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

RUMOUR TEXT CONSTRUCTING TECHNIQUES IN MEDIA DISCOURSE: CASE STUDY OF GOSSIP COLUMNS

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Abstract

Being defined as an important element of informal interpersonal communication, in the modern informational society rumours have invaded the sphere of institutional discourse of media and gained a status of its permanent constituent. The subject for the discussion is gossip columns texts providing media rumours. The investigation is implemented on the basis of discourse analysis with the involvement of specific methods of linguistic scientific research. The purpose of the paper is to revise the linguistic resources employed in generating rumours within discursive practices of gossip columns. The rumour constructive techniques are based on the lexical and grammar resources on the level of the English language system and a variety of genre peculiarities of celebrity gossip texts belonging mainly to the surface textual level. They are studied in connection with the realization of textual categories of intentionality, informativeness and cohesion. The scope of the textforming features and rumour constructing techniques include different evidential markers and language means of epistemic modality of certainty, sensationalism of the information imparted being the dominant discursive feature of the media rumour texts about celebrities. The techniques employed are explicitly aimed at increasing the accuracy of information but implicitly disguise their functioning as messengers of unverified evidence.

1. Introduction

Modern public communication and new mass media journalism are closely related to the concept of technological way of presenting information. Manipulation has become an everyday practice within different types of institutional discourses.

In post mass media it is characteristic to realise two controversy models of news production. The first one comprises two ritual patterns in journalism providing the core part of the role of a journalist in the modern informational society. The first strategy involves the adhering to the neutral position of the journalist in the process of news gathering and imparting information, the second one concerning carrying out verification and fact-checking. They make up the basis of legitimacy the whole system of journalism is built on. The second model reflecting a consistent trend in mass media communicative space is based on engaging rumours as a specific form of epistemic source of knowledge in coverage reliability. Thus, in diversified contemporary media contents rumours have become an important element in newsmaking and specific information genre having been traditionally qualified as an informal verbal type of communication but nowadays being widely exploited by both printed media and new mass media including interactive channel.

2. Problem Statement

Being an archaic phenomenon, rumours have been accompanying the mankind since the ancient times of its history. And they have proved to be an omnitemporal method of information acquisition within historical and recent societies. According to the latest reviews in the field of psychology and social science, being subject to "mutating", rumours have acquired new specific features gaining a more powerful status in modern communicative environment (Kulikov, 2014). But it is argued that we still know little about these changes in their nature. Although, it is suggested (Demerath & Korotayev, 2015) that the importance of informal ways of attaining and disseminating information like gossip and rumours will increase with institutionalization and societal complexity for the reason that in larger, urbanised, stratified, and complex societies for any given individual "it is more difficult to get information one would need for accessing resources and coordinating to accomplish goals" (p. 298). The pervasive tendency of their penetrating into the institutional discourse including political one creates a role for studying different aspects of the many-sided phenomenon of rumors in the sphere of mass media communication.

Alongside with other scientific approaches in journalism studies linguistic paradigm contributes to the in-depth view of journalistic text peculiarities coming into existence in a new technological environment. Therefore, our research interest is connected with examining media texts by means of linguistic instrumentation. In the framework of Russian linguistic science traditions rumours have been studied from different points of view: as a technology of presenting anonymous information on the basis of discourse-analysis (Ivanova & Chanysheva, 2014), as a lingua-cultural concept from the position of linguistic-cultural conceptology (Khakimova, 2016a, 2016b; Slyshkin, Zheltukhina, Baybikova, & Zubareva, 2016), as an independent speech genre and verbal communication channel providing unauthorized information in the paradigm of genre studies and communication theory (Osetrova, 2015).

In our opinion, the growing number of investigations in this field attests to the fact that within Russian linguistic science there has been developing a new promising research area studying rumours and other related phenomena in the contemporary society taking into account the new technological environment (Khakimova, 2018).

3. Research Questions

Thus, the object of our research is media rumours as texts exemplified by gossip columns presenting celebrity gossip and placed in on-line versions of printed press and original web outlets within the Anglophone interactive media space. Our choice is determined by the fact that celebrity gossip texts represent rumours *per se*, i.e. rumours in their "pure form". It gives us the opportunity to pursue two objectives in the framework of the given investigation: to observe the discursive characteristics of journalistic texts constructing rumours about celebrities and find out communicative qualities of rumours as a social, psychological and philosophical category from the linguistic point of view.

The study of the problem put forward above supposes the preliminary discussion of several questions arising in the process of investigation and needed clarification. The first one deals with the definition aspects of gossip and rumours and their distinctive features (if, any). The second major issue is related to the place of gossip columns in the typological system of mass media discourse.

3.1. Defining the notion of gossip and rumours

Belonging to a vast range of informal pathways of communication, gossip and rumours have been a target of research in different fields of humanities for about a hundred years and become the subject of discussion in contemporary discourse studies. The history of studying these phenomena is marked by suggesting a large number of their definitions and making efforts to distinguish them with respect to a variety of factors depending on the scientific school and approach. Our analysis of their representation in language shows their "family resemblance" and no conceptual differences between them, gossip being a more restricted type, a subspecies of rumour communicating information on individuals and their conduct, but the rumour propagating information of broader significance. It is proved by the existence of borderline types, hybrid forms demonstrating features of both gossip and rumour like celebrity gossip (this view point can also be found in (Gelfert, 2012, pp. 770-771; Guerin & Miyazaki, 2006, pp. 28-29)).

As the concept of rumour represents a complex cognitive construct, for the purpose of the present analysis we place emphasis on its two invariant features: its unconfirmed information status (lack of evidence) but perceived as the reliable, trustworthy one.

3.2. Genre features of gossip columns: general information

From the perspective of linguistics gossip is traditionally referred to the category of verbal phatic genres. Gossip columns can be treated as a hybrid form combining the features of informal verbal interpersonal communication and that of formal mass media discourse.

Taking into account the model of textuality based on invariant textual categories suggested by Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), we focus on the textforming categories of cohesion, informativeness and intentionality displayed on the text surface level, for the text deep layers requiring additional efforts and

more detailed account. In addition, we focus on the synchronical aspect of the texts under study, though noting rather long history of the genre development filled with changes in the topical preferences and stylistic organisation as well as and ideological accent transformations of the celebrity gossip text type.

In the framework of medialinguistics developed by Dobrosklonskaya (2013), the functional aspect is considered to be the most important one stipulating the text intentional hierarchy to be the point of departure in our reasoning. We assume that by their nature on-line gossip columns trace all the textual characteristics essential for any media texts but possess specific, inherent features influenced by their multiintentional nature. The latter is determined by two factors: the first being bound to the discursive characteristics of the tabloid gossip and yellow journalism depending on the medial format and affected by the spirit of hedonism; the second one being connected with the study of the space of rumors and complicated by the dialectical interaction of such categories as "truth" and "fiction" or "rumor" and "fact".

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the paper is to revise the linguistic resources employed in mass media discursive practices introducing unverified information and realizing rumour constructing technologies which are widely used in gossip columns providing news about celebrities. These practices are based on various means of the language system and textual categories of intentionality and informativeness. The choice of linguistic means engaged in the production of texts under investigation is determined by their polyintentional character. In the taxonomy of their objectives the dominant one is considered to be the entertaining intention. Actually, this goal is combined with the intention to inform declared as the basic one for all types of mass media texts. Thus, the explicit intentional foundation of the studied texts can be represented as informing plus entertaining that triggered the appearance of the notion of infotainment including the principle of information accessibility in addition to the intentions mentioned. It results in the main strategy of producers of gossip column texts to gloss over the unverified information and deliver it in terms of the news coverage.

Therefore, the scope of linguistic means to be considered will include on the one hand two levels of the English language system consisting of lexical and grammar-syntactical strata, and on the other hand, textual characteristics and genre features of news discursive practices engaged in the techniques drawing upon unconfirmed information.

5. Research Methods

Due to adjacency effect of the research and complexity of issues under study the methodological foundation of the work is an integrative approach connecting theoretical assumptions of the theory of discourse, media studies, rumourology, textlinguistics in the framework of European paradigm of knowledge in human sciences, on the one hand, and Russian traditions realised within linguistics of text, genre studies, medialinguistics, and functional stylistics. Through its synergetic effect this scientific attitude will allow to reflect and study cognitive, psychological, social, pragmatic and language aspects of the complicated phenomenon reviewed. As for specifying research procedure we resort to the discourse-

analysis as a basic technique of the study integrated with the inductive method combined with specific linguistic scientific methods, developed by Russian scholars within the linguistic science, namely, semantic, textual, contextual and stylistic types of analysis.

6. Findings

6.1. The lexical aspect of rumour constructing techniques in the texts of gossip columns

The lexical resources of the language are traditionally regarded as means of the surface level of text formation. The analysis shows the ambitendency of choosing the lexical resources due to the ambiguity of intentions (to inform entertaining). On the one hand, these texts tend to employ the lexical repertoire typical of the group of mass media news. On the other hand, there are language peculiarities belonging to the genre of celebrity gossip exclusively.

In the texts of newsmaking discursive practices journalistic skills such as verifying facts and checking sources are valued the most. As a result, to increase the verification potential of the information imparted journalists resort to lexical-semantic units stressing testimonial, impersonal, documental quality of the information. These means are closely related to the language category of evidentiality codifying the source of information opened by scholars in recent past and being one of the disputable language categories at present (See more about the problem of evidentiality in (Aikhenvald, 2004; Willet, 1988)). According to our analysis, among the language units most frequently used are deictic words of evidentiality and epistemic modality. The latter is considered to define the degree of trust and reliability of propositions presented, though its status is still being discussed. The first category of lexical means denote displaying indirect evidence: 1) reportage verbs (introductive predicates) like *say, tell, inform, report, quote, confirm, assert, admit*, 2) journalistic clichés: *according to, per the report*. In addition, there is a steady presence of the number of lexico-semantic resources belonging to the genre of celebrity gossip. The second group of text invariant is composed of rumour evidential markers (presenting indirect evidence) conducting the modality of indefinitiveness (uncertainty) and presented by multi-level means of the English language:

1) linking set-expressions, predicative units, word-combinations, and phraseological units based on metaphors verbalizing the concept of rumour: *the word (rumour, legend) has it, it is rumoured, based on a handful of tabloid rumors, there have been rumors/theories, rumours suggest/surface, the rumor grew legs quickly, spark rumors (buzz), according to reports/rumours, set tongues wagging, fuel speculations, swirling speculations/allegations, tabloid rumor mill, a complete fabrication, filled with the kind of gossip and scandal, the buzz predict;*

2) lexical units, indicating unauthorized, anonymous, non-referential source of information delivered that determines its unverified, unproved, unsubstantiated quality, of which the most frequently used are as follows: *an insider, a (anonymous) source(s) (for, close to, familiar with), a pal, a spy, a rep, am informant, a member of the team, a close friend, a certain man, some folk, a snitch, a resident (of), unclear origin, allegedly, apparently, reportedly, allegation, speculation, assumption, report, claim, speculate, appear, suggest, allege, hint, be quoted as saying.*

The second group of the prototype lexical elements in the discursive practices under investigation are related to the dominant feature of the media rumours about celebrities: sensationalism and rapidness of presenting information. The core of their scope consists of the nominations, attributive and phraseological units explicating the concepts of *sensation* and *scandal* or comprising the semes of sensationalism or scandalousness: *scandal, sensation, brouhaha* - a noisy stir or wrangle; hubbub; uproar; commotion*, rumblings, bombshell* - something which arouses great interest or excitement; sensation, killer - *slang*, an extremely successful, impressive, exciting, etc. person or thing, *surprise, scandalous affair, juicy info, hot/stunning news, the newest rumor, latest scandalous gossip/saga, exclusive - adjective noun*, an exclusive is an exclusive article or report, *hot - adjective noun*, [journalism], a hot issue or topic is one that is very important at the present time and is receiving a lot of publicity, *breaking news, the hype, dynamite* (Collins English dictionary, 2019). If you describe a piece of information as dynamite, you think that people will react strongly to it (Collins English dictionary, 2019), *be embroiled in scandals and controversy, consume minds with curiosity, grab/make headlines, go viral, hit the press/the news, keep tabloids in business, become tabloid fodder, follow hot on the heels of the story, have a field day (of the press), stun.* This lexical repertoire can be considered as a powerful resource of persuasion in terms of emotional impact it has on the addressee of the investigated text representations.

The third constituent of lexical level inherent to the gossip column text type is connected with the topical organisation of informational flow. It is represented by lexical clichés with usual meaning and evaluative predicates relating to topics consistent with the coverage of celebrosphere items, like social aspects and private conduct, or personal life of celebrities: *A-list star/celebrities/duo, (Hollywood) A-lister, famed pop singer, stunning entertainer, famed songstress* - Journalists sometimes refer to a female popular singer as a songstress (Collins English dictionary, 2019), *socialite, huge icon of music, acceptance speech, publicity stunt, baby bump - informal*, visible signs of pregnancy, noticeable abdominal swelling in a pregnant woman. Usage notes: Frequently used in tabloid coverage of celebrities (English Wiktionary, 2019), *be/stay in the spotlight, shoot to stardom, a secret love child, boy toy, an old lover, celeb love rumor, celebrity romance, whirlwind romance, celeb love duo, amorous couple, Hollywood's golden couple, high-profile divorce/split, political scandal, cheating scandal, affair allegation, divorce scandal, sex scandal, sexual assault, abuse scandal, sexual misconduct/misdeed, exchange some PDA, be an item, tie the knot, welcome a baby, tangle up in a feud, keep a low profile.* As it can be seen, the dominant topoi of the media rumours are based on the large scale of intrusion on privacy of celebrities including items of fertility, sexual and misbehaviour practices.

6.2. The morphological-syntactic level of media rumours

This level is related to the syntagmatic relations of lexis and is marked by the frequency of multiple-element lexical combinations specific for informational mass media genres. In the studied texts they are used on the basis of developing thematic content specific to celebrity gossip. They are as follows:

▪ unsteady type compound words, i.e. occasional multicomponents like *the too-crazy-to-be-true story, the long-in-the-tooth tale, former actress-turned-duchess, the child-actor-turned-metal-band-singer, the recession-era property-porn documentary, year-long romance with an as-yet-unidentified man, she-who-shall-not-be-named, a former-model-turned-reality-TV-show-star's arm candy, nine-months-pregnant star, headline-grabbing divorce;*

- multicomponent attributive word combinations:

the 27-year-old NBA star's first baby mama, suspicious-looking white powder, the alleged purse-snatching victim, then-notorious Hollywood bad boy, spotted Hiddleston-less, a devastating mystery illness, short-lived relationship, over-the-top-wedding, "locker room" style conversation, a Scottish-born musician, a long-term girlfriend, a former adult-film star, father-daughter relationship, the 82-year-old veteran broadcaster, the fellow female pop star, an LAPD public information officer, internet-operated sex trafficking.

Besides, among distinguishing features of the language of the texts described is a large scope of words denoting the cultural "realia" of Anglophone countries, i.e. words containing background information including nominations of different precedent phenomena denoting British or American cultural concepts or concerning private life and professional activities of rumour "targets", in particular personal names, titles of films, songs, musical albums, contests, etc. Special interest is aroused by their involvement into the structure of multicomponent combinations representing periphrases on the basis of the stylistic device of allusion. The latter has a high profile in the semantic organisation of the texts and lack of its understanding makes impossible appropriate text interpretation. They can be illustrated by the following examples: *Trump's right-hand woman, the Oscar-worthy film, the Oscar-winning star, the two-time Grammy winner, the Formula One star, the Shake It Off singer, the 35-year-old Night Manager star, the "212" rapper, the Best Man actress, Victoria Secret model, L'Oreal stunner, Super Bowl performance, 2014 Rolling Stone cover story, Golden Globe speech, "Girls Trip" breakout star, a former America's Next Top Model contestant, the Poker Face hitmaker, the Raging Bull actor, the Hips Don't Lie singer, the little bundle of waka-waka.* This cultural markedness on the lexical level reveals the reference of these texts to other cultural texts and phenomena, and characterises this text type as the one recorded by high degree of intertextuality, specific cultural meanings being referred to the deep layer of their semantics.

6.3. Rumour constructing techniques at the textual level

In the case of gossip and rumours we don't strongly need the testimony (evidence) (on the philosophical point of testimony, see (Gelfert, 2012, 2014, 2018)) of others. In the case of journalist texts providing news testimony is a crucial point of the information delivered to the mass dissipative addressee. Indeed, this is why in the case of gossip columns journalists use a large number of evidential tools belonging to the textual level pursuing two goals: (1) to link separate semantic segments of the texts for linguistic reasons, and (2) to increase the credibility of the rumour disseminated for psychological reasons. These key elements include numerous references to the sources of information, citations, and interview fragments represented in a wide scale of citations in the various forms of direct speech, indirect speech, separate phrases being put quotes around. Typically, the authors of citations are directly rumour "targets", insiders, various experts and other "well-informed sources". Such citations and references appeal to indicate some kind of investigation and checking by the journalist, but in fact fail to provide truthful facts. The other fact that attracts attention is that references are often made in the form of cross-referencing (references to other outlets), for media being apparently manifested as sources of testimonial beliefs playing a central role in our epistemic life.

Often gossip column texts get overloaded with the evidential markers, as in the following example of the story from the sex scandal narrative on Larry King's wife alleged affair found in the *Page Six*:

> *EXCLUSIVE Meet the man allegedly having an affair with Larry King's wife*
> *The man who's been carrying on an alleged yearlong affair with Larry King's wife, Shawn King, is a public-speaking guru whose clients have included US senators, Arianna Huffington, Princess Diana, Naomi Campbell, and Will Smith and Jada Pinkett Smith, <u>according to a source close to the King family</u>.*
> *Richard Greene - dubbed <u>"the master of charisma" by the Sunday Times of London</u>, and whose website lists the aforementioned stars as customers - has also appeared as a talking head on endless TV news reports. And <u>the National Enquirer - which broke the story of the affair, but didn't name Greene - claims that Shawn is trying to groom him as "the next Larry King."</u>*
> *<u>Attorneys representing Shawn and Larry, as well as a rep for Greene, called the story of the affair "inaccurate."</u>*
> *Meanwhile, <u>insiders tell Page Six that Larry, 82, was blindsided by the revelation of the alleged tryst.</u>*
> *<u>Sources say that Larry believed his wife of 19 years was faithful to him and only learned about her romance with Greene when the Enquirer contacted his reps for comment.</u>*
> *Shockingly, <u>an insider told us that Shawn, 56, met Greene when he was a guest on a podcast she co-hosts with her husband, "Back and Forth With Shawn and Larry."</u>*
> *<u>"He's heartbroken," a friend of Larry's told us. "He's embarrassed and furious."</u>*
> *<u>The source added that although Shawn - who the Enquirer reported on Wednesday had sent nude pictures and had "steamy afternoon sex sessions" with her boy toy - is still living with Larry after the news hit, the veteran broadcaster hasn't made a decision on whether to file for divorce.</u>*
> *In fact, <u>the insider said that before the scandal broke, Shawn "was ready to divorce Larry for this guy, but the guy was hesitant about it."</u>*
> *<u>The insider further revealed that Shawn and Larry's marriage has effectively been over since about 2010 and that the couple sleep in separate rooms in their Beverly Hills, Calif., home.</u>*
> (Coleman, 2016)

The whole body of the text is exclusively composed of testimonial propositions and contains all types of evidential elements mentioned above, and thus can be interpreted as a variant possessing all the prototype features of celebrity gossip representations.

Besides, it is important to note that the same segments of citations are being exported from one text to the next. This results in the jungle telegraph or grape-vine effect inherent to the verbal rumour channel. In other words, the plethora of cross-references and cross-quotations creates the impression of "hearsay" or in-chain-order way of producing information. And in this sense, indeed, media construct their own reality that was suggested by Luhmann (2000). It seems that by means of multiplication the fable is easily transformed into the fact for the reason that in the process of cascading the content of the message remains but not the modality of uncertainty as in the case of verbal ("word of mouth") rumours described by Dubois, Rucker, and Tormala (2011).

The example of *Brangelina saga* presentating events concerning the divorce of the former couple in different outlets demonstrates how media transform any news into the chain of events through stovepiping, and information looms large taking the form of endless narratives.

The wide range of evidential elements has been enriched with the integration of newsmaking with social media. These last few years in journalism studies scholars have argued that the new pervasive tendency in contemporary mass media may lead to an erosion of the canonic journalist principles of verifying facts and checking sources for the very disputable extent of testimonial trustworthiness of accounts of events provided by the public. The case of celebrity gossip proves that this strategy helps to make a fact out of a factoid.

Typical of this, the following is found in the *Page Six* story:

Azealia Banks says she was roofied and raped

In a since deleted Instagram story, the troubled star simply wrote, "Lowkey just got raped. I feel like dirt" (Taylor, 2018).

For the most part the factual foundation of the text is constructed on the personal *Instagram* story. The quality of the authentic information appears to be quite doubtful. We find here very little evidence of actual verification and lack of contextual information:

It's unclear if the "212" rapper filed a police report. She did not name her accuser in her Instagram story (Taylor, 2018).

The only effort to improve the accuracy of information in the statement at the end of the text totally discredits the previous information provided:

A request for comment from Banks' publicist and team wasn't immediately returned (Taylor, 2018).

As some scholars have suggested such questions about the changing nature of news and alignment of news sourcing with social media "may require that we rethink our model of news production and, it would seem here, that this should include the way that we attribute ideology" (Bouvier, 2017, p. 16). The latter is true for the media discursive practises generating rumours, in particular, for they have transformed into one of the popular sources of obtaining information about the "luxurious, wonderful, attractive" life of celebrities (as it seems to be) for rank-and-file people. The information conducting different sides of the celebrity culture (way of life, way of thinking, behaviour patterns, food, clothes preferences, etc.) is definitely to assume a prescriptive nature and, thus, make the texts of this kind a forceful tool of representing the views of elites, the powerful and naturalizing dominant ideologies.

At last, one more tendency is felt strong in the framework of celebrity gossip texts, namely, introducing the means of investigative feature genre. They are marked with making full use of linguistic means of epistemic modality of certainty displaying the persuasive potential of the texts by implying the validity and, thus, high extent of trustworthiness of the presented information. First of all, this strategy is realised in the headlines and annotation lines considered to be the strong positions of the texts. The following range of elements represents the bright illustration of this:

The real reason Taylor Swift and Tom Hiddleston split;

Things you didn't know about Donald Trump's wife;

The untold truth of Thomas and Ashley on Southern Charm;

<u>What you don't know about</u> Magic Johnson's son EJ;

<u>Lies about</u> Leonardo DiCaprio <u>that people believed</u>;

Celebrity Siblings That <u>You Hardly Hear About</u>;

Top 10 Celebrities <u>With Secret</u> Love Children;

<u>Busted</u>: Top 15 Celebrities With The Longest Criminal Record;

<u>What Really Happened</u> The Night George Michael Died?;

<u>What's really going on</u> with Tamron Hall;

Hailey Baldwin and Justin Bieber: <u>The PROOF</u> They're Back Together!

Who bit Beyonce? <u>The mystery is finally solved</u>.

In fact, the epistemic language markers are widely used as means of manipulation realising the function of persuasion in the texts. These resources include a wide part-of-speech range and different types of word combinability intensified by emotional-expressive means of language with attitudinal meaning which can be illustrated by the following:

the shady/ugly truth about/behind, the untold truth of, the revelation of, the real reason, the inside dope, the straight dope, dirty laundry, the mystery/ secret revealed/solved, the reveal confirmed, small details you missed, the details leaked, things you didn't know about, the biggest head-scratcher, the complete story, confirmed with (a kiss), (actual) evidence (to support claims), inside, reveal, identify, find out, open up, speak out, dish, expose, lay bare, unpack, shed (throw) light on, spill the beans, get validation, be (follow) hot on sb's heels, why smth happened, break a story/scandal; some undisclosed event, unclear situation, unknown facts, supposed/mystery woman/man.

The hypertrophic extent of certain modality that these means are marked by appears to lay stress on the sensational, exclusive character of the imparted information pretending to the status of verified, reliable knowledge.

In sum, displaying all the described features such texts reveal a ritualistic character of verification and checking by the journalist in the process of generating rumours in the celebrosphere.

7. Conclusion

The synchronical analysis shows that within the immense communicative space of media discourse there has developed a persistent type of rumour disseminating texts resulting from the convergence of verbal (word-of mouth) interpersonal communication being implemented via informal networks and institutional public discourse of mass media marked by new challenges and possibilities of the internet age. Its combined nature is determined by the tendencies of genre hybridization and stylistic convergence in mass media communication. They can be identified as discursive practices belonging to the media small talk genre comprising essential characteristics of newsmaking journalistic discourse and phatic verbal interaction.

The case of gossip columns shows the systematic character of rumour constructing techniques including two levels. The first one comprises general discursive rules of text forming influenced by the impulse of hedonism and closely connected with the dominant recreational function of the texts under discussion. The second level is referred to the basic media function of informing concerning the news coverage norms, testimonial evidence of facts appearing to take to a large extent the ritualistic form. The

latter means that different linguistic resources of evidentiality of the language system and textual levels aiming to denote the testimonial trustworthiness are used as tools of fact verification and source checking in the sense of masking unverified, inaccurate, or unsubstantiated character of information imparted. Thus, the technological character of introducing rumours, in particular, provides the recreational, prescriptive and persuasive functions of these texts and attests to the fact of non-evidential discourse existing in the media communicative space.

This is not to say, of course, that the analysis lays claim to be comprehensive investigation of the media rumour texts. But this small study provides the indication of technological nature of constructing rumours by journalists and their constant efforts in improving techniques of introducing unverified information. In further studies the deep level of the texts should be engaged presupposing the involvement of language means belonging to other layers of the language system, and other textual categories, with the emphasis on the categories of modality, coherence and informativeness allowing the penetration to the deep textual level of media rumours.

As for qualifying new features of rumours, it can be stated that the ubiquitous character of this phenomenon determining their invasion of the communicative space of media institutional discourse results in transforming rumours into hyper speech genre, converging different styles, features of formal and informal communication, and comprising various discursive practices, celebrity gossip being one of the most popular media genre.

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