

Fashion and Communication Training for A Quality Information

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Abstract

Our research group Media Studio for quality journalism by the excellence project "Quality Journalism to new digital journalistic formats" has rescued a tool to measure the quality of the contents and to analyze treatment of specialized contents. The overall project objective is to find out what are the parameters that determine how journalistic work can be considered of quality. Furthermore, it will be necessary to establish the relationship between journalistic quality and profile of the profession and if that quality should be or not linked to the professional figure. We consider that the method value added journalistic developed at the Catholic University of Chile and Argentina is a real find for an objective assessment of quality journalism. This methodology evaluates the newspaper articles, focusing on two stages: the selection of the news (Gatekeeping) and the process of creating it (News making), based on the application analysis sheet. The second stage of the project will be to study the formation of specialized journalists in different national and international universities. The method assigned to each research is the analysis of content and interviews with specialized sources, respectively. After making both investigations we will notice if it exists an equivalence relation between quantity and quality of published information on fashion at the national and international media and the professional profile that configures the information. The comparative analysis shows on the one hand that quantity does not equal quality of information. Moreover, it is important to see what is the relationship between the training provided by prestigious universities and the quality of the articles published on the media. Is now a reality the media need to have specialized fashion journalists because is increasing the fashion information. Until now, it was limited to magazines and special supplements with a high level of technical language.

Keywords: Fashion; Communication; Quality; Content; Analysis; University; Value added journalistic

Fashion, Tower of Babel between Designers and Journalists

Fashion is an art. A designer has to be an architect to create patterns, a sculptor for the shapes, a painter for the colour, a musician to find the harmony and a philosopher to create a style (Balenciaga). And we add to this sentence: He has to be a teacher, source and communicator for the media and society. From a long time ago to now, as usual attending person, as researcher, as journalist, to congresses, conferences and fashion shows, we can detect how the designers, agencies, models and event's organizers have a difficult relation love-hate with the media. It is very well known the bad relation between Balenciaga and the media. He never wanted to be public in the media, probably caused by a bad experience in his first years. Balenciaga didn't want to be in the photos and he only granted an interview to The Times, in 1971, three years later of his retirement of the Haute Couture [1]. However, every time more press conferences are summoned and more articles, supplements, specialized magazines or culture and society pages. And not to forget the professionals who dedicate their work to include some of this kind of topics. The principal theory that supports their critiques is the ignorance that the press and the audio-visual have about technical aspects, about the designers path, about the structure and the inside society, about investments, products and benefits, ... definitively the un-known information about a world that is occupying more media space and generating more social debate. In Spain, Fashion news has a long way to work. In general, only a few specialized journalists exist and also the fashion articles are sign by people who come from other different areas of journalism. The relation between the press and fashion is placed in the beginnings of the 18th century, with a few precedents of critique more than of acceptance. Since Josefa Figueras gathers in his book Fashion protagonists "when occasionally one was treating in the texts the different ways of dressing, it was done as something already known by all of us and one was alluding in satirical way or forming a part of a denunciation of the customs of the epoch (Ib:27).

If the vision is like a teacher of Specialized Journalism it is a surprise that there are a lot of future journalists who want to do something around that topic, probably because they have detected a formative lack in the general information press and also in the specialized magazines, maybe anxious to undertake or create communication companies tied to the fashion topic. But, is fashion an interest for the "Communication Experts"? What is at issue today? What journalist profile covers these events? Do they use these topics to eliminate others which concern the public opinion? And in the university area, what options are granted in the new plans for specialization? Are there enough options for these students who want to be specialized in an economic and social topic as fashion? Is fashion understood as something frivolous, superficial, linked to the elitism of celebrities? Into the University it reverts the responsibility of designing a professional profile of journalist expert in fashion, of promoting the investigation, of offering access to documentation and specific bibliography and generating new publications, of teaching with the collaboration of the media and the specialists, a world that exceeds the limits of the design to enter into the world of communication, company, marketing, social networks. As De Pablo Coello and Mateos Martín stated "the journalism is in crisis. The informative product that the mass media is nowadays offering does not answer with guaranties to the requirements of a quality newspaper as truthfulness, current affairs, public interest, checking, sources contrast, pluralism and rigour" [2].

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In the media is necessary to treat the fashion events following the guidelines of a good journalism work: including background, explanation, interpretation, technical language, judgments of value. The fashion big world areas like London, New York, Paris or Milan are trying to guarantee a great value communication which breaks with the image sometimes superficial, sometimes sensationalist, of an activity that generates many working places and also for future.

The University of Fashion

The fashion world in Spain has reviewed to be an exclusive scope of specialized and social elites to occupy an excellent space in newspapers of general information. This process of change is not directly proportional to the number and quality of expert journalists in the matter. Until recently, the fashion journalistic chronicles, the cover of related events or the interviews to designers and experts were signed by journalists who didn't know the subject and they took precise care of the news. This situation creates discomfort between the fashion experts who criticize the lack of documentation, information, technical language or the vision sensationalist and frivolous with how the media often deal the subjects about fashion. Nevertheless, the pursuit of the press and also of the radio and television states that an increasing interest of the public by these subjects exists, a demand which also the media try to respond. In contrast, there has not grown so much the offer of the Spanish universities to form expert fashion journalists. The most prestigious universities are in the international area: London (Central Saint Martin), New York (Parsons and FIT), Paris (The Chambre) or Milan (Marangoni,) ... the majority of them are private and they really have a lot of offers for students of Communication who want to be specialized in fashion.

The fashion market, the big companies and groups of shareholders are also linked to these fashion centres, which generates more quantity of information in the mass media. It is relevant the daily space that the newspapers and magazines dedicate to fashion in a commercial area as New York or how the British media dedicate to a formative high-level activity like London. Therefore, University and Media are a necessary tandem to form and to communicate Fashion. There is a big difference between the information that the journalist elaborates from a direct relation with the specialized sources (designers, models, illustrators, stylists, persons in charge of communication and marketing companies ...) and the one that only take care about the sensationalism, the gossip magazines and TV programs. Nevertheless, it is difficult to do without some famous figures of recognized reputation and popularity in the mass media who are the fashionable image, the muses, and the glamour for the creative people who work in the business.

The journalist must be able to communicate to his readers the connotations that make a detour to this area of art. Is Fashion an alternative way only accessible to social high-level spheres? What strategies do the professionals of the sector to carry the fashion to the people of the streets? Where is sustained the fashion empire? With what topics the models are surrounded by? What is certainly in defining them as victims of their own image? The labor of the specialized journalist is not only to report but also to form the public in the measure that promotes a critical and reflexive attitude before the information. It is difficult to obviate the interest of the media to flood with fashion at any TV space (with magazines about fashion where we can see famous people arriving at fashion shows in Paris, Milan, London or New York, also at the Spanish ones like Madrid or 080 Barcelona, or try to explain fashion only with the consumerism and the fashion victims, the compulsive buying ones that also have had their similarities with

some of the most famous films like Sex and the City, the devil wears Prada, Confessions of a compulsive buyer or about press (with fashion articles with nice color photos and big headings) or the great bet for the specialization (in some recognized fashion magazines, directed to a female sector and also masculine interested in knowing the last trends). The symbiosis between experts and journalists to spread fashion is not only advisable but necessary because it is a citizen right and a duty of the media to give service and response to the great demand of the public from a perspective IFE (Information, Formation and Entertainment).

Added Journalistic Value, Quality Brand in Fashion

How to distinguish a quality journalistic work to others that do not fulfill the minimum parameters demanded? Is it the informative quality a factor that helps to decouple from fashion words as frivolity or superficiality? Offers like the ones of the teachers Gomez Mompert and Palau Sampio in their article. The challenge of excellence. Indicators to measure the journalistic quality [3] it has a purpose to lay the foundations for a method or analysis of the quality of the journalistic productions that combines the textual and contextual aspects, so, not only those derivatives of the final product but also those who are related to the production conditions, so that possible interests can be interpreted in the incorporation and treatment of certain news. The article called the added journalistic value, as a tool to establish the criteria which define quality journalism [4] explains that the definition of the journalistic quality is based on ethical thinking like veracity, contrast, coherence and equity stumbles over economic, ideological and labor professional conditions. Like that, often there are designated as journalistic products that only meet some conditions of newsworthy, to be novel or striking but that omit other basic requirements as veracity, public interest, context, contrast. It is necessary to know how we can recognize the Quality Journalism. Our group of investigation Study of the Media for a Quality Journalism has rescued an instrument of quality measurements of the journalistic texts by the application of the Method VAP or Added Journalistic Value that allows to analyze the treatment of the journalistic texts not only in the quantitative level also in the qualitative one. The global aim of the project is to find which are the levels which determine that a journalistic work could be consider of quality and if this quality is tied or not to the figure of the professional, it will be necessary to see what relation exists between the quality of the information and the profile of the profession. Usually they are designated as journalistic products that only fulfill some conditions of the newsworthy: be something new, showy, but they omit requirements as veracity, public interest, contrast or context. It is necessary to know how we can distinguish a good journalism. Percal thinks that the method VAP (Value Added Journalistic) developed in the Catholic University of Chile and of Argentina is a real finding to evaluate in an objective way the quality of the journalistic work and how that work has been revealed in multiple investigations. This methodology evaluates the journalistic texts depending on a selection process of the news (Gatekeeping) and a process of creation (News making). The process consists on the application of analysis cards to the first text in the phase of selection of the event and later his development and organization [5].

Journalistic quality variables on fashion

A good journalist who covers the information about fashion must be also a good investigator, documentary maker and a great critic of the topic. In Spain, the information about fashion is still limited to the data of the International Fashion Weeks and certainly to the Spanish Fashion Weeks. Later, there are only a few pages about fashion,

saving some articles of fixed editions whose signatures does not even correspond to journalists but to people linked to the fashion world. It is time for the expert journalists to claim a space to provide it with content and quality. The VAP sheet will allow measuring a professional labor of reference: the fashion journalist one. The standard model of an analysis sheet is the one that now appears but it is hold to the modifications of the investigation development.

Process of selection: It includes indicators of selectivity, access and equality.

1. Selectivity indicators: Type of news, distinguishing between hard news and soft ones. Origin: initiative of the media, of the source, a reproduction of it has an indefinite origin. Relevancy of the fact with regard to the public: high, medium, low.

2. Access indicators: Presence of the sources: number of documentary sources, mentioned media, personal sources, types of sources (governmental, official public, official private, expert, nominal and not identified).

3. Equality indicators: Presence of the protagonist, Presence of the antagonist, topic: political, social, international, economic, free time and magazine.

Process of creation:

a) Style indicators: The narrative structure: the reversed pyramid, the chronological structure, the mixed structure and the interviews, The narrative level: presence of the narrator, Number of qualifying adjectives, Number of verbs of attribution, Number of photos, Number of info graphs , Number of graphs.

b) Content indicators: Precedents, Consequences , Observation of the journalist before the facts .

c) Emphasis indicators: Approach (troubled, human interest or transcendence), Speculative Treatment.

Though the group of investigation has delimited the study of the texts in digital format, in this case, the card is going to be applied to the press of general information and to the fashion supplements. Since it is possible to verify, it is a question of a resource that allows to measure quantitatively and qualitatively the brands that the news, an article or a fashion chronicle present.

High level fashion journalism university task

And the second stage of the project starts. The stays of investigation in foreign universities like Sacred Cuore of Milan or Central Saint Martin's [6] of London has induced to the second phase which aim is to insist into the idea that the quality level of the journalistic text is directly proportional to the level of formation of the professional who signs it.

Object of study

- Fashion study in the mass media.
- Formation and journalistic Information specialized in fashion. Quality levels. Comparative analysis of the treatment specialized in the fashionable chronicles in the English and Spanish press from September 2014.

Hypothesis

- The information about Fashion occupies every time a major space in the pres. (Specialized journalism and Journalism of Service).

- The treatment of the journalistic text lacks of the quality indexes demanded for specialized information.
- The treatment of the journalistic text has a lack of quality compared to the specialized information level.
- A high education is precise for future journalists, expert in fashion.
- The offer of Communication and Fashion in the Spanish Universities is reduced in comparison with foreign universities in spite of the professionals' demand by this profile.

Methodology

Analysis of the Content and Interviews, to know the initial hypothesis, we can design an investigation with a double route:

a) Analyse qualitatively and quantitatively the information about fashion in Spanish and foreign diaries of general information of reference.

English diaries: The Telegraph Spanish diaries: El País.

b) Make a comparative study about the journalist formation specialized in fashion in Spanish and foreign universities.

English Universities: Central Saint Martin's Spanish Universities: Francisco de Vitoria Madrid [7].

VAP tool: The design of the analysis card will allow to know the quality levels of the journalistic texts with indicators that mark the added journalistic value (VAP) that distinguishes a few texts from others, for its treatment, its contrast, its coherence, its sources, its language or its analytical and critical vision between other factors. Across the journalistic quality analysis, not only it is possible to determine which texts can be considered of quality and which not. Furthermore, there can be diagnosed the lacks of the journalistic quality nowadays, departing from the own texts and with the option to modify and improve the journalistic routines, and with it the formation of the critical conscience of the society.

Timetable

Phase 1

- Summary and selection of Fashion reports in press from September, 2014 to March, 2015.
- Summary of reports in the Spanish press from September 2014 to March, 2015.
- Comparative analysis from April 2015 to December 2015.
- Diffusion of results in February, 2016.

Phase 2

- Interviews to teachers, students, expert journalists in fashion and professionals of the fashion world, from February 2015 to June, 2015.
- Revision of the schemes of Spanish University educational arrangement opposite to other foreign universities and location of subjects on Communication and Fashion. From February 2015 to December 2015.
- Comparative analysis of the training levels of journalists specialized in Fashion in the Spanish universities and foreigners mentioned for March, 2016.

- Diffusion of the results approximately March, 2017.

Conclusions

Once realized both investigations it will be possible to verify if a relation of equivalence exists between the quantity and the quality of the information published about Fashion in the national and international area and the professional profile who forms the information. The comparative analysis can demonstrate on one hand, that quantity is not equal to informative quality, while it is published more in the foreign newspapers about fashion topics than on the Spanish ones, but there has not been analysed the degree of qualification of this information. On the other hand, it is important to see what relation exists between the formations that offer international and Spanish universities and the quality of the journalistic texts published in every area. Definitively, to link the formation of the journalist with the quality and the data processing on fashion, far from losing interest, is becoming day a day more “trendy”.

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