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# THE NEWS ON SELECTED NATIONAL TELEVISION CHANNELS ON THE MACEDONIAN NATIONAL HOLIDAY, OCTOBER 11<sup>TH</sup>, DAY OF UPRISING OF THE MACEDONIAN PEOPLE

**ABSTRACT:** In this research we examined the news on the four most-watched Macedonian national television channels broadcasting in the Macedonian language according to the Annual Report for 2022<sup>1</sup> by the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services<sup>2</sup>. We analysed the news from the above television channels presented on October 11<sup>th</sup>, Day of the Uprising of the Macedonian People, which is one of the most important Macedonian National Holidays for the Macedonian state.

Going through the news flow and selection of information, we get the picture of the attitude of the television channel towards daily political events and the eventual political inclination. Consequently, the composition of the editorial team, the language employed, presentation style, and target audience all play

<sup>1</sup> Агенција за аудио и аудиовизуелни медиумски услуги, Податоци за досегот на радиостаниците и за уделот во вкупната гледаност на телевизиските станици. Годишен извештај 2022 [Agencija za audio i audiovizuelni medijumski uslugi, *Podatoci za dosegot na radiostanicite i za udelot vo vkupnata gledanost na televiziskite stanici. Godišen izveštaj 2022*], <https://tiny.pl/26v5sdq5> – 6 X 2023.

<sup>2</sup> The Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services is an independent, non-profit regulatory body with the status of a legal entity endowed with public authorities regulated by the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services.

pivotal roles in shaping the conveyed media messages. Especially, it is crucial to consider how the audience will react to the messages.

This research shows that the editorial team plays a significant role in the final product of the programme, they decide on what information will be placed in the news, guided by the established editorial policy, which is assumed to be complying, i.e. should be complying to professional criteria: timeliness, relevance, truthfulness, completeness, and objectivity of the message<sup>3</sup>. Through production, i.e., creating media content, each medium creates a different representation of the same event. It is especially important to know who owns the medium. Each television channel uses a different linguistic expression, combining image, sound, text, film, etc. In this way, a different representation of reality is created in the media.

**Keywords:** communicology, Macedonian language, mass media, political discourse

Mass media and the messages they convey represent an inexhaustible source of research topics which can be examined from the perspective of multiple sciences, such as communicology, linguistics, political science, etc. This means that, above all, it involves interdisciplinary research. The aim of this paper is to present the linguistic discourse, i.e., the way Macedonian journalists present information in the news programmes of several Macedonian national television channels. The research is focused on communicology and linguistic variations in the news.

We decided to examine the news on the four most-watched Macedonian national television channels broadcasting in Macedonian language according to the Annual Report for 2022<sup>4</sup> by the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services<sup>5</sup>, which are Macedonian Radio Television (MRT), Sitel, Kanal 5, and Alfa. It should be noted that Alsat M television channel is the third most-watched, but it primarily broadcasts in Albanian language. We only consider the statements of journalists (from the studio and from site of the event). Statements of the politicians are taken into account only if rephrased by a journalist. We analysed the news from the above television channels presented on October 11th, Day of the Uprising of the Macedonian People, which is one of the most important Macedonian National Holidays for the Macedonian state.

<sup>3</sup> Милетић М., Милетић Н., Комуниколошки лексикон, Београд [Miletić M., Miletić N., *Komunikološki leksikon*, Beograd] 2012, pp. 362-363.

<sup>4</sup> Агенција за аудио и аудиовизуелни медиумски услуги, Податоци за досегот на радиостаниците и за уделот во вкупната гледаност на телевизиските станици. Годишен извештај 2022 [Agencija za audio i audiovizuelni medijumski uslugi, *Podatoci za dosegot na radiostanice i za udelot vo vkupnata gledanost na televiziskite stanici. Godišen izveštaj 2022*], <https://tiny.pl/26v5sdq5> – 6 X 2023.

<sup>5</sup> The Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services is an independent, non-profit regulatory body with the status of a legal entity endowed with public authorities regulated by the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services.

This day commemorates the beginning of the uprising of the Macedonian people against fascism, as well as for liberation, self-identity, and independence of the Macedonian people. Through its armed struggle, the country made a significant contribution to the victory over fascism in the Second World War. This year marks 82 years since the uprising and the first organised attacks against the fascists in the cities of Prilep and Kumanovo.

Going through the news flow and selection of information, we get the picture of the attitude of the television channel towards daily political events and the eventual political inclination.

Journalists refer to the public officially, and therefore, they should use standard Macedonian language. Considering the fact that language is a live material enriching and upgrading itself constantly, we aim to examine it from aspect of communicology.

For a communicology overview, we start with the following definition: mass communication is a societal activity involving the operation of signs, informative, educational, and recreational content through which professional groups in specialised institutions enable mutual understanding with the mass audience, stimulating their participation in a specific societal activity<sup>6</sup>. Mass communication is carried out through mass media. Mass media are institutions, legally regulated sources of information (through the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services), and accordingly, message senders should act within the framework of institutionally defined roles, according to ethical codes and regulations. Although media freedom is provided for, it is still expected to operate within the boundaries of legal provisions that pertain to the media.

The sender of information uses the opportunity to refer via television to a wider circle of receivers, ensuring information penetration in short time and efficiently into the masses.

The communication process was defined by Roman Jakobson<sup>7</sup>, while Harold Lasswell analysed communication within the framework of five basic questions: *Who? Says what? In what channel? To whom? and with What effect?*<sup>8</sup>.

According to Miletic, the news should provide answers to the questions who, what, where, when, and how, and their order must be in line with the aspect of reality to which the news pertains<sup>9</sup>. In this context, there are distinctions between flash news and extended news. The former, flash news, contain only the most important answers to the mentioned questions (e.g., who and what) and are often featured on the front pages

<sup>6</sup> Gruevski [Груевски] cited in Јованова-Грујовска Е., Кузмановска Е., “Местото на експресивната лексика во информативните емисии на електронските медиуми”, in Е. Јованова-Грујовска (ed.), *Македонскиот јазик – извор на филолошки и на културолошки истражувања*, Скопје [Јованова-Грујовска Е., Kuzmanovska E., “Mestoto na ekspresivnata leksika vo infomativnite emisii na elektronskite mediumi”, in E. Jovanova-Grujovska (ed.), *Makedonskiot jazik – izvor na filološki i na kulturološki istražuvanja*, Skopje] 2020, p. 161.

<sup>7</sup> Jakobson in A.A. Berger, *Essentials of Mass Communication Theory*, Thousand Oaks 1995, pp. 14-15.

<sup>8</sup> Lasswell cited in V. Vuković, *Društveni mediju u upravljanje komunikacijama*, Cetinje 2019, p. 50.

<sup>9</sup> Милетић М., Милетић Н., *Комуниколошки лексикон*, Београд [Miletić M., Miletić N., *Komunikološki leksikon*, Beograd] 2012, p. 17.

of newspapers or in announcements on radio and television informative programmes, while extended news provide more information and a detailed description<sup>10</sup>.

Therefore, it is very important which editorial team sends the media messages, in which language, how they are presented, and which audience they are directed to (gender, age, social status, place of residence). Especially, it is crucial to consider how the audience will react to the messages. In Macedonia, it is exceptionally important who owns the media, as they decide what type of media content will be created and with what kind of technology.

The public service broadcaster MRT is state-owned, but has had nearly constant leadership in the past 15 years. Regarding the ownership of the other television channels, according to the Ownership Report for Media in 2023<sup>11</sup> by the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, Kanal 5 is owned by a physical entity, while the owners of Sitel and Alfa are legal entities. Sitel Television is owned by a legal entity which is of full ownership by a physical entity. It is publicly known that the parents of the owners of Kanal 5 and Sitel are former prominent members of the executive authority from the time of what is now the opposition party. Alfa Television channel is owned by a legal entity, whose owners are four other legal entities, and the majority of ownership, namely 57% through mediation of three legal entities, leads us to a physical entity from Hungary.

Journalists contact the public with their announcements through electronic media. It is extremely important for the journalist, host, or presenter to have a solid understanding of the language, to keep up with updates in linguistic norms, to be able to accurately convey the standard language norm, and to be a linguistic authority for the listeners and viewers.

We will be examining the news in the course of the whole day, from the first morning, through the central afternoon and evening news, to the late-night briefings.

All four television channels start their morning news with information about announced celebrations and events. MRT, the public service broadcaster, began its news with: "Under the motto Defiance and Freedom, Macedonia marks 82 years since the start of the National Uprising. The central event will be held in front of the Memorial Cenotaph in Kumanovo, and numerous delegations will lay fresh flowers at the memorials of the National Liberation War in Skopje and in Prilep. Prime Minister Kovachevski will also speak at the ceremony in Kumanovo. Last night in Prilep, the hero-city, an improvised attack on the city was carried out, as a reminder of the beginning of the armed struggle against the fascist occupiers". MRT adapted its programme for the National Holiday and provided a live broadcast of all conveniently scheduled events until 12:30 PM.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>11</sup> Агенција за аудио и аудиовизуелни медиумски услуги, Сопственоста на медиумите во 2023 година [Agencija za audio i audiovizuelni medijumski uslugi, *Sopstvenosta na medijumite vo 2023 godina*], <https://tiny.pl/v23bp3fw> – 10 I 2024.

Sitel TV started the morning news with: *Macedonia marks October 11th, the Day of the People's Liberation War*. This was followed by short segments from the Memorial Cenotaph in Kumanovo with excerpts from the speeches of Maxim Dimitrievski, mayor of Kumanovo (and president of the ZNAM opposition party), as well as of the Dimitar Kovachevski, Prime Minister.

Kanal 5 TV announced: *Macedonia celebrates one of the brightest dates in its history, October 11th*. October 11th is commemorated under the motto Defiance and Freedom.

In the morning news, Alfa TV announced: *Under the motto Defiance and Freedom, today marks 82 years since the day that marked the beginning of the People's Liberation Struggle. The central event will be held in front of the Memorial Cenotaph in Kumanovo, and the state award 'October 11th' will be handed in the Assembly. Flowers will be laid at the memorials of the fallen fighters of the People's Liberation Struggle in Skopje, Prilep, and Kumanovo*.

Watching the morning news, we can conclude that in the morning hours, there was only presentation of information, almost without any comments and political messages from the journalists.

The midday and afternoon news (at 12, 14, 15, or 16 o'clock) differ from the morning news in terms of political commentaries and messages, which were nearly absent in the morning. MRT congratulates: *Happy holiday! Macedonia celebrates the Day of the People's Uprising. Fighters stressed their achievements should be highly respected. Politicians paid tribute. They called for unity for the progress of the country in Europe*.

One can immediately notice the influence of the editor, in the sentence *Politicians paid tribute*, as if the Macedonian people were not there to pay their tribute to the Holiday.

Sitel changes its rhetoric: *Macedonia celebrates the Day of the People's Uprising – October 11th. The state leadership announcing wise decisions, citizens requesting for a better life provisions. October 11th in Prilep marked under strong police security*.

Here we can see the immense influence of the editor who stresses that the state leadership only announces wise decisions, while the people have requests for better life. The presence of the state and political leadership in Prilep under high police security brings out the absence of the Macedonian people paying tribute to the Holiday.

This is followed by statements from Deputy Prime Minister Bitikji, Jovchevski, Mayor of Prilep, and a complaint by a representative of the Union of Fighters from Skopje that they were not part of the delegations for laying flowers, and being rejected regardless of their timely notification.

Kanal 5 starts the news throughout the day with the same sentences in honour of the holiday. It is followed by a live stream of the reporter in front of the Monument in Skopje, saying, among other things the following: *Yet, the younger generations were absent today, so if it weren't for the delegates and the two representatives of the National Liberation War, the plateau in front of the government would have been empty... This year, as well as in the last, foreign delegations were welcomed at the plateau, which is in an unfortunate state. The flower beds still stand unpainted, the tiles are shattered, and the government building does not provide a better image. The state-political leadership (without the*

people, our note) celebrated the holiday on October 11th with calls for unity and a better tomorrow. This is followed by messages from the President of the state, Stevo Pendarovski, Prime Minister Dimitar Kovachevski, President of the opposition party VMRO-DPMNE Hristijan Mickoski, and then the President of the Parliament, Talat Djaferi.

According to the order of conveying messages from politicians, we can see that there is an effort to bring the President of the opposition party as close as possible to the state leadership, while the President of the Parliament is placed last.

Alpha TV, through the voice of its editor Kole Chashule, reports as the fifth news on the state holiday of October 11th: *Defiance and freedom, but whose, where, and from whom? As for the Day of the Macedonian Uprising, the authority has neither an M from Macedonia nor a word about the Bulgarian fascists.*

We can note that with the editor's showing up on Alpha TV, the bilateral dispute with Bulgaria and Bulgaria's past as a fascist country is more important than the celebration of the National Holiday.

The evening central news (at 18, 19, and 19:30), mainly, remain consistent with the afternoon ones. This applies to MRT, Sitel, and Kanal 5. Alpha TV put it the celebration news of the holiday on October 11th in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth news segments, with comments by the editor, similar to those in the afternoon news.

It is interesting to mention that only MRT and Sitel, reported that the President of the state, besides paying tribute to the holiday, laid flowers at the Memorial Complex Partisan Graves in Butel.

The editorial team plays a significant role in the final product of the programme, it decides on what information will be placed in the news, guided by the established editorial policy, which is assumed to be complying, i.e. should be complying to professional criteria: timeliness, relevance, truthfulness, completeness, and objectivity of the message<sup>12</sup>. The content of TV programmes results from the process of selection and interpretation<sup>13</sup>. The way in which certain content is constructed depends on a multitude of assumptions relied upon by media creators and editors<sup>14</sup>. Through production, i.e., creating media content, each medium creates a different representation of the same event. It is especially important to know who owns the medium. Each television channel uses a different linguistic expression, combining image, sound, text, film, etc. In this way, a different representation of reality is created in the media. The audience as the recipient of media content is crucial in the media system. The media message is directed towards them, and their reaction to that message returns to the media and influences how future content will be produced. Although some theorists believe that the audience passively receives content from the media and cannot have much conscious influence on it, we believe that the audience consciously chooses which media content

<sup>12</sup> Милетић М., Милетић Н., Комуниколошки лексикон, Београд [Miletić M., Miletić N., *Komunikološki leksikon*, Beograd] 2012, pp. 362-363.

<sup>13</sup> Z. Tomić, *Komunikologija*, Beograd 2003, p. 74.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.



to consume for information. Macedonian national television channels already have their targeted groups of viewers, which are relatively constant in composition and belief.

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