

## CONTEMPORARY LITERARY JOURNALISM: FACTORS OF INFLUENCE ON THE READER

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**Abstract:** The article deals with the problem of influence on the reader in the modern theory and practice of journalism. The focus of the study is on the mechanisms and tools of influence on the macro-text level: psychological or socio-communicative patterns. The effectiveness of the influence of modern literary journalism at the macro level is primarily related to the actualization of the typical or possible virtual space of human existence. Reception, cultural reality, involvement of the reader in intellectual and creative work on decoding expressive and figurative ciphers are the main influence tools, while the style of macro level (tropes, figures, linear narrative) are secondary and act primarily on the unprepared reader. The presence of apparent consumer culture, the tradition of rhetoric, preaching, the possibility of individual associations and providing headlines with an anchor polyinterpretive sound are the main factors of approaching and effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Contemporary literary journalism, Cross-culture, Mechanisms of influence, Perception, Simulacrum.

### 1 Introduction

The problem of tools in journalism theory and practice are the most actual and least unified: most critics of social and political journalism and modern literature consider it appropriate to approach the analysis of works in terms of interpretation, hermeneutics, and intellectual perception as well. Consequently, the terms and concepts of psychology, culturology and philosophy – heterogenic, sometimes pseudoscientific eclecticism, appear to be included in methodological set of tools. The issue of non- or extrascientific critical discourse is arising. The concept of ‘tools’ in scientific and methodological discourse means the set of specific tools to achieve a partial (tactical) goal, that is why it is reasonable to suppose that in mass communication, the tools concern in a lesser degree to metatextual affect (ideology, outlook) and more to intertextual one (intertextuality, trop, means of cognitive and perceptive dissonance).

Thus, it is reasonable to study the tools and mechanisms of direct impact on the reader, that are those textual means promoting perception, learning, and influence.

Percipients’ feedback, collected by questionnaires and discursive methods, served as study material. Doing this, the readers voluntarily or under directions read the works by the following authors as Neil Gaiman, Oksana Zabuzhko, Umberto Eco, Stanisław Jerzy Lec, Serhiy Zhadan, Hunter S. Thompson, Pamela Travers, and others, provided by the training program for future journalists and teachers of Ukrainian language and literature and Foreign literature.

Perceptual and sensitive potentials of modern human in the post-industrial culturological space are analyzed in the works of G. Marcuse (1970) [12]; G. Christian's study examines the phenomenon of “journalistic society” [7]; V. Buryak (2015) studies the evolution of terminological tools of modern journalism theory [5].

In turn, M. Zubkov notes that, in the post-Soviet space, there is now a need for a new journalistic understanding of the new reality. The main channel for the dissemination of journalism is the Web, which makes the artifact relevant, interactive, hypertextual [23, p. 110]. Various aspects of modern journalism have been the subject of related sciences or issues, such as

pseudo-scientific discourse and information security [19]; strategy and technology of expression of intellectual dualism [14]. Research on the ethical principles of journalism as part of global or regional culture and rethinking classical values, including the “logic of control” [8], is also becoming popular.

Eastern European scholars emphasize that the tools of deep influence require greater intellectual, emotional, or intuitive involvement of the recipient and appeal to the actualization or modification of values, attitudes, stereotypes, myths, beliefs, taboos up to the archetypes of the collective unconscious [2-4]. This approach is due to the very essence of journalism. Thus, V. Uchonova (1989) already uses the term “influence” in the definition of journalism: “Journalism is a specific branch of socio-political creative activity, which aims to actual ideological influence on public opinion, consciousness and behavior of the masses” [20, p. 213]. K. Serazhim proposes to consider the journalistic text pragmatically – as “a set of speech actions carried out to achieve a certain communicative goal” [17, p.112]. Thus, journalism can be considered as a manifestation of social activity, as a result of activity that is only a side of the artist's involvement in communication and transformative social activities, so its influence is inseparable from the biography and “transformative acts” of journalists. While a work of art is a substantive manifestation of the artist's inner virtual activity, journalism is a manifestation of creative activity, but more extroverted, such that, based on the inner existence of the artist, becomes external, involved in socio-political life.

Modern scholars emphasize that the mass communicative influence is not only the effectiveness of the text, but often the very fact of its appearance. Thus, V. Mansurova (2002) writes that in our time “there is significant increase of the performativity (when the word itself becomes an act) of the role of the journalist, which is manifested not only in public self-reflection, but also in bringing this reflection to an objective result” [11, p. 108]. This pattern is closely related to the popularity of the author, his rating, so readers often buy journalistic collections of those writers who are cult in literature. The specificity of journalism is the influence not so much by artistic means, which are layered on predicative centers, but rather by involving the reader in the experience and understanding of ideological, cultural, or other value intentions. Thus, Serazhim draws attention to the fact that in a journalistic text the elements of arrangement play only an additional function, and the main one is the so-called “deep structure” [17, p. 23]. V. Zdorovega noted: the peculiarity of the journalistic image is that it is an instrument of thought. In a work of art based on real events, we operate with the category of “truth of life”, which is the material for the artistic idea, and, therefore, a means, not an end. In journalism, on the contrary: artistic expression is a means [22]. The fundamental difference between PR, advertising, mass or other influence from the tools of journalism is fundamental. This is also emphasized by J. Losj [10, p. 155].

Thus, scholars are unanimous in their opinion that a journalistic text has its own outwardly defined, but in fact incomplete structure, which is open to reader co-creation. Intellectual and sensory co-creation consists in the use of a number of tools that have indirect analogues in human consciousness, in particular, in its value-motivational, aesthetic, and ethical spheres.

### 2 Materials and Methods

Recently, the concept of research methods of social and political journalism, ways of reality reflection in it, journalistic set of tools is becoming increasingly more actual. Structural, semantic, and interpretative methods are relegated to the background, while pragmatic, perceptive, and sociological methods are becoming relevant.

The article uses the methods focused on studying the perception and influence of social and political journalism on the reader. At

the experimental stage, questionnaires, keeping the readers' diaries and formation of focus groups took place. At the analytical stage, there were studying of readers' diaries content, analysis of discursive audio material collected during the work of focus groups, a summary of the main trends of influence (effectiveness) of contemporary literary journalism.

The experiment was performed in two groups formed of fourth year students; the first group was academic and studied social and political journalism according to the curriculum. The second group was combined and formed of the students who had a desire to read or liked reading social and political essays. Both groups formed further a focus group to discuss the effectiveness of literary journalism. The discussion was accompanied by an audio recording for future registration of key moments. Preliminary, stylistic and structural-semantic analysis of journalistic works of leading writers took place to identify the tools of effectiveness at the micro and macro levels. At the end of the experiment, there was a comparison of perceptive and structural-semantic effectiveness of the fragments of journalistic discourse of the given authors. The markers of the effectiveness of journalistic tools, specified by voluntary group (A) and compulsory group (B), were compared as well.

### 3 Results and Discussion

The tools of literary journalism are among the most relevant and least unified in terms of categories. In the article, such tools are understood as a set of means to achieve a partial (tactical) goal, so hypothetically it includes intratextual and extratextual aspects.

The aim of the article is to study the tools and mechanisms of direct influence on the reader (perception). The material of the research was the feedback of the recipients after reading a number of popular examples of literary journalism, where the fact is a precedent, but not the subject of discourse.

Methods of collecting factual data include readers' diaries and writing reviews; organization by the author of the article of focus discussions with audio recording and further analysis of the questionnaire, conducting and forming focus groups. These data were analyzed by summarizing the main trends and tools of influence (effectiveness) of modern literary journalism.

It has been found that the emotional tools of perceptual influence are at the same time factors of approximation, and modern postmodern discourse is designed for both mass and elite consumption. This encourages writers to influence the reader by actualizing consumer and amateur discourses, and to build more complex narrative and axiological models on this basis. Writers-publicists, based on the tendencies of postcolonial society, construct virtual worlds with the help of two types of tools simulative and stimulating (stimulation of emotions, empathy, involvement, etc.).

The structural-semantic approach to the most effective fragments of the journalistic text proved that the means of influence are not so much ideological components but rather instruments of the microtext level: stylistics of figures, rhetoric, narration (actualization of well-known discourses).

The perception of a journalistic text is related to the subjective interpretation of known narratives, ideas and worlds, which is manifested in irrational reading modalities against the background of cross-culture and cross-time.

The general conclusion derived from the results of perceptual materials, collected from both experimental groups, is as follows: modern writers use the mechanisms of influence that are simultaneously the factors of approaching and persuasion as well. They almost do not use manipulation techniques in their journalistic works, in contrast to advertising, political technologies, yellow journalism, etc.

It became obvious that contemporary postmodern discourse has a direction towards both mass and elite consumption. This promotes the significant number of literary and journalistic

works to be perceptible by a wide range of readers. This encourages contemporary popular writers to influence the reader by using a consumer and dilettante spirit of the society, and then to build more complicated models on this pseudo-intellectual base. Thus, 78 % of participants of EG 'A' and 63 % of EG 'B' underlined mass cultural markers of text approaching. This confirms the theory of German sociologist Herbert Marcuse, who substantiated the role of MCT in human 'implanting' into everyday consumer environment: a human produces and identifies own utilitarian needs forming mass culture, and culture supports, promotes, and produces the values of a consumer level [12]. This theory is an opposition to elite concept of MCT, according to which mass communication serves, first of all, intellectual, political, and economic circles of the recipients [15]. Broadly speaking about political manipulation, advertising and public relations, it is possible to state that both trends operate in parallel with a significant prevalence of mass (in the narrow sense) communication.

The efficiency of influence of modern MCT on the audience is determined by the peculiarity of mass media space, social relations, civilizational processes and current political course. However, according to scientists, the modern audience does not imagine its life without virtual worlds, the creation of which specifies first of all not ideological, but instrumental approach (technologies, techniques, methods), and has a connection with two complementary processes – simulation and stimulation. In our opinion, literary journalism that among journalistic and related information product at most extent may have the right to be called a simulacrum, can simulate and stimulate mass mental superficial (effect) and deep (effectiveness) phenomena. Table 1 shows the generalized tools with perceptual advantage according to the participants of both EGs.

Table 1: The Comparison of factors of effect and effectiveness in the experimental groups

Experimental group A		Experimental group B	
Effect 68 %	Effectiveness 32%	Effect 77 %	Effectiveness 23 %
Vision Metaphor Idiom	Definition	Word-play Vision Metaphor Antinomy Stereotype	Word-play Factors of Closeness Idea
	Idea		
	Implied Sense		
	Heading		
	Allusion		
	Fact		
	Conclusion Parallels		

Thus, we can consider social and political journalism as a manifestation of social activity, as a result of activities that is only a side of the artist's involvement in communication and transformative social activity, that is why its influence is inseparable from the "transforming acts" of the reader-consumer or reader-gourmet. As a work of art is a subject demonstration of the artist's internal virtual activity, so social and political journalism is a demonstration of creative activity, but more extroverted, such that, based on the artist's internal existence, it becomes external, involved in socio-political being and the very fact of reading. Moreover, it is noticeable that mass communicative influence is not just the effectiveness of the text, but often the very fact of its appearance (performance) – of course, provided that the author is a prominent person [6, 9, 13]. The word itself becomes an act. This regularity is closely related to the popularity of the author, his rating. That is why the readers often buy journalistic collections of those writers who are cult in literature.

On the other hand, the comparison of the tools removed by the author of the article through structural-semantic analysis with the spontaneous selection of micromarkers of recipients defined that the categorical tools of social and political journalism studies are not a direct epistemological reflection of practical creative tools. The latter is coming closer to the context, pragmatics, perception and moving away from the style of figures, rhetoric, and narration. The evidence of this is a questionnaire survey of readers-respondents of both experimental groups. Thus, both experimental groups in one way or another pointed to the following determinants of effectiveness: a) the emotional impact of reading 'in the mood'; b) actualization of personal experience

through anchor and in fact intertextual moments of the text; c) irrational feelings in the form of emotional triggers, excitement after reading separate pieces or the whole text.

At this stage, it is possible to make an intermediate conclusion: the perception of a journalistic text causes primarily not so much debatability but rather subjective interpretation, shown first of all in irrational modalities that are difficult to verbalize in a questionnaire. Typical modes of explanation were the phrases from the questionnaires of respondents of both groups: it evoked memories; I looked the other way, I felt the excitement, I cannot explain, but I feel and so on. It is interesting that the stamps, well-known facts, popular allusions and stereotypes served only as a “grounding”, returning to reality, but did not stimulate internal dialogue or experience anyway, which was clear after studying audio recordings of discussions in focus groups.

In the discursive work of focus groups, it became evident that, for the present, journalistic genres among others (informational and analytical) are the least readable, because they do not correspond to the modern method of reader “surfing” without deepening into the spiritual essence of information; on the other hand, blogger journalism, Internet and video versions of political pamphlets, etc. are gaining popularity. In our opinion, the primary condition for the effectiveness and influence of a contemporary journalistic text is its accessibility and voluntary act of the recipient, efforts aimed at reading the text, desire to read, and only then the expressive-cognitive potential of the journalistic text is determined apart of factual information and interpretive moments, involving the reader in the intellectual and creative work of decoding expressive and figurative ciphers.

75 % of respondents of group ‘A’ and 87 % of group ‘B’ indicated that currently an important factor to read the work is its compactness (concise informational text ideally contains predicates and nominal distributors, i.e., implements only the inherent languages of valence). This promotes the distribution of short journalistic essays, diary notes, thoughts, aphorisms, and maxims. However, the effectiveness of social and political journalism is the influence not so much by artistic means, layered on the predicative centers, as by involving the reader in the experience and understanding of ideological, cultural, or other valuable intentions. So, according to the protocols of the debates in focus groups, arranging a journalistic text performs only the function of approaching-retention, and so-called ‘deep structure’ is the main one.

In addition to giving preference to compactness, the questionnaire of both EGs revealed the importance of cross-culture and cross-timing as a background against which the markers of the personal mini-epoch are outlined. Such texts use the elementary socio-cultural mechanism of the average individual: ‘I used to be different (young, inexperienced), now I am experienced, fashionable, being in context and on the edge of time’ (‘in trend’).

The respondents of group ‘B’, in the focus group discussions, preferred everyday life, routine, consumption as effective factors of approaching, widely used in modern mass journalism. Journalistic direct nominations are borrowed from current life or stylized for it. The use of factors of temporal and spatial approaching at the level of images, allusions is one of the effective tools to influence the audience. Here, the stereotype of perception by the mass reader of a mass media or literary product under the instruction ‘The book is about what I love, what I live today’ (journalistic analogue – ‘I was shown on TV’) works.

In practice, this is embodied in the attempt to approach social or philosophical truths through the elements of memoirs, diaries, reflection, a fact resembling the homologous natural biological laws (the Biogenetic Law [Haeckel and Mueller, 1866]). Its essence is as follows: ontogeny (personal evolution) recapitulates phylogeny (development of the whole species). Thus, Y. Andrukhovych, Y. Kononenko, Y. Izdryk often derive existential or ontological truths from their own life experience,

contemplation-return, experience-reconsideration of former emotions, phrases, interiors.

For connoisseurs of literary journalism, it is effective to string the categories previously valuable and still relevant to the recipient, which link old and new values. The most elementary tool to influence the textual micro level is a nomination made with a projection on a certain cultural reality that is or may be valuable for a certain circle of readers (cultural reality or consciousness horizon). Thus, Oksana Zabuzhko, in her foreword to *The Chronicles of Fortinbras 2006* (first edition 1999), recognizing the six-year ‘intermission’ that could have been reformatted in the light of the new millennium, the terrorist attacks of September 11, the Orange Revolution, and other events, deliberately leaves lexical ‘anachronisms’: ‘The only thing that has crept in ‘intermission’ are some small factual anachronism’ (like ‘coupons’ instead of ‘hryvnia’, etc.), but sees no sense in correcting them: even if they are out of fashion, which you find in the bowels of the wardrobe, they will add to these texts that elegiac ‘retro’ flavour, which our sticky and spiritually barren post-tragic era is not able to provide’ [21, p.7].

Allusive correlations with phraseology, aphorisms, stereotypes, etc. can be given individually. In the practice of reading, the interpretation that is closest and most accessible to a more or less prepared and conscious reader is realized.

There is an opinion that modern literature is clearly divided into ‘high’ and ‘mass’. It is appropriate to assume that journalistic creative work will also have such a dichotomy, which testifies to the discourse orientation, rather than the author’s ability. This thesis is key to the development of further thought: if the elite literature and social and political journalism is read mainly by the elite (writers and publicists themselves, latent or real, as a rule), it is clear that mass tools of influence weakly affect the elite public: for such readers, world creation, ideology, conceptuality, stylistics – higher overtext levels are more important.

So, when it comes about the tools of journalistic influence, one should primarily concern the unprepared reader with an average level of aesthetic, philosophical, andgnoseological demands. Thus, as a result of structural-semantic and axiosemantic analysis of the works of modern writers and publicists, two directions were singled out – intellectual journalism focused on the elite reader (mostly writers themselves) and postmodern journalism, the intellectualism of which lies not so much in the plane of erudition, intertextuality, and intertemporality but rather in search of truths in consumer, utilitarian, and actual reality (Figure 1).

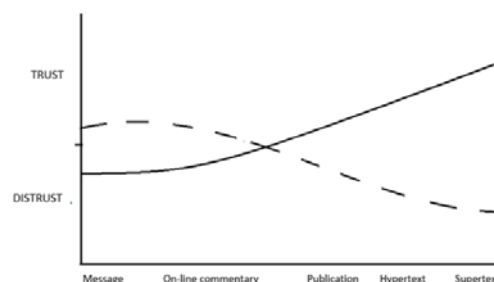


Figure 1 – The difference in text perception of unprepared and prepared reader

The above graph shows that the effectiveness of the act of perception of the unprepared reader (indicated by a dotted line) decreases when meeting with tools of the metatext level, while in the prepared one on the contrary.

The effectiveness of journalistic text is currently ambiguous in the MCT: on the one hand, journalism is gradually losing text-centricity due to the displacement of multimedia and Internet technologies ‘delivery’ of news, on the other, the text becomes a cross-cutting parameter: message-online comment-publication-

hypertext-supertext. Thus, relevance and background knowledge of the topic and allusion constitute the main background of effective perception. One of such background press positions is journalistic experience or reading experience, need and taste.

Conceptual categories of journalistic text have a hierarchical structure, which begins with the system of the text that correlates with the system of society, creative idea, outlook (philosophical, political, artistic) model. Ontologically, this is due to the fact that one of the most powerful human instincts is cognitive, and the top of cognition is the formation for forms of social consciousness (at the simple level for self) relative to a holistic and complete picture of the world. In this connection, even naive or consumer thinking has a direction towards regulating the apparent chaos of the world.

The social and political journalism of 'living surfaces' with the reflection of relevant trifles and details of practical, bohemian, or consumer life is not an ideal model of ideas, but a practical model of consumption, chance, 'stream' and, as a result, irony and banter.

However, the primary effectiveness of the perception of any text determines the title as the most anchor and readable component of any work. The title of a journalistic text can be pragmatic, affective (anchor), informative, or formal-structural.

We conducted an experimental survey of students of Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky Vinnytsia State Pedagogical University on the information capacity of the titles of some well-known journalistic works of modern writers (students have not previously read them). The result is a multidimensionality of interpretation, the possibility of deep individual modality of irrational headings. For example, the titles of cult essays by Y. Andrukhovych (Andrukhovych 1998) provoked the following individual associations and intertexts in the respondents: The Devil Hides in Cheese – 'presence of emptiness', 'temptation, bait', 'gourmandise', 'exquisiteness', 'danger in everyday things'; Twelve Hoops – 'twelve circles of hell', 'Dante and his Divine Comedy', 'human limitations', 'rotation, compression, equilibrium', etc. We can achieve similar associative results due to semantic or culturological analysis of the titles of journalistic works.

An extremely common macro-textual tool to influence contemporary literary journalism is the culturological 'return' to recent epochs, artefacts, texts that still have value and relevance, which is on the border between something precedent and 'eternal'. This creates the effect of succession and continuity of generations, ideologies and cross-cutting values of the individual. The theory of priming epistemologically explains this mechanism, according to which the object of cognition can be actualized, although modified due to previous significance or acquaintance.

#### 4 Conclusion

The main categories of this study are the mechanisms and tools of influence of the macro-text level. It is necessary to mark that the mechanism is a psychological or socio-communicative pattern, which is the basis for the implementation of certain writing set of tools. When we talk about the tools of journalistic influence, we mean not so much the persuasion in the conceptual idea, but rather concrete-situational (at this point of reading and perception) influence, because the very concept of 'tool' involves operational and practical intervention. The tools of tactical flow include semantic and formal linguistic-communicative and culturological operations: wordplay, metaphor, ambiguity, hint, allusion, involvement of approaching factors, actualization of certain cultural realities, etc.

It was proved that the tools of micro or mesolevel of influence with the use of linguistic and literary means have the greatest impact on all participants in the experiment. A holistic picture of the work-simulacrum does not affect the reader's perception so much as a case of visual and imaginary characteristics, contrasts

based on hyperbole, litany, means of grotesque, irony, sarcasm do.

Thus, contemporary writers and publicists stimulate the reader to know the world not through 'high matters', but through the reflection of daily existence against the background of long-established culture, and also use the individual style principle of approaching the reader.

This determines the degree of semantic and content-related integrity of modern social and political journalism, which, despite the complexity of the phenomena and concepts described, remains interpretively and modally open. So, the influence and effectiveness of a journalistic text when reading it can be high under two conditions: when the reader felt and understood the author's intention as much as possible, or when the author laid down a polymodal interpretive potential in the work.

The effectiveness of the influence of modern literary journalism at the macro level is primarily related to the actualization of the typical or possible virtual space of human existence. In spite of the low unification of categories of tools at this level, we can conclude that among the means of journalism influencing on the elite reader, in the first place, there are reception, cultural reality, involvement of the reader in intellectual and creative work on decoding expressive and figurative ciphers, while the style of macro level (tropes, figures, linear narrative) is secondary and acts primarily on the unprepared reader. As factors of approaching and effectiveness, the following are widely used: the presence of apparent consumer culture, the tradition of rhetoric, preaching, the possibility of individual associations and providing headlines with an anchor polyinterpretive sound.

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**Primary Paper Section: A**

**Secondary Paper Section: AI, AJ, AM**