



EDITORIAL GENRES IN PRESS AND THEIR ORGANIZATION IN HYPERSTRUCTURES

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The study of the hyper structure phenomenon in press intersects the issue of press genres. Hyper structure strengthens and awards a new importance to the journalistic genres. Within the succession of Bahtin’s theories, genres have a paramount value in the linguistic interaction as they allow the integration of the enunciations into our intra and extra linguistic experience. This paper sets out to follow on a defined newspapers’ corpus how hyper structure, as manner of organizing the knowledge categories in general, transposes into press and favours within the structuring of media communication certain journalistic genres.

Keywords: Editorial unit, Thematic unit, Category, Prototype.

1. Introduction

Our study regarding the specifics of the journalistic text and of the written press made us bring into discussion the various means of regrouping the articles in known assemblies known as hyper structures. The reference point in our intercession is represented by the non-literary vision of the approached theoretical reflection: redefinition of the concept of journalistic text.

The proposed topic lies at the intersection of three research fields that are very appreciated nowadays: discourse analysis with its theoretical models and knowledge models, the analysis of the media discourse (press, radio, audiovisual) and the linguistic analysis of the journalistic text. The research direction we follow and within which this intervention is framed is the linguistic analysis of the press text focused on the study of certain textual sequences (narration, description, argumentation) or of certain written press genres and especially on the matters related to the theory of journalistic genres such as: the fluctuating nature of the typologies established by manuals and by the discourse analysis, the general heterogeneous configuration of press articles.

After having defined the hyperstructure and its functions, we attempt at presenting the results of a small quantity study. Initially we shall present the characteristics of our corpus in order to subsequently relate them to the number and types of hyper structures privileged by each paper.

1. 1. HyperStructure as Structuring Element

Hyper structure is, according to the specialists of LASELDI1 Centre a kind of journalistic writing, an intermediary and optional information-structuring element that designates a structuring level of journalistic texts between the newspaper and the article. In the Romanian press this form tends to generalize. From what we know, E. U. Grosse and E. Seibold (1996) were the first to advance such a concept, which was taken up by Gilles Lugin² and integrated into his theoretical studies regarding the concept of text, its peritextual frontiers and the co-text quality relation between texts and icons of texts united under the same scriptural area.

Within the same idea, Jacques Mouriouand (Mouriouand, 1997 : 109) underlined the fact that newspapers tend to divide their articles in as small as possible multiple modules, thus proposing another construction of the informational message that associates not only verbal but also iconic and verbal-iconic semiotic units.

Generally speaking, two tendencies are observed in the evolution of the written press. On the one hand a dispersion of the articles in shorter modules to be more quickly and easily identifiable and in order to favour a partial and selective reading of the newspaper. Lugin (2001) also shows that the development of the hyperstructures is accompanied by a marked strengthening of the genres. Therefore, it is not only about the shortening of the articles' length but also about the increase of the number of possible inputs of a subject with the purpose of favouring the selective reading. On the other hand a greater attention is noticed – in the case of the written press, a larger space – given to the visual element. Jacques Mouriouand notices that newspapers tend to reduce the side dedicated to articles in favour of a “topicality staging” (Mouriouand, 1997:12) where photography and what he calls “infographie” (*infographics*) play a determining role.

The definition of hyper structure is given by the same Gilles Lugin as being a co-textual structure which gathers within the same scriptural area of no more than two pages, “an assembly of texts-articles mostly accompanied by photographic and/or infographics iconotexts” (Lugin 2000:35). These co-texts, which are related to the same media event, are usually united by a general title (often accompanied by quite an extended subtitle to be considered an introductory paragraph), by a dominant article or a hyperarticle and by a frame delimitating the perimeter of the hyperstructure. While achieving a complexity scale of the press articles we mention the following steps: from a simple article up to a file having more pages, we go through the composed article (article and illustrative photo with reference legend), elementary hyperstructure – half a page or complex – one or two pages, associating several articles and one or more infographics and/or photos with a more or less developed legend.

1.2. Hyper Structure – Result of Dispersion into Units of a Press Topic

One must distinguish two types of fundamental hyperstructures. A first type is the product of the division and redistribution of a basic article into subunits. This division allows the shortening of the articles and offers various access ways to the readers, the reading thus being eased up. The second hyperstructure type presents itself as a regrouping of complementary articles coming from different sources. We shall attempt to give examples of both categories of structures.

Hyper structure H1 is extracted from the daily newspaper “Jurnalul Național” from 16th March 2011 and concerns the matter of the earthquake, tsunami and the nuclear disaster of Japan. On the basis of this

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topic a large dimensions editorial unit / media event is created, we could say to match the gravity and impact of the events lived by the Japanese people. We are talking of hyper structure to the extent in which the page five article, covering the entire page named “Special” may considered the main article or the hyperarticle (A1), being continue on the next four pages by articles on the same subjects of natural (earthquake) and nuclear disasters. Of course important photographic areas are circumscribed to these articles. These articles, signed by various authors, may be considered a hyperstructure, a regrouping of the same topic in various subjects. We are actually witnessing a diversification of the viewpoints on disasters: thus, there are interviewed and mentioned specialists in earth physics, specialists of the Public Health National Institute, various researchers.

1.3. Hyper Structure Development: Definitions and Main Functions

We deduce from the speciality studies that a hyper structure represents an editorial assembly made up of the body of an article, peritext and auxiliary elements. Many times, the reader doesn’t have the patience to surmount the so-called reading difficulties, heavy, less known, specialized terms and then, the reading is over. Thus can be explained the countless efforts in the field of “dressing up” articles and of a more attractive and effective journalistic writing. J. Mouriquand goes further and underlines the importance of shortening the article: „la longueur décourage systématiquement” (*Length discourages systematically*). The French specialists specify that a text longer than 1,800 signs shall lose the readers quicker. Hence, the tendency to separate/divide texts in multiple modules (Mouriquand, 1997:109). But the hyper structure participates to this effort of enhancing the visibility of information.

The hyper structure prototype is made up of an article and a frame, the presence of a photo with a legend that may complete the device. Hyper structures are the product of either a redistribution of the articles in distinct fractions, signed by one journalist, or of a reunion of elements pertaining to different general categories, signed by several journalists. The auxiliary articles are generally distributed around a main article and separated by the same by colour titles or characters.

Media discourse specialists acknowledge the growing importance of “dramatizing / screening” information. According to them, peritext leads and eases up reading.

Actually, this development of text-images hybrid genres and the frequent occurrence of hyper structures actually answers the needs of this new reading technique that is faster and more selective. The reader wishes to have access to various information faster and easier, the consequence being the increase of the importance of informational genre articles, especially service – utility ones.

In parallel we witness the development of the importance of image. Grosse & Seibold point out a recent evolution related to this subject: „Notons ici une nouvelle tendance celle de substituer bien des passages textuels par des images. (...) Des ensembles complémentaires "texte et image(s)" se profilent: la brève en image, le récit en images et le reportage en images” (*Notice here a new tendency of substituting text passages by images (...) Complementary “text and image(s)” assemblies stand out: news in brief in images, the story in images and the report in images”*) (Grosse & Seibold 1996:41).

Within this context, E. U. Grosse and E. Seibold list three advantages of the hyperstructure: (1) facilitation of text reading avoiding complex structures (digressions, explanations, backgrounds); (2) introduction of serialization by publishing a contribution in different numbers; (3) avoid the co-existence of various intentions into a single article (Grosse & Seibold 1996:54).

Specialist Gilles Lugin concludes in his study about the mixing of genres in hyper structure that the functions of the hyper structure may be summarized as follows:

- ✓ Shortening of the average length of articles
- ✓ Increase of the number of possible entries of a subject, selective and tessellated reading
- ✓ Strengthening of journalistic genres, especially the division into more autonomous units
- ✓ Achievement of privileged connections between various constituents
- ✓ Circulation of meaning inside the hyperstructure
- ✓ Staging / dramatizing information.

2. Press Genres and Hyperstructure

The quantity survey whose results we attempt to sketch herein is actually intended to verify the hypothesis according to which within the hyperstructure takes place a strengthening of the journalistic genres. Our corpus is made up of two newspapers (“Jurnalul Național” and “Adevărul”) taken into consideration during one week, 9th – 16th March 2011. We are trying to define the assembly of hyperstructures, and also reveal their production manner (by distribution / dispersion or regrouping), the type of auxiliary articles, the function of these auxiliary articles (highlighting, reading facilitation, genres distinction) as well as a short reference to the various illustrations intervening into the composition of the hyperstructure (infographics, photography, a series of photos). This quantitative assessment shall allow us, on the one hand, to specify whether the hyperstructure favours certain journalistic genres, and on the other hand, whether the production manner (dispersion – regrouping), the types of journalistic genres, the functions of the auxiliary articles or the various images that may be correlated with the various profiles of the newspapers making up our corpus.

2.1. Corpus Description: Two Different Types of Newspapers

Every newspaper tries to reach out to an as large as possible audience in order to ensure its revenues and of course, to reach its publicity goals that would allow them to survive. Thus, everybody tries, in one way or another, to answer its readers from both the viewpoint of content as well as the shape this content takes. One of the issues we tried to answer to by this material was to specify whether the number of hyperstructures, their obtaining manner, the recurrence of the journalistic genres within the same, the functions of the auxiliary articles and the use of various images are specific to a particular press type.

The journalism materials operate a distinction between the various types of press: quality or elite, on one hand, and popular or tabloid on the other hand.

A distinction we agree with is that according to which the popular press is not necessarily defined by its readers but rather by the topics it approaches – a predilection for sports, scandal and sex, but also for practical information, to the detriment of the national and international news. Such traits seem to characterize the popular newspaper also according to the specialists Herman and Lugin (1999) – and especially according to how information is structured, as we shall see, i.e. by the use of hyperstructures.

Under the label of popular press and quality press we should not see a value assessment of the readers’ type but rather the approach differences in choosing information structuring manner. At a glance at the tabloid press we can realize that the popular press favours hyperstructure, especially the one resulting from a division process. This hypothesis seems partially confirmed by what B. Jouanno said, quoted by Lugin in his article about the mix of genres within the hyperstructure: „La communication populaire privilégie le récit, l’aventure, l’anecdote et le fait divers, se méfie des longs discours savants et abstraits. [...] Elle cherche à distraire, à expliquer, à montrer, à émouvoir, à être utile” (*The popular communication favours the story, the adventure, the anecdote and the other news, distrusts the long scientific and abstract discourse*) (Lugin, 2001). The large-scale use of images and information compression seem to be some of the dominant characteristics of the popular press.

Although it may seem surprising, it is difficult to find the stable definitions of a quality daily newspaper. One of the remarks may be related to the content of the newspaper: stressing of the political, economic and cultural topics to the detriment of the sports pages and the so-called magazine-pages. A short peek on the “Jurnalul Național” confirms that the quality newspapers have a more traditional, less “chopped” page layout. This would be a first distinction between the popular newspapers and the quality ones. I have chosen the two national newspapers because the Romanian media has a poor representation within the regional daily newspapers, and the local ones did not seem representative for now for the approached topic.

“Jurnalul Național” is a quality daily newspaper seeking to show and explain both national and international current phenomena as well as their implications. It proposes many articles and even reflection “files”. The same cannot be asserted about “Adevărul”, which proposes for the larger part of its

content “practical” subjects, as close as possible to the daily preoccupations of the population. The political subjects and especially the external matters occupy marginal pages, usually at the end of the publication. At the photo chapter, it is not second to “Jurnalul Național”, but unlike “Adevărul”, which prefers larger images accompanied by shorter texts, gives more space to the main articles, long articles inviting to reflection. “Adevărul” privileges quick and diversified information which targets a composite audience, that must read / go through the essential of the information without deepening it.

Going back to hyperstructures, we specify again that there may occur two types of hyperstructures, as we shall also see in the analysed daily newspapers. In a first situation we mention the hyperstructure coming from the dispersion of an article (with a unique signature), in which case the purpose being to ease the reading of the material. In the second situation we find the hyperstructure grouping the articles (with different signatures), which expresses different viewpoints in relation to the same subject. In this case, the hyperstructure offers more reading possibilities to the reader for the same subject. “Adevărul” obviously privileges the dispersion / explosion of the articles that seems to characterize the tabloids. Actually, we have to mention here that the difference is given by the type of the approached subject. Such a hyperstructure is encountered in both tabloids and the “quality”/elitist press. If we take the example of “Jurnalul Național” and consider the subject of the Japanese disaster, which offered a consistent study basis, we could conclude that more than a hyperstructure was achieved in each issue after the Japanese disaster (during the week taken into consideration), actually an entire press file was achieved. In several consecutive issues of the daily newspaper from the followed period, the analyses on this topic exceed the two pages considered by the French specialists as traditionally belonging to a hyperstructure. On the other hand, we consider the fact that the media situation created by the circumstances in Japan is entirely special and that we may exceed the theoretical framework of the hyperstructure. Therefore, we seem fit to distinguish between the subjects approached by the two daily newspapers. While “Adevărul” makes a hyperstructure from the subject related to healthy food, weight and diet obsession (examples: issue 6421 from 15th March 2011, pages 34 and 35: „Traps of healthy food diet”, “Excessive weight as a trauma”, “Perfect diet obsession”, “Bratman test”, which continues with health pages), “Jurnalul Național” dedicates information articles and especially of reflection on the implications that the Japanese world events may have to Romania or what alerts should be given (exemple: page 1 of issue 5617, 16th March 2011: “I don’t believe that the buildings built after ’89 are safe”, which continues with a double pagination inside the newspaper, pages 8-9, page five “Nuclear nightmare”, pages 6-7 “Europe starts war on atomic energy”).

The main preoccupation of a tabloid is not that of proposing different viewpoints but to shorten the length of the articles so that the reader may quickly find the information he needs. “Jurnalul Național”, as representative of the quality press, does exactly the other way around: it does not operate this explosion of articles unless it proposes around an article /main subject a very well marked viewpoint.

2.2. Privileged Genres

The study of hyperstructures intersects the issue of genres: in our research we start from the idea that within the hyperstructure certain journalistic genres acquire a great importance. Its function shall be of highlighting different instances or declarative positions: different journalists, news from the agency.

We must specify, in continuation of Bahtin’s idea that genres have a capital importance in the language interaction (linguistic) in order to determine the meaning of the statements in a global manner: „Les genres du discours organisent notre parole de la même façon que l’organisent les formes grammaticales (syntaxiques)” (*The discourse genres organise our words in the same way the grammatical forms (syntactic) do it*) (Bahtin, 1984:285).

The almost descriptive numerous descriptions and typologies from the journalism manuals and not only, confirm this statement. Also in the media discourse, this position was adopted because the way of structuring ideas by a journalist was and still is extremely important in the understanding of the journalistic message.

If we know the usual characteristics of a genre, this capacity will guide us towards the correct interpretation of a text; therefore, there are a few criteria that “direct” the reading of the “world’s” texts in general and especially those of the press.

The journalistic genres theory contains therefore within its germ an art of the science to make, actively and consciously receive the production of the texts from this field. These genres that belong to the discourse formation in a perpetual evolution are historically marked: some may evolve, others may disappear and new others may of course occur. The analysis of the journalistic genres manifesting themselves within the hyperstructures becomes thus interesting. From another point of view, the hyperstructure lies at the crossing of the new information and communication technologies. Thus, it participates at the evolution of the written press and shall mark, we believe along the French specialists who manifested a special attention towards this subject (Gilles Lugin, Jean-Michel Adam), the evolution of certain genres as well as the occurrence of some other journalistic genres.

The analysis of the results refers us to a first finding, that the hyperstructure is based on a main article belonging to the informative genre and not to the comment. A comment article is difficult to divide, that is why it will rather appear in a regrouping and shall represent a contextualization, a nuancing of the information from the main article.

In the case of two genres we may talk of star-genre or a genre that is often used by the local newspapers: the interview and the agency news. If the interview may be the main article in the case of both newspaper types – elitist and popular – the agency news is especially used by “Adevărul” (as representative of the popular press) that proposes quick and short information, very close as elaboration to the agency news. Still in “Adevărul” we encounter this tendency to split / divide subjects, and that is why hyperstructures are not a very well shaped phenomenon in this press type. Many times, on two consecutive pages of the newspaper we find such different subjects that it is hard to find their place even under the auspices of the same chapter: social, political, school. Actually, what “Adevărul” proposes is a tessellated / diversified but short reading in order to offer its readers an as fast as possible reading. “Jurnalul Național” seems to be positioned on a different axis as to the use of hyperstructure. Here we find countless lines, topics debated on several columns, under several signatures but also different points of view. Comments are exploited at a large scale in Jurnalul Național. The interview is also often used. But it is always completed by comments, analyses on the interview’s subject, thus creating the hyperstructure. The interview, though the vivacity it sets and though the authenticity of the emotions falls rather into the line of the popular newspapers. But, in Jurnalul, as we mentioned, there is always an added value given by the amplification of the approached topics.

3. A Quantity Balance Attempt

Our attentive readings, especially from the viewpoint of form, revealed certain aspects of information processing. Thus: in “Adevărul”, the articles that do not designate themselves (“News”, “Editorial”, “Inquiry”) are more often encountered than in the so-called quality newspapers. Secondly, the dispersion / spreading (as equivalent of the French term „*éclatement*”) or the regrouping of the articles may vary depending on the financial means and the personnel of the newspaper. Yet we find a larger unity of the subjects approached in “Jurnalul Național” and a closer correlation between its articles. Nevertheless there are privileged: the agency news, the interview and especially the comment.

3.1. From Hypertext to Hyperstructure or the Need to Sell Information

Many times, in the Romanian press, the distinction considered natural in the communication theories and journalism is no longer made so strictly. Yet, “Jurnalul Național”, attempting to preserve this demarcation line, favours the opinion articles under the form of auxiliary articles. Images are frequent in the hyperstructure. These two components of an article should not be considered separate and treated separately, but they circumscribe to the same picture. Sometimes, images may become the central element of the hyperstructure. We find, not since today but since twenty years, a hyperuse (to preserve the same line of the used vocabulary) of images in press, after which infographics comes. The processing and page

layout of information is related to the type of journal. “Jurnalul Național” and “Adevărul” are opposite (to some extent) at the level of information structuring, journalistic genres and images, which also confirms the fact that the expectations of the audience-reader are not identical: the hyperstructure seems to correspond to a press tendency to favour a “chopped”, disparate and rather visual reading of the information, according to the Internet model.

3.2. Some Consequences of Press Writing

The appearance of online newspaper formulae resulted into the modification of information presentation and even journalistic practice. If initially the paper format was the departure point which imposed or strongly influenced the presentation line and the formal of the online versions, today our impression is that the path is made inversely: the online version that today develops its own identity imposes more and more its traits to the printed newspapers (generally on the traditional media). If we follow a balance of the press, we could conclude along with the specialists in the field, that a series of transformations was determined by the modification of the economic actors (and the Romanian landscape has many examples from this point of view) as well as the revolution of the information manners (information networks).

In its struggle to survive in the television and multimedia era, within the advanced capitalism or the ever-present marketing, press was forced to transform and remodel its content and especially how it is presented, the genres and the illustrations. Two aspects may be considered fundamental: the unsurpassed development of the visual elements and the strengthening of genres. Hyperstructure may be considered an element of these transformations, a hybrid shape lying at the intersection of two media – press and Internet: „L'hybridation ou la rencontre de deux média est un moment de vérité et de découverte qui engendre des formes nouvelles” (*The hybridization or the encounter of the two media is a moment of truth and discovery that generates new shapes*) (Mc Luhan 1968:77).

Internet exerted a form of influence over the press by the setting into motion of a true “browsing” device through the newspaper. And if the press had a strong influence when the first Internet pages were created, it seems that today, this tendency is at least partially reversed.

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