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Post mass media in the modern informational society
"Journalistic text in a new technological environment:
achievements and problems"

**PROFESSION OF RADIO JOURNALIST IN NEW
TECHNOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT: RELOADING**

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Abstract

By the example of the Russian federal and regional FM and Internet radio stations the article analyzes the root changes in the work of the Russian radio, concerning the new opportunities, appearing due to Internet, and describes the trajectory of skills development, which are necessary for contemporary journalist. The new technological environment changes the traditional view on the radio broadcasting – the following professional skills go affront: perfect mastering of the written speech, the knowledge of Internet-journalism foundations, work to fulfil the site of radio station content, skill to work for the television camera, mastering of skills of work with computer programs for video and photo materials (Adobe Premier, Adobe Photoshop etc.), skills of SMM-specialist – knowledge to provide the effective promotion of radio station in social networks etc. The Russian radio market, both capital and regional, is characterized with concentration, developed system of radio formats for various target audiences, which greatly actualizes the scientific skills of a radio journalist: in such conditions he has to be a good analyzer of radio and media market as well as to conduct sociological researches to study the radio audience. The article explores the topicality of the model of «nomadic» journalist with a wide range of knowledge and skills from various professional fields, demanded by the modern radio broadcasting, radio market and employers. In accordance with these new tasks, faced by radio journalists, the author of the article offers to change the educational process – training of future journalists, bachelor students in schools of journalism.

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Keywords: Russian radio broadcasting, work of radio journalist, Internet radio, visual radio, social networks, journalistic education.



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1. Introduction

Traditional demands to the representatives of the profession of radio journalist, formed in the 20th century, have always been the following: a beautiful voice timbre, perfect diction, literate oral speech, quick intellectual and speech reaction, skills of drama, knowledge how to work with a microphone and to properly meet the problem situations, happening on air, knowledge of psychology, skills of communication with audience etc. In the first decade of the 21st century the demands for this profession sufficiently grew in number and were added: now a radio journalist must possess charisma, understand and adopt different radio formats, have a skill of working in the team of presenters and «wear» necessary scenic masks depending upon the air tasks, feel comfortable working in different computer programs of audio recording and editing etc. Finally, there appeared musical FM-stations, with the only employee by the microphone and the mixer board at certain air hours – a radio journalist. Here starts the era of a universal journalist, possessing knowledge, skills and abilities of representatives of several professions.

In the beginning of the 21st century a great investment in the study of the Russian radio journalism of the post-Soviet period was made by the Moscow school of media researches, devoted his works to theory, history and contemporary state of radio broadcasting. Tikhonova (2017) and some other authors analyzed the specific of the Russian radio broadcasting and radio journalism at the time of their birth and development. They also revealed the historical meaning of this process for our country.

In 2005 the third edition (edited and added) of the classic university text book “Radio journalism”, written by a large number of talented researchers and edited by Sherel (as cited in Barabash et al., 2005), appeared. The authors of the chapter about the basis of the profession of a radio journalist and methods of his work are Barabash et al. (2005) generalizing the experience accumulated for the previous decade and considering the specific of work of a radio journalist on air, at an event, in extreme environment, in public relations, on a business trip abroad, in the Parliament, etc.

The genre system of the Russian broadcasting is deeply and thoroughly was studied by Bolotova, Kuznetsov, Smirnov, and Sherel (2005), dividing all radio genres into three groups: information, analytical and documentary. The specific of work of radio journalists in informational and other genres were considered by practicing journalists – V. Varfolomeev, E. Filimonovykh, G. Syrkov, V. Neroznak, V. Novokhatskaya, D. Gubin etc. (It is time to work for the radio, 2002). Lebedeva (2012, 2016) (Voronezh) renewed the theoretical and practical approaches to the system of radio genres, considered the transformation of genres of contemporary radio broadcasting.

The problems of radio broadcasting, connected with radio formats, were studied by Vartanova (2003), Bolotova and Kravchenko (2010) etc. Shein (2010) and Kluev (2015) considered the theory and practice of contemporary journalism, Smirnov et al. (2018) analyzed the organizational and economic basics of contemporary Russian colloquial radio and Baranova (2015) studied the peculiarities of development of sites of this sector of radio broadcasting. Bolotova and Bolotova (2015) studied the work of contemporary radio as the multimedia project.

In recent the research of the structure of contemporary work process of radio journalists as well as his motivation and satisfaction from work was researched by Galkina and colleagues (Galkina, Virkovsky, Obraztsova, Kolesnichenko, & Vartanov, 2015; Galkina et al., 2018).

Nowadays the profession of the radio journalist faced the technological challenges, which appeared due to the development of Internet. There emerged new for a radio journalist forms of work, knowledge, skills and abilities – from the field of TV journalism, SMM, sociology, production etc. This problem, concerning the rapidly changing demands both for radio broadcasting and the profession of a radio journalist, needs the constant monitoring.

The material of the research included the Russian regional radio broadcasting – 30 radio stations in FM and online broadcasting if the Chelyabinsk region, 24 out of them are the net radio stations and 6 are local (musical ones – Intervolna, L-radio, Olymp, Radio Continental, Radio 100 and colloquial radio South Ural), and federal radio broadcasting which is analyzed by the example of the leading radio stations of the Moscow media market (“Moscow Echo”, “Like FM”, etc.). Nowadays the capital radio market includes over 50 radio stations, 10 out of them- radio stations of colloquial format (Radio broadcasting in Russia in 2017, 2018; Smirnov et al., 2018).

2. Problem Statement

New margins of the Russian broadcasting, starting to emerge 10 years ago, are strongly fixed nowadays: the zone of active presence and influence of the radio on its audience moved to Internet. At present FM-broadcasting in Russia is still in demand, especially for those who drive a car (Radio broadcasting in Russia in 2017, 2018), but its potential is clearly limited in comparison with the abilities, which are provided by Internet. The new technological background opens new opportunities for the modern radio broadcasting, and they automatically form the system of new demands to this media. The professional skills, which must be possessed by journalists of the future, in the broadest sense, are discussed in the article by Nigmatullina (2018) in the magazine “Journalist”. Though this problem, constantly renewing demands to the profession of radio journalist, needs the systematic reconsideration and addition of the most important professional skills to this list. At present the very system of the radio journalist training needs some correction within the higher school, so that the graduates are completely ready for work in new for radio broadcasting conditions.

3. Research Questions

3.1. The consideration of new features in the work of contemporary Russian radio broadcasting: development of online broadcasting, radio station’s site as a multimedia platform; implementation of visual radio; active promotion of radio stations in social networks; federal and regional radio broadcasting in messengers; rapid development of personal musical audio streaming, competing with traditional musical radio, popularity of podcast radio etc. Search and study of new demands for the profession of radio journalist in its connection with new tendencies in the development of radio broadcasting.

3.2. Questions of professional training of radio journalists in higher school: introduction of new practice-oriented special disciplines and correction of the existing academic courses as well as changes in the work of academic media platforms of the school of journalism.

4. Purpose of the Study

To follow the evolution of the profession of radio journalists for the last 10 years; to define how the demands to knowledge, skills and abilities of contemporary Russian radio journalist changed as the result of the development of new technological environment for the last 5 years; to correct the program of teaching of radio journalist disciplines (by the example of the curriculum of Journalism baccalaureate in Chelyabinsk State University).

5. Research Methods

The article applies such scientific methods as: the method of induction – from single skills and demands for the profession of contemporary radio journalist to the general model of a radio journalist of the future; the method of analogies to study the radio market of federal and regional radio broadcasting; the method of generalization. The methods of empiric learning: comparative analyses of the work of the Russian capital and regional radio broadcasting; the method of static analyses applied to study the dynamic growth of the audience of radio stations in social networks; comparative analyses of educational programs on higher school journalism (specialization “Radio broadcasting”), the method of observation applied to the work of radio journalists 15 years ago, 5 years ago and at present. The methodological foundation of the article is the also the structural principle, analytic-synthetic and system approaches.

6. Findings

6.1. New features in the work of contemporary Russian radio broadcasting and new demands for the profession of radio journalist.

Contemporary radio broadcasting needs a “nomadic” radio journalist, i.e. a free (or “wandering”), flexible and always Internet-connected journalist, who easily changes formats in the conditions of the Russian radio market holding-making, learns new forms of work, creates under the transforming system of genres, knows the audience well, actively follows the development of its interests, and is constantly connected with it. It must be a professional with the widest range of various professional skills and abilities.

Radio journalist in its work place must be both print and Internet journalist. The sites of leading Russian radio stations function as the independent Internet-portals with constant generation and renewal of content. That is why the work of a radio journalist with printed texts is acute, and this amount of work overtakes the traditional sector – work with a microphone. For example, the audience of “Moscow Echo”, besides the traditional listening to the radio programs, has an opportunity to “read” and to “watch” them. The amount of printed texts on the site impresses deeply, all the informational agenda in Russian and in the world and its analyses are there. The work of a regional radio journalist with a microphone in FM-air in “Moscow Echo. Chelyabinsk” is only 5-6% of his work nowadays; the rest 94-95% is the “written” work to fill the site with breaking news to increase its attendance. Due to the vast amount of work with texts and their further upload to the site, the demands for mastering the written speech for radio journalists increase. Today while applying for a job in many colloquial radio stations, a journalist must

pass not just a casting for a beautiful voice timbre and a perfect diction, but the written test on Russian, showing good results which may significantly influence the future decision about his job application.

Radio journalists must master SMM-specialist's skills. Nobody can imagine the work of contemporary radio station without promotion in social networks, without connection with its audience on these media platforms. "Live" communication here also is transformed to written one. A radio journalist must know how to organize groups of radio stations in the most popular social networks — VKontakte, Instagram, Facebook, Classmate etc., how to adopt the uploaded content to the interests and demands of the audience of each social network, to promote his radio station, using all the technological abilities of these Internet platforms to attract the audience, to interact with it and to study it. Besides, a radio journalist must have his own profile in these social networks with constant appearance of information about the work of his radio station. The necessary condition is that the radio journalist's page must be "linked" with the group of his radio station in social network with the help of hyperlink.

The topicality and importance of this kind of work for the journalist may be proved by the example of the audience growth, measured by us in the most rated Chelyabinsk commercial musical FM-stations in social network (February 2017 – February 2019): 1st place – L-radio: format: dance club music, the target audience – young people of 16-25. The group growth for 2 years: VKontakte – 9795 people; Instagram – 1471 people; Facebook – 65 people. 2nd place – Radio Continental: format: national hits, target audience – males and females 25-45. The group growth for 2 years: VK – 6909 people; the audience loss in Instagram for 2018 – 76 people, growth in 2019 – 440 people. 3rd place – Intervolna: format – Hot AC (Hot Adult Contemporary), target audience – male and female of 25-45. The group growth for 2 years: VKontakte – 2556 people; Instagram – 214 people. The most important social network to promote the regional radio stations is VKontakte, the basic social network is Instagram, Facebook and Classmates are also in the zone of attention for formats with more adult audience. The radio journalist must regularly monitor social networks, know their audience and follow the popularity and development of these communicative platforms.

Radio journalists must know how to work with his audience in the most popular messengers in Russia – Viber, WhatsApp and Telegram. He needs to constantly watch the development, renewal of functions and appearance of new abilities, and also to follow the popularity rating of messengers among the radio station audience. A journalist must understand what the kind of radio station's content is and in what way it is interesting for the audience in these channels of communication. This work is actively conducted by capital radio stations. For example, the audience "Moscow Echo" in Telegram (a computer application) is 26705 participants, the audience of "Moscow Echo. Chelyabinsk" is 78 participants. Nevertheless, regional radio journalists in their work must focus on the leading radio stations of the country and follow the capital tendencies, which come in regions quite late.

Radio journalists must know how to work in format of visual radio. He must gain the basic skills of TV journalist, camera man, director, film editor, because the Russian radio broadcasting is actively visualized, introducing video broadcasting of their air on sites and other Internet platforms. Bordug (2015) notices that large radio stations in their design and size are similar to TV ones. At the same time contemporary visual technologies, equipment and software allow working without extra employees, and here lie real opportunities of visualization in any radio station. The most important new skill is the

simultaneous work in two formats: traditional radio and visual radio. Radio journalists must work with a microphone and with a camera; communicate with the audience audibly and visually. He must also learn to work with computer software of cutting and editing photos – Vegas, Adobe Premiere Pro, Photoshop etc. The best fragments of visual air, interesting interviews, chats, talk-shows as well as photo content must be uploaded to YouTube-channel of radio stations, Instagram and other media platforms.

Pioneers of implementation of visual radio broadcasting in Russia – Moscow Echo (2007), Voice of Russia (2011), Spring FM and Sport FM (2012), Herald FM and Majak (2014), Europe Plus and Modern Radio (2015) etc. The first experience of visualization of Chelyabinsk air in 2008 was the air broadcasting of “Moscow Echo. Chelyabinsk” on Channel 31. Today the most active regional radio stations have video broadcasting, upload video records of air in social networks.

Radio journalists must study new popular Internet platforms for radio content. Lately the Russian radio market has seen an active learning and use of experience of work of the Western musical personal audio streaming. The musical Russian FM-broadcasting takes its attractive features – playlist follows the preferences of each listener, the audience really influences the programming of radio station etc. A bright example is the Moscow radio station Like FM. On the regional level the audience preferences in music are taken into account through groups in social networks, which also gather information about the audience preferences in general: intellectual, musical, thematic, genre etc. Radio journalists must also actively study the new Internet platforms, which are more popular with the Western audience – personal musical Internet radio, podcast radio, social network Snapchat etc. It is necessary for radio journalists to better understand the principles of work of these platforms, specific of their content, to be ready for competition and to possibly use their strengths for the profit of own radio station and the audience.

Radio journalists must be scientific researchers, good analyzers of radio and media market. Contemporary journalist must know how to analyze his radio market on various parameters, to interpret the rating and other media metric results of sociological centres and companies, to grab the new tendencies in the development of radio and media market before others and to demonstrate a constant work over the attraction and renewal of his audience. All these not only increases competitiveness of the radio journalist in labour market but also increases the level of his work and the competitiveness of his radio station. For this he must gain the basic skills of a scientific researcher.

6.2. Professional training of radio journalists in higher school: introduction of new courses and correction of the existing academic courses.

At present there is a necessity to introduce the new practice-oriented special courses – “Visual radio” (to train the skills of simultaneous work in radio and TV air etc.), “Podcast radio: theory and practice”, “Radio text and network text” (to train the skills of writing radio programs and texts for sites of radio stations), “Methods of sociological surveys and analyses of radio audience”, “Radio production: practical aspect”, and to spread the margins and to correct the names of existing courses for radio journalists: “Digital radio audience” or “Radio audience: offline, online, social networks and messengers” (instead of “The audience of radio”), “Acute genres and formats of world and Russian radio market” (instead of “Genres and formats of radio broadcasting”) etc. It is necessary to build the work of own academic mass media and Internet platforms of schools of journalism in accord with the new demands, which radio market, employers and new technological environment set for graduates. For example, the

journalists of the academic radio station of school of journalism must develop groups in more than 4-5 social networks(VKontakte, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Classmates), record and upload podcasts, work in the format of visual radio, to make visualization of the air and own radio programs in social networks – YouTube, VKontakte, Instagram. Besides, schools of journalism must make contracts on students' externship only with those radio stations, which are up-to-date and can teach the would-be radio journalist many things – to work with a microphone on FM-air, to work with air visualization, skills of SMM-specialist, a complete cycle of work on sites, practical skills of radio production etc. It is necessary to more actively involve practicing journalists working in different formats (colloquial and musical) in teaching special course on radio journalism for senior students, so that the practical experience, greatly needed by students, related to the real demands of radio and media market.

7. Conclusion

The profession of journalist has radically changed for the last 15 years. The absence of a nice voice timbre and clear diction are not the features of professional readiness for work on radio. Contemporary journalists may not be on offline or online air, he may work only in the site of radio station, promote it in social networks, conduct work on visualization of the content of radio station in YouTube-channels, work with the audience of messengers etc. The written form of information submission and visual component of the radio content in social networks and on the site push out the traditional skills of audible communication with the audience, new ones appear: perfect mastering of written speech; understanding of basics of printed and Internet journalism; ability to rewrite the content within the format of radio station and to cope with a large amount of “written” work on the site and in the groups of the radio station in social networks; constant monitoring of transforming system of Internet and radio genres; ability to simultaneously work in radio station with a microphone and with TV camera etc.

The further scientific reflection of this topic may concern a more accurate correction of the bachelor's curriculum in journalism to place the necessary accents – upon the new, visual component of the profession of radio journalist, practical learning of special scientific methods of various sciences, for example, sociology, to study the content of mass media, their audience and the audience of social networks etc. But how real it is to train such a “nomadic” journalist, on one hand, and a syncretic, possessing the multiple skills of different professions, superuniversal journalist, on the other hand, in conditions of the existing system of the Russian higher education with the existing problem of lack of budget to equip the schools of journalism with modern material and technical resources – this is another question, which has no answer yet.

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