

News Values in Online Media Articles

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Abstract – *The study centred on the analysis of the news values present in the online news articles of Rappler.com, Philstar.com, and Inquirer.net. Specifically, it aimed to determine the most frequently read articles published by the three electronic sites in the field of politics, entertainment, lifestyle, and sports; determine the presence of the news values in terms of impact, audience identification and pragmatics of media coverage; and propose guidelines for the enhancement of instruction in writing online journalistic articles. The study used the qualitative method of research to examine the ways an author achieves the desired effects in his works. It involves the element of interpretation that affords insights and identifies the linguistic tools used in analyzing a newspaper article. The method was substantiated with the use of content analysis which is often done in analytical studies in literature and the humanities. The researcher analyzed the top story or articles taken from the Philstar.com, the online portal of The Philippine Star, Inquirer.net of the Philippine Daily Inquirer and the news media site, Rappler from November 13, 2016 to December 4, 2016. The researcher concentrated only on four Sundays of the mentioned periods. It was found out that news about drugs, extra-judicial killing (crimes), Martial law and the Marcoses show to have impact to the readers while the involvement of famous personalities like Kris Aquino and issues on beauty pageants and basketball are subjects of articles with audience-identification news values. Meanwhile, a combination of these news stories is the consideration of the online journalists reflecting the pragmatics of media coverage. Further, guidelines to further guide Communication and Media Literacy faculty in teaching news writing was proposed. It was recommended that Senior high faculty, handling Purposive Communication and Media and Literacy Information courses, may include analysis of news values on online media sites in their discussion. Lastly, Master of Arts in English Language Studies and Doctor of Philosophy in English Language Studies students may collaborate on the creation of a web page or website for Graduate school*

news and updates concerning the program and to which the content posted may be used also for linguistic analysis.

Keywords – *News Values, Online Media sites, online news*

INTRODUCTION

Newspaper is one of the initial communication tools of the society. It has been the most usual and a generally received medium to be used in conveying the local, regional, international and national news to readers.

Printed newspapers are known to widen the range of public topics, events and issues their audience is aware of. There are reasons to assume that their online counterparts help increase their audience's perceived agenda to a lesser extent. The way print newspapers are structured and used is supposed to lure readers into reading stories they may not have been interested in beforehand. Online papers support more activity and control by their users; becoming aware of a narrower range of topics according to one's individual interests is more plausible [1].

In the Philippines, the online media has immensely played a part in delivering news to the public. The social news network Rappler, the Philippine Star online portal, Philstar.com and Inquirer's Inquirer.net are three of the most visited electronic media news sources and to which majority of talk-about news items are being taken [2].

Philippine Primer [3] asserted that Rappler's diverse content of well-researched news is one of the most credible news sources. On the other hand, philstar.com, on its own website claimed that it is a Philippine news and entertainment portal for the Filipino global community whose goal is to keep Filipinos, wherever in the world they may be – in tune with the events taking place in the Philippines and in synch with the needs and trends of the times and in touch with the rest of the world [4]. Further, INQUIRER.net, is the official news website of the INQUIRER Group of Companies (IGC) whose main features include breaking news 24/7 and the latest on issues and current event.

These are also the media being utilized by the so-called millennials or millennial generation who grew up in an electronics-filled and increasingly online and socially-networked world. They are the generation that has received the most marketing attention and this is also to which learners of today mostly belong. Millennials rely more on the electronic media than in the printed ones and their consumption of it must be carefully given attention because their views and thoughts about the society depend on how they perceive and interpret a news item or a literary work. With the influence that online media brings to the wide range of reading public, it is but necessary to look at the values each news story contains and see how they make the news published and how they influence the readers. As how Thomas [5] puts it:

News values are general guidelines or criteria used by media outlets, such as newspapers or broadcast media, to determine how much prominence to give to a story. They are fundamental to understanding news production and the choices that editors and other journalists face when deciding that one piece of information is news while another is not.

Filipinos live in a newspaper culture and whether it is English or other regional languages, almost every man gets benefited from newspaper. The dignity and reputation of a newspaper rests on the degree of their fidelity to truth and fearless reporting and with the cited importance of newspaper, it is best to analyze the value of its content and how these news values contribute in making a particular story in the headline.

Analysis of the values and processes involved in the selection of news is one of the most important areas of journalism studies as it goes to the heart of what is included, what is excluded, and why. These values also provide journalists with a mechanism to sort through quickly, process and select the news from that vast amount of information made available to them.

Bell [6] further cited Galtung and Ruge's list of news values which analyzed international news stories to find out what factors they had in common, and what factors placed them at the top of the news agenda worldwide. The values they identified fall into three categories: impact, audience identification and pragmatics of media coverage. Additionally, news values, according to Spencer-Thomas [7] distinguish whether stories are to be pursued. They will determine whether, if pursued, they will then be published. They will determine, if published, where the stories will be placed in news presentation.

The article has said to have impact if it affects one's life or has found to be significant to the people[7] The impact of a news story is a characteristic that describes weather or not this story is important to a reader and is relative to every reader's own personal interests [8]. This includes threshold, frequency, negativity, unexpectedness and unambiguity.

Meissner [9] affirmed that the best news is something that just happened. It increases the likelihood of an event to become news if it fits into a 24-hour news cycle This way, the people or the readers could easily be interested and identified with the situation or event in the story. Audience identification involves personalization, meaningfulness, reference to elite nations and reference to elite persons.

The pragmatics of media coverage identifies the consonance, continuity and composition. Consonance is stories which match the media's expectations receive more coverage than those which contradict them. At first sight, this appears to contradict the notion of unexpectedness. However, consonance refers to the media's readiness to report an item, which they are more likely to do if they are prepared for it. Indeed, journalists often have a preconceived idea of the angle they want to report an event from, even before they get there.

Spencer-Thomas [7] argued that journalists tend to select stories with a high news value, that is, a high score on one or more of the news factors. It is unlikely that a story will exhibit all of these.

Apparently, news stories posted online are easily accessed by the millennial who have the best technology or gadgets with them. Their knowledge on a particular issue and their views and opinions on a certain matter is affected by the way they receive the news. Take for example, the number of young people who are seen on television rallying on the streets and voicing their sentiments on the latest issues being talk about in the country that affect them individually. This only exhibits the power of the media, particularly the online, to which most of them rely with.

This research aimed to place online news articles as a form of literature subject for analysis because looking critically into its content makes one not just knowledgeable with the latest happening around but a more socially-relevant individual. The researcher believes that examining its news values employed would lead to a more effective and responsible newspaper report writing free from biases and adhere to the ethical standards or practices in news writing. More so, it intends to set the guidelines in teaching news writing by producing and or writing news articles containing the news values being looked for by the readers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study centered on the analysis of the news values present in the online news articles of Rappler.com, Philstar.com, and Inquirer.net.

Specifically, it aimed to determine the most frequently read articles published by the three electronic sites in the field of politics, entertainment, lifestyle, and sports; determine the presence of the news values in terms of impact, audience identification and pragmatics of media coverage; and propose guidelines for the enhancement of instruction in writing online journalistic articles.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used the qualitative method of research to examine the ways an author achieves the desired effects in his works. It involves the element of interpretation that affords insights and identifies the linguistic tools used in analyzing a newspaper article. Qualitative data are concerned with the features, attributes and characteristics of phenomenon that can be interpreted thematically. The design of qualitative research is probably the most flexible of the various experimental techniques, encompassing a variety of accepted methods and structures [10].

The method was substantiated with the use of content analysis which is often done in analytical studies in literature and the humanities. Content analysis is the primary technique used in this study. Content analysis is a widely used qualitative research technique. Rather than being a single method, current applications of content analysis show three distinct approaches: conventional, directed, or summative. All three approaches are used to interpret meaning from the content of text data and, hence, adhere to the naturalistic paradigm. The major differences among the approaches are coding schemes, origins of codes, and threats to trustworthiness. In conventional content analysis, coding categories are derived directly from the text data [11]. In so doing, the researcher analyzed three news values of a newspaper article that include impact, audience identification and pragmatics of media coverage.

Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the top story or articles taken from the Philstar.com, the online portal of The Philippine Star, Inquirer.net of the Philippine Daily Inquirer and the news media site, Rappler from November 13, 2016 to December 4, 2016. The researcher concentrated only on four Sundays of the mentioned periods. These articles were the ones which took the banner headlines of that particular portal. The articles

analyzed included news on politics, sports, health and lifestyle and entertainment.

FINDINGS

The most frequently read articles published by the three electronic sites in the field of politics, entertainment, lifestyle, and sports

Evidently news about President Rodrigo Duterte and former President Ferdinand Marcos dominated the politics page of the three posts. This only goes to show that issues and controversies surrounding their lives, whether good and bad, are being followed by the readers. Also, the public has found to be involved in the issue by analyzing by themselves the qualifications of a so-called hero qualified to be buried at the prestigious cemetery of heroes. And for other Duterte-ally readers, the burial of the infamous former commander-in-chief is a call to the Filipinos to move forward, heal the wounds and learn from the ugly past. Indeed, Thomas [5] put that news that deviates sharply from what one would expect and experience of everyday life, unusual, strange or wacky impacts people while most important news reports are those that affect a large number of people or which a large number of people want to know about. Evidently, news about Marcos draws the reader because his life and his experiences are being watched and trailed by the readers. Similarly, they have aftershocks in the lifestyle and entertainment issue as their names are being dragged also as recognized personalities together with Kris Aquino and the news on beauty pageants and basketball. News involving Ms. Kris is obviously a public concern and found to have a huge impact on them. An article posted at the Kicker Daily News [12] titled Top Ten Most Influential Females in the Philippines claimed that Kris' ability to reach and influence millions of people through her TV shows and movies made her one of the country's leading endorsers in the field of advertising. Also Sajo in her article titled *Fostering desire: The power of celebrity* posted in academia.edu [13] wrote that Kris Aquino's power lies in the public disclosure of her relationship woes produced in the visibility and auralness of media. Her performance of coping with these scandals captivates the public that the images seem to impress on public memory much more than national history, or practical, relevant issues in everyday civic culture. Kris Aquino is seemingly embedded in the Filipino's social fabric: every instance of her domestic life becomes subject to valuation. There she also cited that one avid follower of the latest Kris Aquino malady said that the Filipinos' lives are never exciting without Kris.

Basketball and a little of baseball have appeared to have controlled the readers' emotions as they dominate

the sports page of the three online sites. De la Rosa, [14] on quoting Bartholomew cited that people have always struggled to define their essence, their soul, or whatever one wishes to call because for Filipinos, basketball is part of that evanescent core.

Filipino fans are also some of the most passionate and knowledgeable in the world that they follow every game and has been affected by its result whether a triumph or a disappointment. Ramirez [15] points out that Filipinos' passion for basketball has historical and cultural roots. Perhaps this love affair with basketball, which in a way has taken away from other sports where analysts say the Filipinos have better chances of succeeding since they are not handicapped in terms of height and heft against naturally bigger nations, can be attributed to the country's own success on the same world stage it is now competing. Further, he adds that the reason why (basketball) is so embedded in the Filipinos' lives is it was the first team sport that was widely accessible and popular. With these reasons, it is with no qualm that news about basketball weighs more than any other news items and deserves to be in the top with the impact and magnitude it has to the Filipino readers.

Presence of the news values in terms of impact, audience identification and pragmatics of media coverage; News about drugs, extra-judicial killing (crimes), Martial law and the Marcoses show to have impact to the readers. Drugs is a major concern of the Filipino as it has been said and proved to have destroyed lives and finding a government official's involvement on it is disappointing and mind boggling. An article posted at alcoholrehab.com [16] claims that reports of drug related crime are common in the Philippines media. The main concern tends to be towards Shabu which gets the most media attention and its use is on the rise, and has worrying implications for the future. Moreover, Calpe and Bednarek [17] added that negative news provides drama and shock value which attracts audiences. The issue of drugs has been followed by the readers and the people particularly the politicians named by the President to have been involved in it surprised them.

Zajechowski [18] cites that any event that pits man against man has news value. Its value goes up if one or a group is directly involved in the conflict because its value depends on its scale, and its impact on people. Further, the impact of news also depends on the society and people it affect because the content of the news varies from society to society and in every society, though, whatever is unusual is likely to be news. Involvement of famous personalities like Kris Aquino and issues on beauty pageants and basketball are subjects of articles with audience-identification news values. As

Thomas [5] said, people are interested in people. News stories that centre on a particular person, and are presented from a human interest angle are likely to make the front page, particularly if they involve a well-known person. He further adds that the media pay attention to the rich, powerful, famous and infamous and stories about important people get the most coverage. It was also claimed that any event that concerns people directly or happens in an area where they live is news for them. It may be as minor as a bus stop being moved to another street; a murder in their city; a theft in their locality; the unexpected closure of the school where their child is studying. In each case, people want to know what has happened, and why. Further, most news is automatically about people, because it is the things people do to change the world which makes news.

Filipinos are into beauty pageants and they consider these a part of their life. Every event that concerns a Filipino joining or competing in an international arena matters to them and regard it as momentous. As cited by Cabral [19] said that Filipino fans have gone beyond the entertainment value in watching beauty pageants.

As Sison [20] wrote that Filipinos identify with the carefully created characters and celebrity personas. The people want their clothes, skin products, and laundry detergent. They want the brand of tuna they eat, the floor wax they use because they believe that using these products will transform them into their idols and give them their onscreen lives. Also she added that in the Philippine context, fandom and irrational loyal allegiance to a fictional story or persona often rules, and when challenged, fanatics are inclined to insist their ideas which are the correct ones, ignoring any facts or arguments that may conflict with their thoughts or beliefs.

A combination of these news stories is the consideration of the online journalists reflecting the pragmatics of media coverage. News organizations bring the news to the wide range of audience. Online news sources, on the other hand, send news to a particular group of individuals who are mostly tagged as the millennials. They are those who belong to the new generation of media consumers who mostly resort to social media for information and for the expression of their wants. In this sense, editors of online media sources need to be picky with the news that they are going to post and make sure those articles will meet the satisfaction of the news consumers. There enters, the third news values- the pragmatics of media coverage. Online news editors must employ pragmatic reasons if they want their site be favored by the readers than the others. They must weigh news according to the will and interest of the public as

well as its significance or relevance to their lives. The composition is described by the competence between the news stories to get a space in the media. Obviously, the news team of Philstar.com, Rappler.com and Inquirer.net consider pragmatics of media coverage in choosing their top news for the week.

Considering the two previously mentioned news values, impact and audience identification, news editors and journalists demonstrated their own sense of news and selected stories deserved to be devoured by the public. The three online sites compete for viewership and subscription. Consonance, composition and continuity are illustrated in every article chosen by the online journalists; thus, make the readers be engrossed in the issue or story being covered and in turn follow its content.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

From the objectives cited, it was concluded that the most read articles in online media are those news about drugs, extra-judicial killing (crimes). Hence, news on Martial law and the Marcoses show to have impact to the readers while involvement of famous personalities like Kris Aquino and issues on beauty pageants and basketball are subjects of articles with audience-identification news values. Apparently, a combination of these news stories is the consideration of the online journalists reflecting the pragmatics of media coverage. It was recommended that Senior high faculty, handling Purposive Communication and Media and Literacy Information courses, may include analysis of news values on online media sites in their discussion. Further, Master of Arts in English Language Studies and Doctor of Philosophy in English Language Studies students may collaborate on the creation of a web page or website for Graduate school news and updates concerning the program and to which the content posted may be used also for analysis.

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