EXPLANATORY JOURNALISM: A STUDY BASED ON REPORTS FROM *NEXO* JOURNAL[1]

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ABSTRACT

This article has as its theme the observation of the characteristics of explanatory journalism. It is intended to investigate the elements of explanatory journalism within five reports of the news portal nexo, belonging to the "explained" section of the portal. From the reading of the selected reports, the article verifies whether they have the characteristics presented by the authors mentioned in the bibliography. The research methodology is content analysis, according to Bardin (2011). It was observed that Nexo presents the characteristics of explanatory journalism.

Keywords: Journalism. Explanatory journalism. Independent journalism. Content analysis. Nexus.

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INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary context, new media, and new ways of communicating are increasingly present, in the face of the abundance of information, voices, dissonant echoes, and the lack of filter. As Hoewl says, they are characteristics of the "convergence scenario", such as "the acceleration of society and the overabundance of information" (2017, p. 3). Given this new reality, it is necessary to create and reproduce efficient communicative journalistic processes so that information is transmitted effectively and credibly so that there are no doubts about the reliability of the material presented.

The modality of explanatory journalism has been debated recently as a way to achieve the objective of presenting confidence and at the same time passing on information in a more complete, didactic way, thus integrating with the reader's experience: "The internet has obliterated the late analysis of the news from the previous day. Today, readers expect to fully understand the news of the day as it happens" (DOCTOR, 2014, undated).

Thus, this article intends to address explanatory journalism and its characteristics in contemporary society, given the emergence especially in journalism considered independent, understanding independent journalism as that which is not linked to organizations, usually linked to advertisers, and which therefore seeks to bring plurality to its publications. According to Patrício (2020, p. 3):

> Despite the polysemy of the concept, the term 'independent journalism' can be recognized by initiatives that elaborate work proposals with objectives beyond the conventional corporate media, intending transformations in inequalities, in any sphere, of Brazilian society.

The objective of this study is to identify the characteristics and strategies present in explanatory journalism in a vehicle that is called independent journalism (PÚBLICA, 2021). It starts from the following research question: can the "explained" section of the newspaper Nexo be considered as an applied example of explanatory journalism? The vehicle chosen was Nexo, as there is a hypothesis that the editorial standards present in the news portal have characteristics of the so-called explanatory journalism. Within the newspaper, the "explained" section is selected, whose main objective is to create longer articles on subjects that are in vogue at a given moment.

To this end, we intend to carry out a systematic observation of five journalistic articles from the Explicado editorial, from Nexo, namely: "CPI's: the History and Scope of Investigations", "Cracolândia: origin, expansion, and Lack of Resolution in Sight", "Amnesty Law: from relief in reopening to military impunity", "Brazilian TV: from hegemony to dispute with new platforms", "ICU's maximum attention when life is hanging by a thread".

The main authors of the research are Gabriel Rizzo (2018), Letícia Brito, and Marli dos Santos (2020), who have already produced analytical content for the newspaper Nexo, and Pedro Bermond (2019), who has researched the topic of explanatory journalism.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This research has a qualitative, descriptive approach. According to Laurence Bardin (2011), the qualitative approach is a set of analyses that aims to obtain and observe the inference of external knowledge within that studied content (through systematic and objective procedures of content description). Descriptive research, according to the same author, has as its object the description of what is observed taking into account the formulation of research questions and establishing a relationship between variables that are proposed in the object under analysis.

The following criteria were used to collect the reports: what are the criteria that the authors identified as explanatory journalism? How is the chosen article of the newspaper nexo constructed? Is the way it is produced related to them? These reports were chosen for the size of the text, the amount of image information they contained, and also their time of publication, they were the most recent articles published in the portal section.

The objective of the content analysis proposed by Bardin (2011) goes beyond the quantitative perspective, previously explored in studies of the 1940s/50s, and advances in the sense of identifying, understanding, and contextualizing the contents in communication processes inferred by the researcher. The procedures for the fulfillment of these objectives include the pre-analysis of the research corpus, exploration of the material and treatment of the results, and a phase in which inferences and interpretations are made of what was collected and systematized, according to the objectives of the research.

In this sense, it is important to highlight that content analysis operates through categories of analysis, defined a priori and a posteriori, which must be linked to the research question and the objectives established by the author and to the context of the Nexo portal:

> Categorization can employ two inverse processes: the category system is provided and the elements are distributed in the best possible way as they are found. This is the "box" procedure of which we have already spoken, applicable in the case where the organization of the material derives directly from the hypothetical theoretical workings; The system of categories is not provided, but results from the analogical and progressive classification of the elements. This is the procedure by "collection": The conceptual title of each category is only defined at the end of the operation. (BARDIN, 2011, p. 149).

The registration units are the five selected articles: "CPIs: The history and scope of investigations", "ICUs: maximum attention when life is hanging by a thread", "Amnesty law: relief in the reopening to military impunity", "Cracolândia: origin, expansion, and lack of resolution in sight" and "Brazilian TV: from hegemony to dispute for new platforms".

Then, from the observation of the elements identified within the research corpus, the verification of the elements of the explanatory journalism modality is constructed, seeking to observe the consonance and how the modality is present in the reports: "Doing a thematic analysis consists of discovering the "nuclei of meaning" that makeup communication and whose presence, or frequency of appearance, can mean something for the chosen analytical objective" (BARDIN, 2011, p. 135).

As categories of analysis of explanatory journalism, the following were defined: the argumentative presence of textual construction (inserting textual inferences in addition to data), presence of hyperlinks with themes that are interconnected to the main theme, presence of imagery material (such as infographics, tables, and images) that illustrate the text and the presence of quotations for the reader to delve deeper into the subject, beyond what the matter offers.

EXPLANATORY JOURNALISM

The notion of explanatory journalism can be described as a way of not exposing the fact in isolation, but rather giving shape, context, and situating citizens in the events to establish a connection with the whole and understand how it can have a direct impact on personal life: "how and why" than just "who, what, when and where" (DOCTOR, 2014, n.n.).

One can point out as characteristics of explanatory journalism the didacticism, the accessible language and the way to prevent journalism from becoming a noise amid the cacophony experienced.

> The Explanatory Element present in so many different products of the craft includes: a technical approach, concerning a technical conceptual repertoire or the treatment of complex themes; a didactic approach, with the use of graphic, narrative, interactive resources, analogies, and gradual expositions to guide the reader to understanding; finally, a contextualizing approach, which deals with the reported facts not only with what is unique to them but paying attention to the connections with what is universal and is contained in a broad temporality (VALLS, 2019, p. 22)

This journalistic modality was included in the Pulitzer Prize and its main function is to include the maximum rigor as well as to communicate with the audience for whom it is intended: "distinct examples of explanatory journalism that illuminate significant and

complex themes, demonstrating mastery of the theme, lucid writing, and clear presentation, with any journalistic tool at their disposal" (EXPLANATORY, Pulitzer Prize, 2019).

WHAT IS EXPLAINED IN *NEXO*

Nexo Jornal is a Brazilian electronic journalism outlet founded by Paula Miraglia, Renata Rizzi, and Conrado Corsalette in 2015. It is a vehicle that brings general themes about Brazil and, according to its editorial: "its objective is to produce content that contributes to a qualified and plural public debate, according to the editorial principles of clarity, balance, and transparency. The following are listed the procedures for publishing content on Nexo, organized in entries" (NEXO JORNAL, 2021).

The "explained" section of Jornal Nexo aims to discuss in more depth a topic that is in vogue in a specific period. Thus, the five articles chosen to be analyzed in this article are: "CPIs: The History and Scope of Investigations", "ICUs: Maximum Attention when Life is Hanging by a Thread", "Amnesty Law: relief in the Reopening of military impunity", "Cracolândia: origin, expansion, and lack of resolution in sight" and "Brazilian TV: from hegemony to dispute for new platforms" all had some relationship with the facts experienced in the month in which they were published.

The five selected reports present the content subdivided into about 10 different intertitles that make up the entire material of the article, there is a predominant focus on the text, but there is also the use of images and especially infographics in all articles. There is also the constant use of hyperlinks with quotations that complement the text. At the end of all the articles, there is a pattern of two topics called: "in art" and "go even deeper", where the above is exemplified through other texts or other media languages, if the reader wants to delve even deeper into the subjects covered.

The union of elements such as hyperlinks, the constant use of images, quotes, outline structure, and indications of other ways of searching for the information presented, not stopping at the text itself, is in line with the debates made about explanatory journalism:

> Explanatory Journalism, therefore, has been a fact present in the world of communications for decades, it is part of the adaptations that the craft undertakes as new sociopolitical needs arise or new means of communicating become available. That is why we seek to conceptualize part of the broad phenomenon "Explanatory Journalism" as an integrated element in the most diverse media, newsrooms, and publications around the world, which was and is a part of the journalists' repertoire, which first presented itself as an accessory characteristic of journalistic practice, before taking on dimension and gaining its contours. (VALLS, 2019, p. 22)

Pre-established categories are present, such as images and infographics illustrating the content of the articles. Paragraphs are constructed with argumentative quotations. In

the example below, the constant use of the hyperlink takes the text to other resources, such as videos and other reports on the subjects.
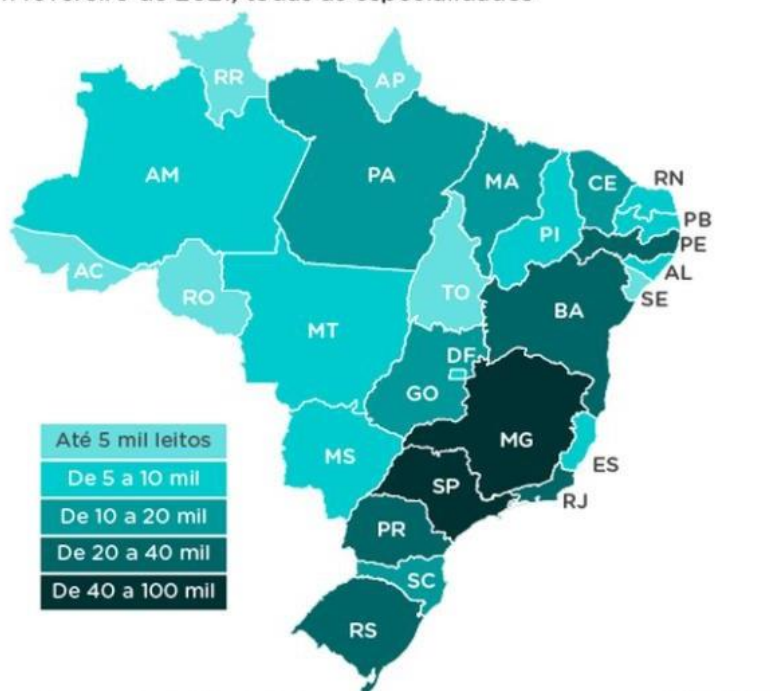
FIGURE 1: - Presence of hyperlinks

"O governo claramente dizia que, se fosse mexido o texto em certos pontos, ele retiraria o projeto da anistia. Esse era o preço a ser pago para o país receber de volta os exilados. Nós não tínhamos como pregar a supressão, isso poderia levar à frustração do projeto, àquela altura tão aguardado"

Sepúlveda Pertence
ex-ministro do STF (Supremo Tribunal Federal) e relator na OAB (Ordem dos Advogados do Brasil) sobre o projeto da Lei da Anistia elaborado pelo governo, em 1979, em declaração de agosto de 2019

Report: "CPI's the History and Scope of the Investigations".

Figure 2 - Infographic in map format

Total de leitos hospitalares de internação
Em fevereiro de 2021, todas as especialidades

Até 5 mil leitos
De 5 a 10 mil
De 10 a 20 mil
De 20 a 40 mil
De 40 a 100 mil

Fonte: Datasus, Ministério da Saúde.
Report: "ICU's: maximum attention is hanging by a thread"

Next, in Figure 3, it is observed that all the titles of the corpus studied have the same structure, that is, the use of a colon with a subtitle to explain the main title. There is also a hyperlink to the names of the journalists who sign the stories, which leads to the reporters' data and contact.

FIGURE 3: Explanatory titles

EXPLICADO
CPIs: a história e o alcance das investigações

Fernanda Boldrin 05 de jun de 2021 (atualizado 05/06/2021 às 22h37)

Instrumento parlamentar pode destrinchar escândalos, mas suas funções vão muito além disso. Conheça a origem, os poderes e os momentos marcantes envolvendo tais apurações

EXPLICADO
UTIs: a atenção máxima quando a vida está por um fio

Cesar Gaglioni 04 de abr de 2021 (atualizado 05/04/2021 às 19h41)

Unidades de Terapia Intensiva abrigam os pacientes mais graves. Pandemia elevou demanda por leitos e pressão sobre hospitais

EXPLICADO
Lei de Anistia: do alívio na reabertura à impunidade militar

João Paulo Charleaux 21 de fev de 2021 (atualizado 24/02/2021 às 13h53)

Decisão permitiu regresso de exilados, mas blindou agentes da ditadura responsáveis por crimes contra a humanidade num Brasil que ainda exalta o regime dos generais

EXPLICADO
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EXPLICADO
Cracolândia: origem, expansão e falta de resolução à vista

Estêvão Bertoni 23 de nov de 2020 (atualizado 23/11/2020 às 20h26)

Uma das maiores cenas abertas de consumo de crack no mundo, área do centro de São Paulo convive há quase três décadas com problema que une questões sociais, sanitárias e de segurança pública

EXPLICADO
TV brasileira: da hegemonia à disputa com novas plataformas

Juliana Domingos de Lima 17 de set de 2020 (atualizado 17/09/2020 às 20h53)

Meio de comunicação mais popular do país completa 70 anos de história entre transformações intensas e reafirmação de seu papel informativo durante a pandemia

In Figure 4, the text is presented in bullet points to give more dynamism to the description.

FIGURE 4: Text in topics

QUEM são os profissionais de uma UTI

A equipe de uma UTI é regulamentada por uma portaria do Ministério da Saúde, publicada em agosto de 1998. O quadro básico é composto por:

— Um **coordenador médico** com título em medicina intensiva, responsável por gerenciar toda a equipe

— Um **médico diarista** a cada dez leitos, com título em medicina intensiva, responsável pelo acompanhamento cotidiano dos pacientes

— Um **médico plantonista** a cada dez leitos, com título em medicina intensiva, responsável pelo atendimento em casos de emergência

— Um **enfermeiro coordenador**, responsável pela equipe de enfermagem

— Um **enfermeiro** a cada dez leitos

— Um **técnico de enfermagem** a cada dois leitos

— Um **fisioterapeuta** a cada dez leitos

— Um **funcionário** responsável pela limpeza da unidade

Com exceção do fisioterapeuta, a UTI deve contar com esses profissionais 24 horas por dia, sete dias por semana.

Report "ICU's: maximum attention is hanging by a thread"

Figure 5 shows a part of the report where the journalist indicates to the reader more references if he wants to delve deeper into that subject.

FIGURE 5: References at the end of the article

VÁ AINDA MAIS FUNDO: trabalhos acadêmicos

— "Nas tramas do crack: etnografia da abjeção" (2014), de Taniele Rui. Editora Terceiro Nome.

— "Pesquisa nacional sobre o uso de crack - Quem são os usuários de crack e/ou similares do Brasil? Quantos são nas capitais brasileiras?", de Francisco Inácio Bastos e Neilane Bertoni (organizadores)/Fiocruz

— "Crack: Reduzir Danos - Lições Brasileiras de Saúde, Segurança, e Cidadania" (2017), da Open Society Foundations.

— "Territorialidades da(s) cracolândia(s) em São Paulo e no Rio de Janeiro" (2012), de Heitor Frúgoli Junior e Mariana Cavalcanti.

— "Drogas e redução de danos - Os direitos das pessoas que usam drogas" (2013), de Maurides de Melo Ribeiro. Editora Saraiva.

— "Entre a saúde e a repressão – políticas públicas na região da cracolândia" (2016), de Leticia Ferreira Menezes.

— "O crack que o Brasil conhece: do discurso jornalístico à disputa política" (2019), de Igor de Souza Rodrigues.

The report "Cracolândia: origin, expansion, and Lack of Resolution in Sight"

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The constant exposition of the reasons, and the research on the theme, as well as the interactivity, brings the reader closer, stimulating him to expand his knowledge on the subject with the offer of information that is related to the theme of the report: events displaced in time:

> This knowledge is classified by him into three categories, according to the discursive activity: one can account for the world by describing, telling, or explaining it. In the explanatory category, relevant to this article, mental perception is determined by the explanation of the motives, intentions, and unfolding of events. (HOEWLL, 2017, p. 3)

Traditional journalism has come to compete with social networks and platforms that compete for people's attention and with that, the material that is deemed relevant is determined by contexts and social places occupied by individuals. The transition of business models and modes of production, consumption modes, and who produces and consumes the news are linked to this change. "What seems essential is to seek the meaning of the facts, relating it to their context" (HOEWLL, 2017, p. 3).

Journalism must learn to listen to the community in which the journalist is inserted. So, to stand out in the field, it is necessary to create journalistic products that present relevance and usefulness, and not just entertainment and loose information, connecting the individual to the fact that is news. It is necessary to stick to how to use explanatory journalism, not making it merely utilitarian, but also looking for ways to integrate it into traditional journalistic ecosystems in a natural way that is productive to the way of doing communication: "So, if explanatory journalism can make the public more enlightened and

increase the newspaper's income, how can the local press take advantage of this?" (DOCTOR, 2014, n.d.).

The aspect of explanatory journalism can offer tools for citizens to defend their interests independently and thus defend their ideals and exercise full citizenship.

Finally, in conclusion, it is perceived that the portal uses the criteria to build the reports because it includes in them a framework that intends and characterizes the explanatory form of journalism selected, such as the presence of inferences through images, links, tables, graphs, photographic images and argumentation with the presence of many references. Thus, the portal is by the proposal of explanatory journalism within and how it is built within a story.

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