Manana Shamilishvili

Tbilisi State University
Tbilisi, Georgia

The specifics of storytelling in the Georgian internet media

The accelerated developmental tempo of modern communication technologies puts media face to face with new challenges and necessitates changes both in form and in content. The domination of the digital media has set new requirements to the author of a media-text who needs to tell a story concisely, reflect daily life, and raise topical problems and social, economic or political issues.

Telling a story in multimedia sphere, i.e. *storytelling*, fosters the advancement of narrative journalism. We concentrate exactly on this phenomenon in the presented research and underscore its importance through qualitative content analysis of specific examples.

We consider the theory of technological determinism of communication as the most relevant one for the present research. This theory establishes the connection between the dominant communication technology of a period and the main characteristics of society. We will also refer to the *two-step flow of communication model* developed by American sociologists, Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld. According to this theory, ideas are first transferred to influential personalities, and afterwards, from those personalities, they are spread throughout wider societies.

We pay special attention to postings. We chose the original texts of those authors, *opinion-makers*, who meet the following criteria: professional competence, numerous followers (*subscribers*) in social networks, intensity of updating status and discussion of topical themes.

In addition to facebook statuses (mini-blogs), we overview multimedia forms of social network storytelling such as: blogs, podcasts, vlogs, longreads, etc. The mentioned forms enable an author to present the story from manifold sides through diverse visual, verbal means, and through audio, video and photo sources and to deliver exhaustive, flawless, and interesting material to audience.

Observing the posts of popular authors helps us to follow the dramaturgy of storytelling, the process that highlights the specifics of relationships between authors and readers in social networks.