

The complexity and relative fuzziness of the phenomenon notwithstanding, the presence of audiovisuals and their significant role and contribution to the evolution of the overall structure of a news story needs to be acknowledged.

As a result of the introduction of audio-visual elements to the news stories, a change in their structure can be observed, leading to increased segmentation, intertextuality and generic heterogeneity of the stories (cf. Dunn 2005: 151). The audiovisuals introduce to the news stories elements of such genres as reportage, feature program, biography, survey, as well as music and film genres. Owing to the audiovisuals offering such generic diversity, the consumers are provided with events broadcast at different layers, by means of different forms of expression.

The addition of news in the form of videos influences not only the structure of a news story, but predominantly its value and overtone. Videos perform many of the functions attributed to photography – informative, impressive, expressive, yet to a fuller and broader extent. Movies may help uncover meanings not present in the text and supply additional information; they may provide evidence for the event, tell a story, show the scene and the participants. Videos perform an impressive function as well, allow readers to empathize and to understand the situation of the participants of the movies. The crucial function which all the videos share is visualization of the events – a property lacking in the textual layer. As Fulton (2005: 140) claims, video images may help to show that the textual description reflects reality, thus reinforcing its credibility. In this way, just like photographs, audiovisuals lend the story the appearance of objectivity, a property of the news particularly desired by journalists. More importantly, videos also help to convey immediacy of the news and enhance the vividness of the coverage. The addition of the videos clearly aims at increasing the newsworthiness of the events and the appeal of the stories. Personalization, drama, and sensationalism are the standard qualities enhancing the attractiveness and impact level of news stories.

The promotional plane of the addition of the multimedia is equally significant. The multimedia prove the potential of the newspapers to broadcast at various levels and to offer the readers news in a variety of forms. The news presented in various modalities may help the newspaper satisfy different pref-

erences of the users – of those either more text- or more multimedia-oriented. The audiovisuals enhance the entertaining value of the news as well, and thus may cater for the needs of the readers pursuing diversion and variety instead of sheer informative and analytic journalistic content.

The new media form – the multimedia package, draws heavily from traditional news practices and news genres, typical predominantly of television. Still, the addition of multimedia and interactive components may considerably expand the meaning potential of a news story. This merger gives room for experimentation and evolution, and advance of new forms of expression.

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