News Discourse
and Digital Currents

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A Corpus-Based Genre Analysis of News Tickers

By

Antonio Fruttaldo

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To my grandfather

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to start by saying that I have never believed in an afterlife or any kind of supreme force looking down at me from above and forcing me to judge others in a given way or another. But I do believe that we are the sum of all the things we have done in our life. And in sum, I do cherish above all the memories that I have of all the people that inhabit or have inhabited my existence because, sometimes, the smallest things, the things caught in a precise moment, are worth the sum of all things. Paraphrasing a monologue taken from a not-so-famous TV series (*Being Human*, BBC 3, 2008–2013), in our life, we meet people and, when we part, they leave marks for us to remember them by. They sculpt us. They define us, for better or worse. They linger inside us, invisible, but always there.

And, amongst the various people that have in some way shaped my very existence, I would like to express my deepest and sincerest gratitude to my supervisor, Marco Venuti. He has constantly encouraged me, guided me through the dark allies of these years, comforted and motivated me when things seemed unbearable. Looking at him working his 'magic' with corpus linguistic methodologies has been an invaluable experience, and I shall always cherish all the moments spent together in his office trying to figure out some way to solve given problems in the data collection and analysis or, more simply, discussing the last episode of *Game of Thrones*. I thank him so much for his incredible patience and these wonderful moments.

I would also like to express my very great appreciation to Professor Giuditta Caliendo. During these years, the echo of our conversations, her enthusiastic encouragements and useful critiques, her valuable and constructive suggestions, and her willingness to give her time so generously during the initial planning and development of this research have been very much appreciated. I always keep in my pocket during conferences a token of her appreciation, a good-luck charm that she gave me when I presented my MA research. It did not fail me so far during these years and, every time I take it from my pocket and carefully put it back in my wallet, I am always reminded of this incredible person that has in so many ways changed my life.

My grateful thanks are also extended to Professor Gabriella Di Martino for her constant encouragements and, more importantly, for the kindness

and generosity she has shown during the years towards 'her' PhD students. Every time I smile, I am always reminded of the nickname she has given me (her Cheshire cat), and I think there is nothing more rewarding than seeing your PhD coordinator treating you with the affection and love she truly feels for all her students. She has taught me so many things during these years, and I will forever be indebted to her for the valuable advice and suggestions linked to my PhD experience.

I would like to express my greatest gratitude to Professor Flavia Gherardi, who has taught me how to be a researcher and whose passion for her work I shall always cherish. I do thank her for her constant presence in my inconstant life. I will never be able to thank her enough for all the advice she has given me and for her guidance during these years both from a personal and an academic point of view.

I would also like to express my greatest gratitude to Paolo Donadio, who is always trying to run me over with his Vespa when crossing the street that takes me to the Department of Political Science. Leaving aside our funny ways of showing our appreciation for each other, I thank him for the incredible support shown during these years and for his knowledge of media discourse, which has allowed me to explore further given peculiarities in the genre I have investigated.

I would like to express my very great appreciation to my former PhD colleagues. In particular, I would like to thank Antonio Compagnone whom I always look up to with the highest and most profound admiration, and who has continuously provided his help when I was a little bit 'lost' in the jungle of the academic world. I would like to also extend my gratitude to Eleonora Esposito, Cristina Aiezza, and Adriano Laudisio for making me feel at home, including me in their lives and allowing me to 'eavesdrop' on their researches.

My special thanks are also extended to Chiara Nasti, Cristina Nisco, Sole Alba Zollo, and Giuseppe Balirano, who have been so very kind to me. I was a stranger to them and, nonetheless, they have encouraged me, helped me, and supported me with their words and their constant presence.

My deepest gratitude also goes to Fabrizio Esposito, Annarita Magliacane, and Angela Zottola. They have been the most significant presence in my life in these years, and I think there are no words to express how deeply and irrevocably I cherish each moment spent together. I would also like to thank Francesca Raffi. Having her by my side during these years has been a real privilege. And if these years have been truly and incredibly happy, it is because of those moments we shared together talking on the phone or walking by the streets of Catania, laughing our heads off about our banters. I thank her for the happiness she has brought

in the darkest moments of my life, and I can only say to her: see you in prison, darling.

Last but not least, I would like to express my sincerest and greatest gratitude to Davide Bizjak. He is the kindest and most dazzling person I have ever met in my life. His open-mindedness, his way of just sitting there, worrying about me, his incredible way of looking at things from a point of view that you could have never imagined existed, are all qualities that make him one of my biggest sources of happiness. We met each other when we were in high school, and his constant advice, guidance and the way he knows me sometimes more than myself makes him the most important presence in my life. I thank him so very much for the simple opportunity he gives me every day to be by his side.

However, I would like to underline that some of the observations, definitions, and examples offered in Section 3.1 of this book are drawn from my personal notes and materials taken and distributed during the English Corpus Linguistics 2014 Summer School held at the University College of London, the UCREL Summer School in Corpus Linguistics 2014 held at Lancaster University, and the online MOOC in *Corpus linguistics: method, analysis, interpretation* offered by Lancaster University via the FutureLearn online e-learning platform. Thus, even though they are not directly acknowledged, I will draw on them for the brief introduction to Corpus Linguistics introduced in this contribution.

A NOTE TO THE READER

Before introducing my work, I would like to address the reader of this book by underlining that, throughout this contribution, I have decided to refer to my own person through the use of the pronoun 'we'. The choice of this pronoun is linked to both my personal belief that in 'research' there is no 'I' and, more importantly, that during my work, different 'voices' have implemented and perfected this research thanks to their constant support and feedback. In particular, I am referring to my research supervisor, Marco Venuti, the members of the PhD board in English for Special Purposes (University of Naples Federico II), my former colleagues, and all those people that during conferences, where I have presented the preliminary results of my investigation, have offered their feedback and pointers to a better understanding of the genre under investigation. Thus, in line with the observation made by Isaac Newton in his famous statement "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants", the use of the pronoun 'we' is nothing but my own personal and modest tribute to all those people that, in some way, have shaped and contributed to this investigation.

Additionally, I would also like to point out that, in this contribution, I have decided to adopt the use of the singular 'they' when referring to antecedents that are grammatically singular, in order to neither reinforce nor perpetuate any form of gender binarism. This is in line with my personal belief that, in Academia, we should all work towards a more gender-inclusive environment, and since binary systems tend to exclude some of the 'voices' that may enrich with their extraordinary lives our professions, this is my own personal tribute to all those people that, every day, in the academic world, struggle in order to be heard and taken into consideration for their knowledge and their commitment to research, and not solely judged on the basis of the way they identify themselves. I do apologise to the reader for this personal (and political) stance towards these issues, and I confide in their understanding and open-mindedness in reading this contribution.

Finally, in the following pages, various links will be provided to online resources. However, due to the 'ephemeral' nature of the web, many of these online resources may have ceased to be active, may have been deleted or may have disappeared from the web at any time in the near future. Thus, I apologise to the reader if they will not be able to access

these resources and suggest the use of online search engines (i.e., Google, Bing, etc.) in order to retrieve them.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Journalistic practices are undergoing, in the last few years, a radical change due to the increasing pressure of new digital media on the professional practice (Bivens 2014). The ever-growing development of new technologies challenges traditional genres found in this context. Indeed, as our lives and social institutions are constantly in flux, creating "a society in which the conditions under which its members act change faster than it takes the ways of acting to consolidate into habits and routines" (Bauman 2005: 1), the ceaseless fluctuation of social practices has inevitable consequences on the genres and discourses created by social institutions, since genres and discourses are socially and linguistically significant entities (Fairclough 1992, 2011).

Thus, as our society becomes characterised more and more by forms of "liquidity" (Bauman 2000, 2005), social practices are also changing in order to stay up-to-date within this constant state of flux. Given this picture, journalistic practices and genres "should be understood within the wider context of liquidity" (Bivens 2014: 77), as practices which try to incorporate in their routines and their genres the liquidity of contemporary society. However, since liquid modernity is unrestrainable, journalistic practices try to convey this flow of ever-changing information by relying on their traditional boundaries and formats.

Indeed, "journalism still depends on its established mode of production, through which it largely (and unreflexively) reproduces the institutional contours of high (or 'solid') modernity" (Deuze 2008: 856). Therefore, contemporary journalism is at the mercy of two opposite forces. The first one constrains journalism within its traditional norms of production and reproduction, while the second one leads it to new forms of fluid contents and the implementation of digital media.

Furthermore, the challenge represented by liquid modernity to social and, consequently, professional practices has inevitable consequences also on the traditional frameworks developed in order to analyse genres in the professional environment. Indeed, a dynamic environment such as that of

contemporary journalism calls into question the very nature of genre analysis.

Genres have been traditionally analysed on the basis of "the use of language in conventionalized communicative settings, which give rise to specific set of communicative goals to specialized disciplinary and social groups, which in turn establish relatively stable structural forms" (Bhatia 1996: 47). On the contrary, in a fluid social context (Deuze 2008), genres are increasingly becoming dynamic rhetorical configurations, whose conventions can be exploited to achieve new goals. In the words of Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995: 6):

> Genres […] are always sites of contention between stability and change.
> They are inherently dynamic, constantly (if gradually) changing over time
> in response to sociocognitive needs of individual users.

Thus, the ultimate aim of genre analysis is becoming that of dynamically explaining the way language users manipulate generic conventions to achieve a variety of complex goals (Bhatia 2004, 2017). Mixed or hybrid forms are most frequently the results of these manipulations, particularly due to the competitive professional environment, where users exploit genre-mixing or hybrid genres "to achieve private intentions within the context of socially recognized communicative purposes" (Bhatia 1996: 51).

These private intentions, however, are not detectable at first hand, since they are blended in the social context where the mixed or hybrid form was created. Kress (1987) explains this by referring to the so-called appropriate authority to innovate, which depends on the likelihood of developing new generic forms on the basis of social change. In other words, "unless there is change in the social structures – and in the kinds of social occasions in which texts are produced – the new generic forms are unlikely to succeed" (Kress 1987: 41-42). Thus, if genre-mixing, defined as the "mixture of two or more communicative purposes through the same generic form" (Bhatia 2002: 11), does not meet the appropriate social environment, such forms are less likely to flourish, and they will soon perish.

Given the ever-changing social context where journalistic practices operate, they are constantly exploiting new forms of hybridity and genre-mixing in order to compete with new ways of delivering the news. For instance, as new media technologies are introduced, we can notice that the "boundaries between news, entertainment, public relations and advertising, always fluid historically, are now becoming almost invisible" (Schiller 1986: 21). This intensifying pressure on traditional media has given rise to

a variety of hybrid and mixed-generic forms, among which we are going to focus on a relatively new genre of TV news broadcast, generally referred to as news tickers (or crawlers).

The genre of news tickers, which made its first (and stable) reappearance on 9/11 in order to deal with the enormous amount of information coming from the American news agencies, has been adopted by various TV news channels and programmes in order to constantly deliver to viewers a summary of the major news stories of the day or to alert viewers of particular breaking news stories. However, during the years and given the increasing pressure on TV journalism to allure viewers, the genre of news tickers has been slowly appropriating certain generic conventions from other genres to serve this purpose. Indeed, given "the growing ability of viewers to avoid or ignore traditional commercials" (Elliott 2009), TV news networks have found in news tickers a subtle way to market their products, "due to the ticker's location at the bottom of the screen, and its format, which does not interrupt programming" (Coffey and Cleary 2008: 896). Genre analysis (Swales 1990; Bhatia 1993, 2004) can, thus, highlight these textual cues that can reveal how news tickers are purposefully being exploited in order to brand the TV news network or programme. However, since genre analysis is increasingly changing in order to stay up-to-date with the dynamically changing context of contemporary society, this social context has demanded a reshaping of its conventional approach to textual analysis, since genres are progressively becoming fluid entities, open to unexpected innovations by borrowing structural conventions and rhetorical configurations from other generic forms. These challenges to genre analysis, however, can be easily overcome by the increasing availability of corpora to researchers. Thus, changes in professional practices can be successfully highlighted by the use of corpus linguistic methodologies.

As we will see, the availability of ready-made corpora may, nonetheless, cause some disadvantages on the behalf of researchers interested in particular areas of human communications, since "a corpus is always designed for a particular purpose" and the majority of them "are created for specific research projects" (Xiao 2008: 383), thus, focusing only on specific genres, while others remain unexplored. In order to study very specific instances of language in use of a particular discourse community, most of the time, researchers have to create their own specialised corpora, and this is particularly the case of news tickers, given the unavailability of an already-built corpus but, more importantly, no database with instances of this genre.

Thus, in the following paragraphs, thanks to a corpus-based linguistic analysis, we are going to focus on if and how the BBC World News uses its news tickers in order to promote itself and its products. In this, corpus-based methodologies have been of great help, since "[t]he computational analysis of language is often able to reveal patterns of form and use in particular genres […] that are unsuspected by the researcher and difficult to perceive in other ways" (Bhatia 2002: 13). This is the reason why a bottom-up approach to the analysis of these strategies has been adopted, since "one cannot detect these functions without first noticing a pattern of forms" (Berkenkotter and Huckin 1995: 43), which Corpus Linguistics allows us to do.

Indeed, through a corpus-based genre analysis, we will try to better define the generic status of the news tickers displayed on the BBC World News by, firstly, introducing a keyword analysis of the genre under investigation, which has allowed us to highlight the presence of given strategies of marketization (Fairclough 1989, 1992) in the comparison with a reference corpus of headlines and lead paragraphs taken from the BBC website. In this, a textual colligation analysis (Hoey 2005; O'Donnell *et al.* 2012) has further helped us highlight the tendencies for these strategies to occupy non-initial sentence positions, therefore, underlining the peculiar textual realisation of the phenomenon highlighted in the corpus under investigation when compared to other genres found in the same professional environment. This has demonstrated the fact that, in the migration of contents from one media platform to the other, the BBC uses given self-promotion marketing strategies that are textually specific to the genre they are realised in. Thus, as Coffey and Cleary (2008, 2011) maintain, also in the context of British news broadcasts, news tickers are particularly used in order to promote the news network and its contents.

Additionally, as we will see, the analysis of the genre under investigation has also proven that, in the comparison with a reference corpus of headlines and lead paragraphs, news tickers can be seen as a mixed (sub-)genre in the context of TV news broadcast. Indeed, the combination of linguistic elements of headlines and lead paragraphs, from a (Critical) Genre Analysis point of view (Bhatia 2004, 2007, 2008, 2012, 2017), underlines a specific private intention in the context of the BBC, that is to say, using the 'offline' contents in order to lead viewers to their online platform, thus, increasing their visibility on the Internet as a leading news company.

Finally, the analysis of the news values (Bell 1991; Bednarek 2016a, 2016b; Bednarek and Caple 2012a, 2012b, 2014, 2017; Potts, Bednarek and Caple 2015) discursively realised in news tickers has additionally

confirmed the previous hypotheses on the hybrid and mixed nature of news tickers but, more importantly, on their subtle purpose to lead viewers towards the BBC online platform.

As we have previously underlined, our work mainly focuses on a corpus-based genre analysis of news tickers. Thus, in order to better define the generic status of the genre under investigation, in Chapter 2, we will briefly outline an overview of the social and professional context where this textual realisation has slowly shaped itself in the format that nowadays we see on major TV news broadcasts. In particular, we will offer an overview of the various works that have investigated this genre, underlining the absence of a specific literature in discourse studies on graphic elements displayed on TV news channels and TV news programmes. Indeed, as we will see, while the increased use of TV news graphics has attracted the attention of some scholars belonging to the field of reception studies, very few attempts, from a discourse analysis point of view, have been made in trying to investigate these genres found in media discourse. Thus, we will firstly introduce a summary of the major works in reception studies on TV news graphics, which will underline how, from a visual behaviour point of view, news tickers play a major role in catching viewers' attention during TV news broadcasts. We will then proceed to the illustration of a brief history of news tickers, in order to better understand how this genre, during the years, has slowly changed the purposes that it served and, thus, how it slowly has been appropriated by TV news broadcasts.

In Chapter 3, we will offer an introduction to the methodological framework used for our analysis, which adopts corpus linguistic methodologies as its main analytical tool in order to highlight given linguistic patterns in the genre of news tickers. Additionally, this chapter also offers an overview of genre analysis (Biber 1988; Swales 1990; Bhatia 1993, 2004; Tribble 1999; Xiao and McEnery 2005), lexical priming (more specifically, as we will see, we will focus on the notion of textual colligation as introduced in the context of Hoey's (2005) approach to textual analysis), and news values (Bell 1991; Bednarek 2006, 2016a, 2016b; Bednarek and Caple 2012a, 2012b, 2014, 2017; Caple and Bednarek 2016; Potts, Bednarek and Caple 2015).

Chapter 4, on the other hand, offers a step-by-step description of the way the corpora that we have used in order to carry out our investigation (i.e., the NTC and the bw_14) have been collected and prepared for our analysis. In particular, we will introduce the annotation scheme used in order to tag our corpora and, by doing so, we will offer a preliminary introduction to the genre of news tickers since the codification of structural elements in the corpus of news tickers provides an initial

overview of the genre. The chapter also describes the software that we have used in order to carry out our investigation and, by doing so, a preliminary analysis of the genre will also be introduced in the form of an initial investigation into the lexical richness of the genre of news tickers when compared to other genres found in the same professional environment.

In Chapter 5, we will introduce the analysis of the genre of news tickers carried out thanks to corpus linguistic methodologies. We will start with the examination of the textual realisation of this genre since the analysis of the formal structure of the crawlers collected in our corpus will provide some interesting insights that will be further investigated in their linguistic realisation. Indeed, thanks to a keyword analysis of the corpus of news tickers, we will both underline the hybrid and mixed nature of this genre, demonstrated by specific linguistic patternings. Additionally, we will further test our claims by analysing the way specific news values are enhanced in news tickers, thus, highlighting how this type of analysis, which combines both a quantitative and a qualitative approach to the data, can reveal which values are particularly enhanced by editors in presenting news stories in this format.

This contribution concludes with an Appendix section. In Appendix 1, the data computed thanks to a keyword extraction from the comparison between the corpus of news tickers collected from the BBC World News and the corpus of headlines and lead paragraphs taken from the BBC website will be introduced. In Appendix 2, on the other hand, a tag keyword extraction in the comparison between the corpus of news tickers and the corpus of headlines and lead paragraphs is offered. Appendix 3 lists the tag keyword extraction in the comparison between the corpus of news tickers and the headline component of the corpus of headlines and lead paragraphs taken from the BBC website. Conversely, Appendix 4 shows the tag keyword extraction in the comparison between the corpus of news tickers and the lead paragraph component of the corpus of headlines and lead paragraphs taken from the BBC website. In line with one of the hypotheses tested in Chapter 5, Appendix 5 provides empirical evidence to this claim by listing all the adverbs occurring in the corpus of news tickers displayed according to their raw frequency. Finally, Appendix 6 lists all the pointers to newsworthiness in the corpus of news tickers.

CHAPTER TWO

GRAPHIC ELEMENTS OF TV NEWS BROADCASTS

As previously underlined, contemporary journalism is at the mercy of two divergent forces. The first one constraints journalism within its traditional norms of production, while the second one leads it to new forms of fluid contents and the implementation of digital media.

In TV news journalism, a compromise between these two forces has been found in the increasing implementation of the graphic layout of TV newscasts. This information reception context has increased in its complexity in the last 30 years in TV news programmes, "such that visual stimuli are presented diversely in the visual space […] [in order to] provide extra information or additional messages to complement the anchor and news video" (Rodrigues *et al.* 2012: 357). Indeed, just as an online web page, TV news broadcasts tend to assign to designated areas of the TV screen given functions, since viewers need to recognise immediately what they are looking at from the place where the textual element is displayed and/or they can easily find certain information they are looking for thanks to a routinely established placement of this information in certain 'places' of the TV screen (see Figure 2.1).

Given the strict placement of textual elements in the TV news graphic layout for the reasons previously highlighted, in the following pages, we are going to focus on the most frequently displayed graphic elements, in order to place them in a specific area of the TV screen but, more importantly, in order to define their function(s).

Additionally, in this Chapter, we will also offer an overview of the various works that have investigated TV news graphics in the context of reception studies, underlining the absence of a specific literature on the topic in discourse studies. Our review of the major works on TV news graphics will also underline the major role that news tickers play from a visual behaviour point of view in catching viewers' attention. Finally, in order to better define them, this Chapter also offers a brief history of news tickers.

Figure 2.1 A screenshot taken from the programme *GMT* aired on February 3, 2014, showing the different graphic elements typical of the BBC World News channel.

2.1 Media discourse and digital currents: Reshaping media conventions

As we have previously highlighted, TV news journalism has seen in the last 30 years an increasing implementation of the graphic layout of TV newscasts. And as a way of justifying this statement, in this Section, we would like to briefly introduce the various graphic elements that are usually and routinely implemented during TV news broadcasts, in order to place them in a specific area of the TV screen but, more importantly, in order to define their function(s).

Firstly, the most common and known graphic element of TV news broadcasts is represented by lower thirds, also referred in the US as 'superbars' (or simply 'supers') or 'chyrons', "due to the popularity of Chyron Corporation's *Chiron I* character generator, an early digital solution developed in the 1970s for rendering lower thirds" (Lower Third 2005). Even though the name of this graphic element refers to the space at the bottom of the TV screen, lower thirds rarely occupy this entire space. Typically, we can distinguish between three types of lower thirds (Rodrigues *et al.* 2012):

   a. one-tier lower thirds: they usually present a headline of the news story currently being presented by the anchor. One-tier lower thirds are also used in order to display the name of the anchor or correspondent;

   b. two-tier lower thirds: they are comprised of two lines. In the first one, the headline of the news story being presented by the anchor is displayed, while in the second one a subheadline is placed in order to add additional information about the news story. Two-tier lower thirds may also be used in order to display the name of the anchor or correspondent (in the first line) and their affiliation (in the second line);

   c. three-tier lower thirds: even though nowadays they are rarely used during TV news broadcasts, since they seem to clutter the screen with too much information, three-tier lower thirds typically show, in the first line, the headline of the news story being presented by the anchor; in the second line, a subhead is added to elaborate on the main headline; and, finally, in the third line, the place and/or time the news report was originally broadcasted is displayed.

One-tier, two-tier and three-tier lower thirds are also known as local ticker texts (Jindal *et al.* 2011). This name does not refer to the relevance of the news stories from a geopolitical point of view. Indeed, the adjective 'local' is used in order to underline that the graphic content being displayed is in sync with the news story being presented by the anchor. In other words, in the case of local ticker texts, the aural and visual channels work together in delivering the news.

    Global ticker texts, on the other hand, are defined by Jindal *et al.* (2011: 460) as displaying "the highlights of all important stories in the news program", while scrolling texts provide "the gist of relatively unimportant news". However, the definitions provided for global ticker texts and scrolling texts are too specific to the TV news channel (i.e., the Indian TV channel *Times Now*) the authors have chosen to analyse. Moreover, in the case of scrolling texts, we can also notice a bias towards this graphic element, since the newsworthiness of given news stories should not be used as a parameter in defining a graphic element. Indeed, the degree of the newsworthiness of the news stories conveyed by scrolling ticker texts is bound to the journalistic practices specific to each network station. Thus, from the observation of a corpus of newscasts collected from various TV news channels and programmes (i.e., BBC World News, Fox News, CNN, ABC's programme *Good Morning America*

and CBS' programme *This Morning*),[1] we suggest that a more general definition of global ticker texts is needed.

In this respect, they can be defined as all the graphic elements displaying news stories that are not directly related to and/or in sync with the news story being presented by the anchor. Scrolling ticker texts (also known as news tickers, crawlers or ticker tape) are a particular form of global ticker texts, which can be identified by the way they are displayed on the screen, that is, as graphic elements that scroll from the right to the left bottom of the screen (in contrast to other global ticker texts such as flippers, which present one news item after the other by 'flipping' at the bottom of the TV screen).[2]

Other typical graphic elements of TV news layout are the so-called DOGs and the locator. The DOG, which stands for Digital On-screen Graphic (Porter 2007), is generally used in order to display the TV channel's logo and/or the name of a particular TV news programme (Meech 1999). Since they are static graphic elements, DOGs are also referred to as 'bugs', a term which metaphorically refers to their overlaying a given screen area. DOGs are typically found at the bottom of the screen, near or as part of the lower third area. The locator, on the other hand, is a graphic element displaying the location and/or the local time of a correspondent being interviewed by the anchor (typically placed up to the left or right screen corner).

Given this picture on the graphic elements that are typically used during TV newscasts, our previous comment on how TV news layout has become more complex in its implementation of the information conveyed by the anchor and the news video is quite confirmed. However, we must underline that, while TV news channels and TV news programmes have

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[1] The corpus collected was part of a preliminary pilot study on the genre of news tickers (see Section 4.1 for further information). As we will see in the paragraph on the methodology used in order to collect the data, a week-long observation of the way these TV news channels and programmes used this genre has allowed us to focus our attention on the BBC World News channel, which in the comparison with the others consistently used news tickers in its daily journalistic routine, while the other channels or programmes did not seem to use them as consistently and routinely (e.g., the normal flow of information conveyed in the news tickers was abruptly interrupted by commercials and did not pick up from where it stopped; during weather emergencies, news tickers were absent in order to leave the graphic 'stage' to messages linked to school closing; etc.).
[2] In Western countries, scrolling ticker texts 'crawl' from the right to the left bottom of the screen, while in Japan, for instance, scrolling ticker texts crawl from the left to the right bottom of the screen, or they are added vertically to the left or to the right of the screen, scrolling from the bottom to the top (O'Hagan 2010).

increasingly been using graphic elements in the past few years, from a discourse analysis point of view, very few studies have been conducted on the topic.

An exception is represented by the work of Montgomery (2007), who focuses on the discourse of two sets of headlines in TV newscasts: the first one represented by "the opening of a standard evening bulletin programme, ITN's *News at Ten*", and the second one by "a lunchtime BBC news programme" (Montgomery 2007: 78). In analysing these two sets of TV headlines, Montgomery (2007) offers some interesting generalisations on the semantic and lexicogrammatical status of the genre as displayed on TV news broadcasts.

Another important analysis of TV news headlines is represented by the work of Bednarek and Caple (2012a), who offer some examples of linguistic structures typical of TV headlines compared to the ones found in print newspapers. In their words (Bednarek and Caple 2012a: 105):

> While they [TV headlines] feature some of the characteristics of print news headlines (such as deletion of verbs or articles, use of nominalization), they can also be full sentences with only the verbal group omitted or reduced to a non-finite form or even consist of several sentences with full verbal groups.

Even though these analyses do offer some valuable insights on the nature of TV news headlines, they do not regard other graphic elements, such as subheadlines, news tickers, breaking news headlines, etc. This may be due to two reasons. Firstly, since there are no available OCR technologies (at the time of writing) that allow researchers to automatically collect corpora of TV news graphics, their analyses tend to focus only on particular case studies, which cannot offer significant generalisations on TV news journalistic practices in the context of TV news graphic elements. Secondly, because some graphic elements (e.g., headlines and subheadlines) are also found in other genres (i.e., print and online newspapers), researchers tend not to regard them as elements of analysis. This can be ascribed to the fact that scholars misleadingly hypothesise that the observations made for print newspapers' headlines, for instance, will also be valid for TV headlines. This is particularly clear in what Cotter (2010) defines as 'modality bleeds', which cause "seepages of one media form to another, […] that come about through changes in media technology" (Cotter 2010: 16). The concept of modality bleeds, however, disregards the fact that different media will require different genres, since their communicative purposes may vary. Thus, while the concept of modality bleeds generally tends to be used as a way to highlight the similarities

found in the different media, little attention has been paid to the sometimes imperceptible variations due to the different environments where the leaked fluids form a new pool.

And while, in their discourse-based account of news discourse, Bednarek and Caple (2012a: 107) relegate to future research how variation across platforms can be analysed in new media, the increased use of TV news graphics has attracted the attention of some scholars belonging to the field of reception studies, where the analysis of TV news graphic layout has been most flourishing in the last few years.

2.2 When is enough… enough? Reception studies in the context of TV news graphic layout

As previously said, while discourse analysts have quite neglected the analysis of TV news graphic layout or focused their attention only on specific case studies, in the field of reception studies, these elements of broadcast journalism have been at the centre of numerous research.

Josephson and Holmes (2006), for instance, have investigated whether the attention spent by participants in different areas of the TV screen (crawler, headline, title, globe, and main area) varied in three versions of the same news story. In the first version, the news story was presented without any textual contents. In the second one, the video and audio of the news story were accompanied by unrelated textual contents (i.e., crawlers). Finally, in the third version of the news story, the video and audio were presented with both related and unrelated textual contents (i.e., headlines and crawlers). From the analysis of the data collected from an eye tracker, the results of this study suggested that the presence of unrelated textual contents (i.e., crawlers) "produced more fixation time at bottom of the screen", while the presence of related textual contents (i.e., headlines) "drew more visual attention to that area of the screen" (Josephson and Holmes 2006: 161). Thus, in both cases, the presence of related or unrelated textual items draw away the attention of the viewers from the main screen area, that is, from the anchor and, consequently, the audio content.

Given these results, Josephson and Holmes (2006) also tested whether the information recall for audio contents of the TV news story was influenced by the presence of on-screen visual enhancements. The results of this part of their research suggested that the presence of related textual elements (i.e., headlines) enhanced the recall of key information in the news story, while unrelated textual elements (i.e., crawlers) did not diminish the recall of key information in the news story. However, as