

MEDIA DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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Nataliia Steblyna, PhD in Social Communication

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9799-9786>

Vasyl' Stus Donetsk National University, Ukraine

POLITICAL DISCOURSE AND NEWS VALUES PERCEPTION IN DONALD TRUMP'S ERA: HOW UKRAINIAN STUDENTS CREATE NEWS ABOUT US PRESIDENT SPEECH

In the digital era, both the news media and media educators don't have an appropriate formula to resist 'politics of resentment' (Fukuyama, 2018), fake news, and populism.

In order to understand, how students perceive populism messages, a news creation experiment was conducted. Students of the journalism department (Odesa University) were asked to find newsworthy phrases for a headline, lead, and a background in an excerpt about Trump's speech. Such news values as aggression, conflict, and crime influenced students' quotes choice for a headline / lead, meanwhile, the students were able to recognize 'positive' populism about wages, new jobs, etc. However, negative stereotypes, aggressive and frightening phrases remain effective in political communication. In background creation, some students were guided by the Trump speech frames and didn't seek alternative positions.

Keywords: modern political communication, Trump, newswriting, journalism education, news perception.

Introduction

'The fake news media' concept is one of the leading topics in Trump's tweets. American president usually contrasts his Twitter and "fake" mass media. Meanwhile, audience of mass media feels confused because of the both news quantity and quality. And 'politics of resentment'¹ has become an effective instrument to influence such a public. In their 'filter bubbles' citizens get only the information they want, and politicians use the citizens' angeriness to mobilise them during elections. In such a situation, mass media don't have many chances to reach such an audience.

Recent elections in Ukraine approved such a technique once more. Using politics of resentment, comedy shows and social networks (predominantly Instagram), popular Ukrainian comedian Volodymyr Zelensky won the presidential elections, having got 73% of votes in the second round. The numerous publications in mass media (journalist investigations about Zelensky's Russian business, Zelensky's connections with Ukrainian oligarch Kolomoisky) it seems, had no effect on voters. And, this time Ukrainian youth decided Ukraine's fate: Zelensky was chosen predominantly by young people aged 18-29.

Does news matter in such a situation? What is the future of news? According to Freedom house reports, democracy is in crisis all over the world, and indexes of freedom decline even in democratic countries. And in 2016, Freedom house named populists and autocrats as the main threat to democracy and freedom. It seems that in the digital era, both the news media and media educators don't have an appropriate formula to resist the threats.

News values in the digital era

The Internet, digital and mobile technologies have been changing or even undermining the traditional news values, the role of journalists², some quality issues³, the ways of news production

¹ Fukuyama, F. (2018). *Identity. The demand for dignity and the politics of resentment*. Farrar: Straus and Giroux.

² Ureta, A.L. (2014). News production in the 'post-broadcasting' era: BBC Scotland's move towards convergence. *Media Culture & Society*, 3(7), 936. DOI:10.1177/0163443714536078.

³ Wallace, S. (2013). The complexities of convergence: Multiskilled journalists working in BBC regional multimedia newsrooms. *The International Communication Gazette*, 75(1), 114. DOI:10.1177/1748048512461764.

and consumption¹, newsrooms work organization². Additionally, new convergence practices in modern journalism may be perceived “mainly as vehicles for economic survival, smothering any other potential [of internet journalism]”³.

In order to reach fragmented and disorientated audiences, who nowadays “read more superficially and sporadically”⁴, journalist tactics of attracting attention have become more aggressive. In the traditional SiLoBaTi+PoUn model⁵, the latter values (popular and unusual) become more important than (significant, local, balanced and timely).

Additionally, both production and consumption of news are faster than ever. As a result, accuracy, balance and background could be neglected by some journalists.

In Ukraine, the number of exclusive sources on the news sites is low and depends on the number of publications per day and the 24/7 mode usage, and many news outlets (both national and local) increase the amount of news on their sites. As a result, the local affairs coverage becomes episodic, reprints dominate in the news feeds. Because of that, online journalists usually don’t look for exclusive news from other news outlets, reprinting popular issues predominantly without verification, journalists don’t see the event on their own eyes, thus information usually lacks accuracy, balance and completeness (See reports of Ukrainian professional journalistic NGOs: (Detector Media), (IMI), (IDPO).

The lack of exclusivity leads to the domination of government, local authorities and police in the agenda of news sites, journalists reprints FB posts of high-ranked officials and press releases without fact checking. Some social groups (migrants, national minorities, vets, pensioners) face discrimination.

The tendencies in Ukrainian mass media can be explained by the general situation in modern journalism, which has been influenced by digital transformations.

Deuze claims, that online mass media presents “close journalistic culture”⁶, journalists usually don’t include alternative voices, ignore participant journalism; and the traditional gatekeeper model dominates on the news sites⁷. Thus, citizens, their problems and initiatives remain unheard, and some politicians may successfully use “the silent majority” technique⁸ to make their pre-election messages more radical, aggressive and attractive.

Also, some financial factors must be added here. Readers get used to free content on the web, mass media (especially in the post-Soviet countries) usually fail in their approaches to implement subscription. Search advertising and social networks become more popular for advertisers. And, journalism as a profession is considered to be “poorly paid” and “difficult job that the public holds in low regard”⁹. Mass media lack finances and practice staff reduction, journalists don’t have enough time for training, multimedia skills forming¹⁰.

Nowadays there are only nine countries, which provide specifications for online journalism in their professional codes¹¹. And there is also a need for regulation of convergence, audio-visual content in print journalism in particular¹².

¹ Westlund, O. (2013). Mobile News. *Digital Journalism*, 1(1), 6-26. doi:10.1080/21670811.2012.740273.

² Curik, J. (2014). Multimedia journalist in the newsrooms of Czech and Slovak „Hospodářské noviny“. Matus, J., Petranova, D. *Marketing Identity : Explosion of Innovations*. Trnava: Faculty of Mass Media Communication, University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Slovak Republic, 373-392.

³ Doudaki, V., Spyridou, L. (2015). News content online: Patterns and norms under convergence dynamics. *Journalism*, 16(2), 257-277. doi:10.1177/1464884913517657.

⁴ Pena-Fernandez S., Lazkano-Arrillaga, I., Garcia, D. (2016). European Newspapers’ Digital Transition: New Products and New Audiences. *Comunicar*, 24(46), 27-35. doi:10.3916/C46-2016-03-english.

⁵ Smith, R.D. (2003). *Becoming a Public Relations Writer*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

⁶ Deuze, M. (2004). The web and its journalisms: considering the consequences of different types of newsmedia online. *New Media & Society*, 5(2), 203-230.

⁷ Steensen, S. (2011). Online journalism and the promises of new technology. A critical review and look ahead. *Journalism Studies*, June, 311-327.

⁸ Fukuyama, F. (2018) *Identity. The demand for dignity and the politics of resentment*. Farrar: Straus and Giroux.

⁹ Hannis, G. (2017). Journalism Education in New Zealand: Its History, Current Challenges and Possible Futures. *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 27(2), 233-248. doi:10.1177/1326365X17728823.

¹⁰ Van B., van der Haak B, Parks, M., Castells, M. (2012). The Future of Journalism: Networked Journalism Rethinking Journalism in the Networked Digital Age. *International Journal of Communication*, 6, 2923-2938.

¹¹ Díaz-Campo, J., Segado-Boj, F. (2015). Journalism ethics in a digital environment: How journalistic codes of ethics have been adapted to the Internet and ICTs in countries around the world. *Telematics and Informatics*, 32(4), 735-744.

¹² Katsirea, I. (2016). Press regulation in an era of convergence: An introduction. *Convergence-The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 22(5), 463-467. doi:10.1177/1354856516660805

However, “the concepts of journalism and journalist vary in the multimedia environment so that some traditional meanings have become outdated”¹. Additionally, according to international journalistic organisations, there are some important decisions to be made by mass media and social networks in order to increase the quality of content, transparency, honesty and accountability².

Trump, political communication, and mass media

Trump has been challenging political communication since 2011, when a new style of writing was launched on his Twitter³. Politicians actively use social networks since Obama’s pre-election campaign in 2008. However, Trump didn’t copy the traditional standards of political communication; he used techniques like bullying, public harassment, insults, fakes and disinformation. In the pre-Trump era, such techniques could cause a public death for a politician; however, nowadays they do work.

Scholars use a plenty of terms to describe modern politics: impolitics⁴, mediated politics⁵, politainment⁶, post-truth or post-factual democracy⁷. Nowadays political discourse becomes more personalized⁸, emotional and unpredictable⁹. Due to the prevalence of social networks in the political communication, “impulsive”, “impolite”, “uncivil” language is perceived as a norm¹⁰.

In the reality of Trump tweets, where ‘the fake news media’ are spreading disinformation about you and your actions, brief, emotional, aggressive statements can be more effective, than long, reasoned, fact-checked speeches. As we know, journalists should only choose newsworthy pieces; however, does the traditional newsworthiness matter in the era of social networks? A resonant, unusual tweet can get much more likes and shares. Thus, demagoguery and populism have a chance to find large grateful audiences. Meanwhile, journalists of the leading international mass media, dealing with such phenomena, are seeking recipes to remain objective, neutral and accurate.

Journalistic education and news writing

Both democracy crisis and journalism crisis caused crisis in the sphere of education¹¹, according to Hannis, there is “a challenging time” for journalistic programs¹². Additionally, the post-truth era and fake news phenomenon force educators to seek new approaches in journalism education¹³.

To improve the situation, the “education needs of the 21st century journalists” should be considered¹⁴ and the educators must seek new ways in order to balance theory

¹ Sanchez-Garcia, P., Campos-Dominguez, E., Gonzalo, S.B. (2015). The unalterable functions of journalists in view of the emerging multimedia job profiles. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 70, 203. doi:10.4185/RLCS-2015-1042

² Newman, N., Fletcher, R., Kalogeropoulos, A., Levy, D. A. L., Nielsen, R.K. (2017). *Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2017*. Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. UK. <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Digital%20News%20Report%202017%20web_0.pdf> (2020, March, 30).

³ Osborne, P., Roberts, T. (2017). *How Trump Thinks*. London: head of Zeus Ltd.

⁴ Montgomery, D.H. (2016). *Presidential Impolitics: Donald Trump and the 2016 Election*. New York: Political Analytics Research Group.

⁵ Rúas, J., Capdevila, A. (2017). Political communication today: challenges and threats. *Communication & Society*, 30(3), 145-153. doi: 10.15581/003.30.3.145-153

⁶ Berrocal, S., Campos-Dominguez, E., Redondo, M. (2014). Media prosumers in political communication: Politainment on YouTube. *Comunicar*, 43(XXII), 65-72. doi <http://dx.doi.org/10.3916/C43-2014-06>

⁷ Hendricks, V.F., Vestergaard, M. (2019). Alternative Facts, Misinformation, and Fake News: Markets of Attention, Misinformation and Manipulation. Hendricks, V.F., Vestergaard, M. *Reality Lost. Markets of Attention, Misinformation and Manipulation*. Basel: Springer, 49-77

⁸ Pérez-Curiel, C., Naharro, P.L. (2019). Political influencers. A study of Donald Trump’s personal brand on Twitter and its impact on the media and users. *Comunicacion y Sociedad*, 32(1), 57-76. doi:10.15581/003.32.1.57-75

⁹ Schneiker, A. (2019). Telling the Story of the Superhero and the Anti-Politician as President: Donald Trump’s Branding on Twitter. *Political Studies Review*, 17(3), 210-223. doi:10.1177/1478929918807712

¹⁰ Ott, B.L. (2017). The age of Twitter: Donald J. Trump and the politics of debasement. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 34(1), 59-68. doi:10.1080/15295036.2016.1266686

¹¹ Anderson, C.W. (2017). Venture Labor, the News Crisis, and Journalism Education. *International Journal of Communication*, 11, 2033-2036.

¹² Hannis, G. (2017). Journalism Education in New Zealand: Its History, Current Challenges and Possible Futures. *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 27(2), 233-248. doi:10.1177/1326365X17728823

¹³ Bhaskaran, H., Mishra, H., Nair, P. (2019). Journalism Education in Post-Truth Era: Pedagogical Approaches based on Indian Journalism Students’ Perception of Fake News. *Journalism and Mass Communication Educator*, 74(2). <<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1077695819830034>>.

¹⁴ Sanchez-Garcia, P., Campos-Dominguez, E., Gonzalo, S.B. (2015). The unalterable functions of journalists in view of the emerging multimedia job profiles. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 70, 204. doi:10.4185/RLCS-2015-1042

and practice¹; technological skills and “the essence of journalism”². However, there is still a gap between journalists' education at universities and new digital mass media requires³, that's why the special courses on convergence and social media should be provided to the future specialists⁴. And the courses should be obligatory ones in bachelor educational programs for journalism⁵.

There are also some problems with lack of modern equipment for media education⁶, untrained staff⁷; decreasing numbers of applicants and their perception of journalism sphere as an unstable one⁸.

Moreover, “the thinking patterns” of modern students have changed, as digital natives, they receive and work with information differently, they prefer active studying with graphic, networking, multitasking, therefore, some tensions between students (digital natives) and educators (digital migrants) have been emerging⁹. According to a survey, provided by Spanish researchers, graduate students see themselves working within multimedia environment in the newsrooms¹⁰.

To solve some of these problems pedagogues are seeking for new methods of teaching: “learning for self-development”¹¹, “project-based learning”¹² (Bron, Barrio 2018), “visual thinking”¹³, cross-cultural and collaborative learning¹⁴, design new teaching environment¹⁵, special students newsroom¹⁶ and ect.

Additionally, the problems with poor equipment may be solved with mobile phones implementing into the process of learning, because with smartphones it is possible to unite “the rational and the emotional, learning and entertainment, the classroom and everyday life outside it”¹⁷ (See also¹⁸).

¹ Bepalova, A., Kuznetzova, A. (2018). Interactive Practice-Oriented Techniques in Professional Media Education. *Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)*, 58(4), 11-21. doi:10.13187/me.2018.4

² Lopez-Garcia, X., Rodriguez-Vazquez, A., Pereira-Farina, X. (2017). Technological Skills and New Professional Profiles: Present Challenges for Journalism. *Comunicar*, 53, 81-90. doi:10.3916/C53-2017-08

³ Lugo-Ortiz, L. (2016). The academia, the media, and the ideal professional: a generalist-multimedia journalist. *Communication & Society Spain*, 29(4), 271-286. doi:10.15581/003.29.4.271-286

⁴ Miloslavskaya, Z. (2016). Media Texts: Fusion of Journalistic, Advertising and PR Texts under Conditions of Media Convergence. *Theoretical and Practical Issues of Journalism*, 5(4), 576-587. doi:10.17150/2308-6203.2016.5(4).576-587

⁵ Sanchez-Garcia, P., Campos-Dominguez, E., Gonzalo, S.B. (2015). The unalterable functions of journalists in view of the emerging multimedia job profiles. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, 70, 187-208. doi:10.4185/RLCS-2015-1042

⁶ Lugo-Ortiz, L. (2017). Challenges and emergent practices in the teaching of multimedia journalism in Puerto Rico. *Austral Communication*, 6(2), 343-369.

⁷ Siqueira, A., Rothberg, D. (2014). Media Education and Brazilian Educational Policies for the Enhancement of Learning. *Comunicar*, 22(43), 114. doi:10.3916/C43-2014-11

⁸ Hannis, G. (2017). Journalism Education in New Zealand: Its History, Current Challenges and Possible Futures. *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 27(2), 237. doi:10.1177/1326365X17728823

⁹ Prensky, M. (2001). Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants. *On the Horizon*, 9(5), 2.

¹⁰ Serrano, M., Lazo, C.M., Sobrino, M. (2015). Work Expectations of Graduates in Communication. Study-case of Journalism Students at University of Zaragoza. *DOXA Comunicación*, 21, 199-214.

¹¹ Frolova, E., Ryabova, T., Rogach, O. (2018). Interactive Technologies for Forming the Students' Media Competence: Opportunities and Limitations of Their Use in Contemporary Educational Practice. *Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)*, 58(4), 22-28. doi:10.13187/me.2018.4.22

¹² Bron, M., Barrio, M.G. (2018). Skills improvement in self-directed learning using collaborative project-based learning in multimedia communications. Case study at the National University of La Rioja (Argentina). *DOXA Comunicación*, 27. doi:10.31921/doxacom.n27a17

¹³ Andrews, D. (2016). Making the Familiar Strange: Thinking Visually in a Study Abroad Course in Professional Communication. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 79(1). doi:10.1177/2329490615616241

¹⁴ Lopez, N., Gonzalez, P. (2014). Audioblogs and Tvblogs, Tools for Collaborative Learning in Journalism. *Comunicar*, 42, 45-53. doi:10.3916/C42-2014-04; Dodd, A., Pasandaran, C., Green, S., Octaviano, A., Mardjianto, F. (2017). Proyek Sepaham: An Experiment in Cross-cultural and Collaborative Journalism Education. *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 27(1). doi:10.1177/1326365X17701790

¹⁵ Pingxiao, W. (2017). Research on the English Teaching and Autonomous Learning Based on Multimedia Platform and Smart Classroom System. *International Journal of Multimedia and Ubiquitous Engineering*, 12(1), 351. doi:10.14257/ijmue.2017.12.1.30

¹⁶ Burns, S. (2017). Experiential Learning in the Social and Mobile-first Student Newsroom. *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 27(1), 118-137. doi:10.1177/1326365X17716707

¹⁷ Figueras-Maz, M., Masanet, M., Ferrer, J. (2017). Mobile devices in higher education: A pending issue in multidimensional media literacy. *Catalan Journal of Communication & Cultural Studies*, 9(1). doi:10.1386/cjcs.9.1.135_1

¹⁸ Chuma, W. (2014). The social meanings of mobile phones among South Africa's 'digital natives': a case study. *Media Culture & Society*, 36(3), 398-408. doi:10.1177/0163443713517482

Moreover, youth's online activity is important not only for better education and deeper understanding of university courses, but for political participation¹.

Ukrainian journalistic education

The Ukrainian educators face challenging times as well. There are many complaints about both the quantity of journalistic departments and the quality of the journalistic education. As for national media market, Ukraine inherited a complex system of state press with a plenty of news outlets, and in the times of independence, along with a low culture of journalism ownership and lack of financial transparency, many new editions emerged.

Thus, as a general rule, low quality media market gets low quality professionals with journalist diplomas. Ukraine does have independent media and a few high ranked leading journalistic departments in Kyiv-Mohyla Academy and Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv; however, neither the mass media, nor the departments have prominent influence on the whole problematic situation in journalism.

Recent research of Ukrainian NGO Detector Media has found:

- Lack of transparency of journalistic departments;
- Lack of practice and teachers with actual experience in journalism;
- Lack of communication both between different departments and between educators and mass media;
- The content of educational programmes is outdated;
- Poor technical equipment².

However, new courses, technical equipment and new ways of teaching are not enough to solve the problem with the crisis in journalism. Nowadays, in the times of propaganda, populism and fake news, both scholars and professionals, still present news as the simplest form. That is why at journalism departments students predominantly study news formats in the first years of education (UNESCO recommendations). However, scholars claim, such an understanding might be harmful for news. For instance, W. Lippmann in 1921 stressed on low quality of news because, within professional circles, news writing was interpreted as something that took little skill and qualification. And, such an approach remains a typical one.

Thus, the educators should to seek new ways of news writing teaching and consider not only issues of digital formats of news (multimedia, cross-media, interactivity), but new demands to digital news content as well.

News teaching in Ukraine

In Ukraine, as in many other countries, news is regarded as the simplest genre and students work with it in their 1st year of education.

However, the transition from secondary school writing to news writing can be complicated. And, there are several reasons for this.

Firstly, in the secondary school, pupils write predominantly essays and this form ('own statement' (*vlasne vyslovlyuvannia*)) is included in the final test in Ukrainian language and literature (obligatory for those who apply to a university). The definition of this statement is "a peculiar speculative essay about a certain problematic and contradictory issue"³. The basic requirement for the text is to prove your own point. The problem is, an author of a news article should avoid this.

The second reason is the journalistic rule to regard certain facts or sentences as much more valuable and newsworthy than other ones. In the secondary school, pupils work with the whole text (usually the proverb 'you can't throw words out of a song' is used here by teachers).

And the third reason is the flexible border between news and feature formats in modern Ukrainian journalism. The reason for this is Soviet tradition, where in news texts reporters were able to use their thoughts, and one of the main principles was party loyalty. Old Soviet recommendations can be found in some modern textbooks for journalists. For example, the style of mass media is called 'publicist' and here is the description: this style 'is used in mass media, in public speeches and in propaganda. The main

¹ Kligler-Vilenchik, N., Literat, I. (2018). Distributed Creativity as Political Expression: Youth Responses to the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election in Online Affinity Networks. *Journal of Communication*, 68(1), 75-97. doi:10.1093/joc/jqx005

² (2018) Журналістська освіта в Україні: чи працює система. *Детектор Медіа*. <<https://detector.media/community/article/142347/2018-11-06-zhurnalistska-osvita-v-ukraini-chi-pratsyue-sistema/>> (2020, March, 30).

³ (2019) Що таке власне висловлювання на ЗНО з української мови. *Osvita.ua*. <<https://osvita.ua/test/training/ukr-mova/51163/>> (2020, March, 30).

characteristic features of the style are: popularity, visuality, polemic presentation, positive or negative expression along with bright stylistic tools¹. So there is no distinction between journalism and propaganda (in the USSR mass media were called ZMIP – the ‘means of mass information and propaganda’). And there is no actual line between news and feature style as well.

So, at their first year of education students, as a rule, aren’t ready to write news. May be educators should change the rules: and teach students to write feature formats at first, and news formats after that.

News creation experiment

In order to discover how 1st and the 2nd year students select quotes and facts for a headline and background, I conducted a news creation experiment. The students already know such terms as newsworthiness, a news peg, and an inverted pyramid, so they are acquainted with the problem of journalistic choice, when you should only use a few sentences in a text about the whole speech. However, this choice, which should be reasonable and independent, according to the professional standards, can be influenced by ‘elite frames’, ‘post-truth’, demagoguery and populism, ‘journalists’ deadlines’, bias etc.

The 1st and the 2nd year students of journalism department were asked to fill up a questionnaire with two parts. The first one contained an excerpt about immigration and the wall from Trump’s first speech to Congress. The second one had questions about Trump’s migration politics, election preferences etc. 65 1st year students and 30 2nd year students took part in the survey. It was anonymous and voluntary.

The excerpt from the speech was split into 13 quotes/fragments. The respondents had to choose one or two fragments for the headline and lead, because a headline quote is expanded in a lead (usually details are added). Five quotes or facts were proposed for a background, and students were asked to choose only one of them. Thus, the process of quote story writing was recreated.

Thus, the aim of this questionnaire was to understand what phrases the students would find newsworthy and what phrases would be evaluated as more significant.

Results

Table 1

Students’ choice for a headline/lead

#	Trump’s speech	Students’ choice
1	By finally enforcing our immigration laws,	22
2	we will raise wages,	13
3	help the unemployed,	10
4	save billions of dollars,	5
5	and make our communities safer for everyone.	12
6	We want all Americans to succeed	18
7	– but that can’t happen in an environment of lawless chaos.	5
8	We must restore integrity and the rule of law to our borders.	29
9	For that reason, we will soon begin the construction of a great wall along our southern border.	27
10	It will be started ahead of schedule and, when finished, it will be a very effective weapon against drugs and crime.	15
11	As we speak, we are removing gang members, drug dealers and criminals that threaten our communities and prey on our citizens.	43
12	Bad ones are going out as I speak tonight and as I have promised.	22
13	To any in Congress who do not believe we should enforce our laws, I would ask you this question: What would you say to the American family that loses their jobs, their income, or a loved one, because America refused to uphold its laws and defend its borders?	13

¹ Капелюшний, А.О. (2005). *Редагування в ЗМІ*. Львів: ПАІС.

Thus, students found ‘migrants as threat’ approach being the most significant for the headline. They were attracted by the negative image of migrants as ‘gang members, drug dealers and criminals’. In two the popular Trump’s quotes ‘bad ones’ and ‘rule of law restoration’ were mentioned. In Ukrainian mass media, crime is an effective approach for a clickable headline (according to Ukrainian NGO IPDO crime is among three most popular topics for local news sites – it is used in 30% of cases¹). So a ‘crime frame’ attracts attention of students and young journalists. And, here lack of knowledge about discrimination, migrant policy matters, however, these topics are usually studied in the 3rd or 4th year of education.

Two neutral quotes about the wall construction and immigration laws enforcement were also among top five most popular Trump’s quotes. Of course, such a quote in a headline won’t attract the same number of readers, however, the additional explanation for the students should be provided in a classroom. It’s important to write about crimes in order to prevent some of them, however, in Trump’s case (and in the cases of some Ukrainian politicians) the term is usually used without reasonable arguments.

It’s also interesting that Trump’s statements about ‘wages’, ‘unemployed’ and an opportunity of saving ‘billions of dollars’ along with ‘lawless chaos’ were rarely chosen. So, the students of the first years of study are able to recognise ‘populism’, concerning positive promises to the people (like money, jobs – in Ukrainian case ‘charity’ of politicians is also quite recognisable). However, ‘populism’, which uses ‘negative’ topics, fear, crimes etc. influence them, thus it should be in the centre of educators’ attention.

As for our next step, – the background, – we should specify some details. Students of the first years of study are acquainted with the necessity to add some context and in some cases alternative positions in the last paragraph of a news text. However, as our experiment shows, some students are not ready to oppose a popular politician.

In order to check students’ perception of the speech, 5 different backgrounds were proposed (tab. 2)

Table 2

Students’ choice for a background

Background	Students’ choice
A – the quote of the Mexican president, who compared Trump to Hitler and Mussolini	4
B – the quote of the Israeli prime minister Netanyahu, who agreed with Trump	15
C statistics of arrests near Texas border and the citizenship of the arrested (4 out of 5 were Americans)	30
D mentioning of resonant murder, committed by an illegal migrant; an American woman was killed.	29
E the data about migrants, who are rarely arrested compared to US citizens	11

So, there were two different backgrounds that were chosen more often: statistics, which opposed Trump’s statements, and a resonant case, which confirmed his words. It is positive that students chose the data and the fact (not just quotes of other politicians, like Enrique Peña Nieto or Benjamin Netanyahu). However, we can see that a big number of students agreed with the politician’s main thesis and didn’t try to oppose it. And ‘the danger’ rhetoric was the most convincing for them.

As for students’ attitudes toward Trump, he is not a preferable candidate for the students; answering the question ‘If you’d lived in the USA, who you would have chosen?’, they ‘voted’ for Clinton (44), Trump had 28 voices, the other candidate had 21 voices.

And their thoughts were divided almost equally on the question ‘Do you agree with Trump’s migrant politics’: 34 (pro), 29 (contra), 32 (it is hard to say). So the students’ attitudes don’t influence their compliance with the point of view in the speech (the majority of students ‘chose’ Clinton; however, were convinced by Trump and didn’t seek alternative positions). But they became frustrated with Trump’s migrant politics – only 30% agreed that they were unfair.

¹ ІДПО (2020) Звіти. <<http://idpo.org.ua/reports>> (2020, March, 30).

Conclusion

Today 29% of world's population avoid news¹, 44% of respondents in 38 countries consider journalists to be biased² and young audiences consume news predominantly via social networks feeds. According to Reuters Institute research, social media is the main news source for 18-to-24-year-olds³. In the times of post-truth such a picture with both news producing and consumption can be dangerous for democracy and global well-being.

Such news values as aggression, conflict and crime influenced students' quotes choice for a headline / lead, meanwhile, the students were able to recognise 'positive' populism about wages, new jobs etc. However, negative stereotypes, aggressive and frightening phrases remain effective in political communication. In background creation some students were guided by the Trump speech frames and didn't seek alternative positions. Statistics was also popular. So, some additional tasks or maybe even disciplines might be designed in order to study complex cases. Populism, post-truth, alternative facts, as the definitions, should be implied in the disciplines about news writing, as well as some recipes to counter these phenomena.

With the challenging changes in the modern political communication, where aggressive tweets may be more powerful than planned and reasonable communicative strategies, both journalistic news culture and journalism education should be modernised. The perception of news as the simplest form may be a reason for low quality of modern news product. Media literacy and critical skills formation should be a significant part of secondary and high education (particularly journalism education). It is not enough to teach journalist students to understand professional standards; teachers should consider different ways of context adding and alternative voice seeking as well. To quote a bright phrase is not enough for a journalist. A clickable headline might be harmful for democracy, as well as populist politicians.

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