

DEMAND FOR GENRES OF JOURNALISTIC TEXTS IN ONLINE MEDIA

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***Abstract** – The genre palettes of online and print media differ significantly. This also applies to the list of genres and the frequency of their use. Using the most popular Russian media sites as an example, the article shows which genres are in demand in the practice of modern online publications. News articles dominate media sites. There are more of them than texts in other genres combined. Reports and interviews are in low demand, essays and investigations have almost disappeared. But such genres as selection, case/life story and recommendation are actively used.*

***Key words:** genres of journalistic texts, online media, news item, multimedia longread.*

I. Introduction

The genres of journalistic texts have been the subject of attention of many researchers for a long time. A number of works by domestic and foreign authors are devoted to the genre systems of journalistic texts, as well as practicing journalists. However, in most cases, genres were studied in relation to print media. As for online publications, in the works on Internet journalism, is mainly focused on new technological possibilities for presenting information (multimedia, hypertextuality, interactivity) in addition to the monomedia genres of the printed press used in the online environment. At the same time, genre systems in these works, if they were cited, essentially repeated the genre systems of the printed press.

It is necessary to recognize that the Internet has already led and in the future will even more clearly lead to the transformation of the entire genre system of journalistic texts. This is a modification of old genres, and the emergence of new ones, and another demand for genres in journalistic practice. So far, these questions have been comprehended in an extremely fragmentary way. Thus, it is noted that, first of all, promptly written news and multimedia reports are in demand on the Internet. Attention is paid to rewriting as the main way of filling news sites with content.

II. Literature review

The question is also raised about the need to redefine the concept of "genre" applicable to texts for the online environment, where a significant part of the materials are "hypertext-transformers", changing over time due to the addition of new information and combining verbal and non-verbal elements (creolized text). A new format for presenting journalistic information, called "multimedia story" or "multimedia longread", is being widely studied, as well as interactive formats that involve interaction with reader.

The demand for genres in the online environment, both from the position of content producers (which genres are most often used) and from the position of consumers (publications in which genres are most often viewed, read), has been studied much less. If we take the poll of production, then the recommendations for journalists to focus on certain genres as the most suitable for the online environment are based more on the assumptions of the authors than on an empirical basis. For example, there is an opinion that online will be in demand, first of all, news articles and long materials of an informative or entertaining feature, and such traditional print media genres as reportage and interviews should be used only in exceptional cases when a journalist watched a super interesting event or talked to a super interesting interlocutor. We are talking about the waves of interest of the audience and the need to adjust to these waves not only in topics, but also in the genres of publications¹. A separate object of study is non-news Internet journalism, the peculiarities of preparing large text materials for media sites.

III. Analysis

Empirical studies of the demand for genres of journalistic texts in the online environment either come down to identifying and fixing various genre forms on media sites without taking into account the frequency of representation of each of the forms, or are built on an extremely limited and a poorly systematized sample. Understanding which genre forms are really in demand in the practice of modern journalists, and which ones go to the periphery or disappear, is extremely necessary. This is what this study is about. It will allow researchers to focus, first of all, on the most popular, and not marginal genres. Journalists-practitioners and media managers will be able to optimize the content strategy of their publication, taking into account the examples of successful media sites.

Genres are used differently online than in print. Some genres traditional for the paper press may not be in demand online. At the same time, the online environment leads to the emergence of new genre forms, the most popular of which are also to be determined. In addition, it is necessary to identify the extent to which journalists really demand such genres, suitable from the point of view of theorists for the online environment, as news articles and multimedia long reads.

Two key issues related to the conduct of the study were identified - this is the choice of media sites for monitoring and the choice of the list of genres that we will identify on these sites.

Twenty leaders were selected for each rating. Further, 20 points were given for the first place in each rating, 19 for the second, 18 for the third, etc. After that, the points were calculated and the top ten leaders were determined:

- 1) website of the Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper www.kp.ru,
- 2) the website of the electronic publication "RIA Novosti" MIA "Russia Today" www.ria.ru,
- 3) the website of the RBC news agency www.rbc.ru,
- 4) the site of the online publication Life www.life.ru,
- 5) the website of the online publication Lenta.ru www.lenta.ru,
- 6) the website of the Internet publication Gazeta.ru www.gazeta.ru,
- 7) website of the Moskovsky Komsomolets newspaper www.mk.ru,

- 8) website of the newspaper "Arguments and Facts" www.aif.ru,
- 9) website of the Internet newspaper "Vesti" www.vesti.ru,
- 10) website of the Izvestia newspaper www.iz.ru.

Then all the materials published or announced on the main page of the site were reviewed, with the exception of links to materials published on other sites. Materials without a text component (video recordings, photo galleries) were also excluded. If the photo or video was accompanied by text at least at the level of an extended caption, such material was taken into account. For sites with an infinite scroll bar (www.kp.ru, www.life.ru), all materials published no later than three days before the monitoring day were taken.

The monitoring was carried out in October and November 2017. Each site was viewed on a weekday in the evening (between 17 and 20 h), since on weekdays the media, as a rule, publish more materials, and in the evening, texts written by per day, and therefore the study will be more representative.

As for the list of genres that were supposed to be identified, an attempt was made to take into account both the "old" genres that are widespread in the printed press, and the "new" genres that are specific to online media. As a result, the following list of 10 genres was formed (with a brief description of each of them):

1. *Short news* - a message written according to the "inverted pyramid" principle, with reference to one source and volume within 1 thousand characters.
2. *Extended news* - a message written according to the principle of an "inverted pyramid", with the mention of several different types of sources (parties of the conflict, experts, etc.) with a volume of more than 1 thousand characters.
3. *Reportage* - a text constructed as a story of an eyewitness or participant in an event in order to show the event as a process and with the opportunity for the reader to see and experience what happened ("presence effect").
4. *Interview* - a text built in the form of journalist's questions and interlocutor's answers.
5. *Column* - the author's statement of his opinion.
6. *Analytical article* - an explanation of a problem or phenomenon based on facts and explanations of experts.
7. *Portrait* - a story about a person, his biography or lifestyle.
8. *Essay* - comprehension of a socially significant problem through a personal story with access to the typification of characters and a description of the picture of mores.
9. *Review* - evaluation of a work of art.
10. *Investigation* - exposure by a journalist of violators of the law and / or moral standards.

The list also needs to be supplemented with the multimedia longread format. This is a material that is a combination of textual and audiovisual elements, when audiovisual elements become an integral part of the material, and not an addition to a monomedia text, which is an independent material and can be fully perceived without multimedia. On the one hand, this format has become the hallmark of modern multimedia journalism. On the other hand, the real demand for this format is unknown.

IV. Discussion

In case of mixing genres, the text should be assigned to the genre that better reflects the form of the material. For example, a report with elements of analytics or containing an interview is still a report if the priority goal of the text is to visually describe what is happening with the reader's ability to see and experience what happened. An extended news note with analytics elements is still an extended news note, but on the condition that the message about the event dominates its comprehension. If the opposite is observed, the text should be attributed to an analytical article. First, let's indicate what genre forms were added to the "Other" column. The following are definitions of these genres with a brief description:

1. Cards - a story about an event or phenomenon, divided into blocks for ease of perception.
2. Case - a story about the creation and development of a business.
3. Test drive - a story about the car, its characteristics and impressions of the trip on it.
4. Announcement of books - a list of book novelties with their summary.
5. Match review - a story about the highlights of the match.
6. Online broadcast - a chronicle of the event, published during the event.
7. Poll (celebrity, public) - answers of different people to the same question of a journalist.
8. Answer to a question - publication of a specialist's answer to a reader's question.
9. Selection - several examples of events or characters united by a common theme. For example, celebrity couples who divorced this year, the richest living monarchs or selfies that have become ridiculous due to the fact that pets got into the frame.
10. Recommendation - useful tips regarding health, home care, etc.
11. Reconstruction - a detailed description of how a significant historical event took place, such as, for example, the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks in Petrograd in the autumn of 1917 or the secret reburial of I.V. Stalin in October 1961
12. Incident / life story - a story about an unusual (usually tragic or curious) event in the life of ordinary people. For example, about how a woman, during a family quarrel, smashed her husband's car with a frying pan. Or about how a recidivist criminal robbed people by threatening them with a Snickers bar disguised as a gun.
13. Test - checking the reader's knowledge in any area by choosing the correct answer from a list of options.

The popularity of speakers is due to the fact that this genre is also relatively easy to produce. A column is written, first of all, "from the head", on the basis of already existing knowledge and life experience. It is rare that a column is prepared in-depth research on a topic (although ideally this should be the case). The speakers also satisfy the audience's demand for an explanation of what is happening and for a splash of emotions. If the column is written by a celebrity, this increases attention to the text, regardless of other characteristics of the material.

The popularity of such genres as case/life story and collection is explained, first of all, by the fact that such materials organically fit into the online environment. Especially if the curious incident is not only described in words, but there is also a video recording or an illustrative series. The selection does not fit well on paper because of its volume (if it is text + photo), but on the Internet

the volume does not play a role. In addition, these genres are non-operational, and such materials can hang on the site for a long time, collecting views.

The latter also explains the popularity of the recommendation genre, although this genre cannot be called specific for the online media, since there are many answers to any practical question on the Internet. And a person who is interested, for example, in floriculture, is more likely to read literature on this issue and specialized sites than media publications that are limited in volume and often written by non-specialists, i.e. a priori less informative and reliable.

The genres of interviews and reports, traditional for the printed press, are in low demand in the online environment. In the case of interviews, this may be due to the “inconvenience” of this genre for perception. The online reader, who is in a hurry and tends to jump from one material to another, has no time to follow the development of the interlocutor's thought, he needs key ideas and quotations in a digestible form. Reporting, on the other hand, provides for a trip to the scene of an event or immersion in the environment, that is, such a text is prepared by the standards of online journalism for a very long time. Most of the materials are prepared with the support of the Internet and telephone only. It is possible that the editorial offices, shrunk because of the crisis, simply do not have the opportunity to often send correspondents to reportage and prefer to keep them busy preparing news, which can be written many times more in the same time.

The weak demand for the genres of essay and investigation (only one material was revealed in each of the genres) is explained by the great laboriousness of working on them, and by the insufficient qualifications of many modern journalists who are not able to prepare such materials. In the case of the essay, its low popularity can also be explained by a different perception of information than in Soviet times, when the essay was one of the leading complex genres of the press. At that time, the press was supposed to read slowly, and censorship encouraged to sort out public phenomena through private stories, not naming, but implying shortcomings in the organization of life.

Noteworthy is the low demand for the genre (format) multimedia longread. On the main pages of most media, there was not a single such material. This may be due to both the high resource intensity of the production of longreads, and the impossibility of attracting and retaining readers with the help of longreads. It is also possible that the most economically justified business model in the online environment is the rapid production of short news items on the topics of the day / hour, rather than investing in the production of complex texts that involve immersion in the topic and multimedia support. In terms of labor costs/attention of the audience, online news journalism can seriously outperform the journalism of large materials, including multimedia ones. Analyzing the genre palettes of various publications, one can make an assumption about the content strategies of these media.

The hypothesis that genres are used differently in the online environment than in print, that some traditional print genres are being marginalized online, and that the online environment is facilitating the emergence of new genre forms of journalistic texts can be considered confirmed. The assumption about the popularity of news articles on media websites was also confirmed. But the assumption about the demand for multimedia longreads, rather, was not confirmed. There are

such publications on websites, but they are rare and are perceived as exotic, and not as one of the leading genres (formats) of online journalism.

The results of the study confirm the argument that the traditional genre systems of journalistic texts developed for the printed press are not suitable for the online environment and need to be updated. It is necessary to identify new genres and find new grounds for classifying genres. Moreover, it is desirable to do this taking into account the real demand for genres, and not just theoretical assumptions about the possibilities of Internet journalism and isolated examples confirming that the corresponding genre forms exist in principle.

V. Conclusion

The survey is necessary, first of all, to separate the creative and economic reasons for the popularity of genres. In the first case, the genre is chosen based on its ability to reveal the topic, in the second case, based on the resources of the editorial office, the workload of journalists and the ability to produce or purchase multimedia content. Another area of research should be to identify the demand for various genre forms at the pole of consumption. Moreover, editorial metrics allow you to count not only clicks on text headings, but also viewing time, the proportion of scrolls to the end of the material (if the material occupies more than one computer screen). It is necessary to try to connect genre forms with these indicators and try to identify exactly the genre component of the influence on the popularity of the material (along with the influence of the topic, the attractiveness of the title and the quality of the material). Ideally, it is desirable to associate the above indicators with audience segments to identify genre preferences of various target groups. This information can be extremely useful for both researchers and practitioners.

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