

Narrative Transparency in Web-Based Multimodal News Discourse

The development of information and communication technologies provides innovative ways for compiling multimodal news accounts. Ideally, new narrative structures offer productive ways for media professionals to report complex issues and mechanisms in society, politics, and economy supporting comprehensible, proportional and contextualized journalism.

For news audience, knowledge on potential of digital news storytelling, as well as transparency within journalistic processes and accounts, is increasingly important in the era of the expansion of (audio)visual news dissemination (Pew Research Center 2014), “fake” and “real” news phenomena, as well as diverse media platforms redelivering filtered news feeds and facilitating discussion on current topics.

This dissertation focuses on the ways in which phototexts and other multimodal news compilations implement transparency within their narrative structures and practices. Moreover, this dissertation discusses the potential of narrative transparency, not yet deployed within multimodal news narration. Accordingly, it suggests additional ways for supporting transparent and contextualized news dissemination and advancing news discourse skills for media audience.

This research is based on studies on narration (Abbott 2008; Herman; 2007; Ryan 2007, 2014) including sociological (Somers & Gibson 1994) and psychological (Bruner 1986, 1990, 1991) perspectives on narrative. It builds on theories of multimodality (Kress and Leeuwen 2006; O’Halloran 2011; Page 2010), and on literature on civic voice and culture (Couldry 2010; Dahlgren 2011). Furthermore, it draws on theories of narrative paradigm (Fisher 1999), news frames and news narratives (Johnson-Cartee 2005) as well as literature on media studies (Baudrillard 1994; Chouliaraki 2008; Massumi 2010).

This dissertation contributes to discussions on the paradigmatic shift from objectivity tradition toward transparency norm in journalism (Hellmueller et al. 2013; Karlsson 2010; Kovach & Rosenstiel 2014; Shudson 2001). Among scholars, transparency has been discussed as “the new objectivity” and defined in terms of 1) disclosure transparency and 2) participatory transparency (Karlsson 2010). This thesis brings a new perspective to this field by focusing on narrative transparency, a rhetorical aspect of transparency, that has not been studied and discussed thoroughly in journalism studies.

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