

DOSSIER

# MEDIA THAT NO LONGER MEDIATE:

## the blurred enunciation in contemporary journalistic practices



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**ABSTRACT** – This study analyzes the place of enunciation that is configured from the publication of an article by certain journalists from the Uruguayan newspaper El Observador, about a case of corruption in the national government. The particularity of this case lies mainly in the journalists who chose their X accounts instead of the written medium, to spread the information. The analysis of these publications within the framework of critical discourse analysis of social networks leads to the identification of spaces of enunciation that blur the limits of media enunciation and make contemporary communication unpredictable.

**Key words:** Enunciation in digital contexts. Journalism. Social networks. Critical analysis of network discourse. Contemporary communication.

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## **MÍDIAS QUE NÃO MEDIAM MAIS: a enunciação turva nas práticas jornalísticas contemporâneas**

**RESUMO** – Este trabalho analisa o lugar de enunciação que se configura a partir da publicação de uma notícia por parte de certos jornalistas do jornal uruguaio El Observador, sobre um caso de corrupção no governo nacional. A particularidade deste caso reside principalmente no fato de que os jornalistas escolheram suas contas no X em vez do meio escrito, para divulgar a informação. A análise dessas publicações sob o marco da análise crítica do discurso de redes sociais leva à identificação dos espaços de enunciação que desfocam os limites da enunciação midiática e tornam imprevisível a comunicação contemporânea.

**Palavras-chave:** Enunciação em contextos digitais. Jornalismo. Redes sociais. Análise crítica do discurso da rede. Comunicação contemporânea.

## **MEDIOS QUE YA NO MEDIAN: la enunciación desdibujada en las prácticas periodísticas contemporâneas**

**RESUMEN** – Este trabajo analiza el lugar de enunciación que se configura a partir de la publicación de una noticia por parte de ciertos periodistas del diario uruguayo El Observador, sobre un caso de corrupción en el gobierno nacional. La particularidad de este caso radica principalmente en que los periodistas escogieron sus cuentas de X en lugar del medio escrito, para difundir la información. El análisis de dichas publicaciones bajo el marco del análisis crítico del discurso de redes sociales, conduce a identificar los espacios de enunciación que desdibujan los límites de la enunciación mediática y vuelven impredecible la comunicación contemporánea.

**Palabras clave:** Enunciación en contextos digitales. Periodismo. Redes sociales. Análisis crítico del discurso de redes. Comunicación contemporânea.

### **1 Introduction**

This article delves into the categorization of enunciators in the contemporary digital ecosystem (Gambetta, 2021a, 2021b; Gambetta & Huertas, 2022; Müller, 2020), by analyzing the expansion of media enunciation that has led to a transformation of the mediating role of traditional media. For this purpose, we take as a case study the publication of a news item in X (ex-Twitter), from the personal accounts of journalists of a traditional written media in Uruguay, in the face of censorship by the newspaper's board of directors.

The news item, which was intended to be published in the El Observador, added information on a case of alleged espionage involving the President of the Republic, his then-wife, and his former personal guardian, the latter having been tried months ago for acts

of corruption. This unprecedented event in Uruguay, in which a group of journalists, from a certain “rebellion”, disobeyed the editorial hierarchies of the media in which they work, in order to make public information that they considered important for the common good, raised a series of questions: how did the logics of the social media X operate in the dissemination and amplification of the news? What is the position of enunciation from which the group of journalists of the *El Observador* published the news?

Although traditional media have historically been the mediators between events and public opinion, both in the definition of the public agenda and in greater subtleties regarding the treatment of news (Aruguete, 2015), the irruption of the internet and particularly of Web 2.0 contributed to balance these media logics that seemed immovable. This study places the focus on one aspect of the traditional media logic that has been placed in tension: media enunciation.

Media discourse has been the subject of analysis by critical discourse studies (CDS), mainly around hegemonic and ideologized discursive constructions, which produce, distribute, and reinforce structures of power and domination (Wodak, 2003). However, this theoretical perspective has been focused on elite discourses (Van Dijk, 2003), on those who, thanks to their favorable position within the classic spaces of enunciation, such as the media, political power, and science, have privileged access to influence the social construction of meaning and naturalize practices that can lead to various forms of exclusion. The continuous transformations in the contemporary media ecosystem, which include the prominence of digital social media and, through them, new logics of discursive practices, enable the expansion of positions of enunciation, which “differ from those of institutionalized discourses (media)” (Müller, 2020, p. 32).

From theories of enunciation (Benveniste, 1971; Ducrot, 2001; Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1980), critical discourse studies (Van Dijk, 2003; Wodak, 1989, 2003; Fairclough, 1995, 2003; Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012), critical social media analysis (KhosraviNik et al., 2016; Müller, 2020) and approaches on the mediating role of the media (Aruguete, 2015; Pazos, 2020), this article aims to investigate whether the media still maintain their mediating role for information and public opinion, or whether the benefits and use of digital social media have led to a blurring of this function. In accession, the aim is to observe how the production, circulation,

and consumption of discourses have expanded to other positions of enunciation (Gambetta, 2021a, 2021b), and have thus generated forms of direct interaction that augmented tension in the traditional processes of unidirectional communication. These now “many-to-many” communication processes that enhance the access and emission of discourses in a “decentralized and democratic” way also drive changes in the way theoretical conceptualizations about the role and exercise of the power of media in society are approached (KhosraviNik, 2017; KhosraviNik & Esposito 2018, p. 54).

Changes in interaction and circulation of discourses lead to the shift of the traditional role of news as a discursive genre and its relationship with the construction of the public. As a discursive genre, the news is articulated as a narrative that connects facts and values to construct a representation of the social present (Martini, 2000). This is guided by newsworthiness criteria that establish which events deserve to be disseminated, based on attributes such as novelty, impact, and future projection on society (Martini, 2000), criteria that function as ideological filters, linking the construction of the public with the editorial and cultural agendas of the media (Aruguete, 2011).

Thus, newsworthiness in the contemporary communication ecosystem is configured as a negotiation process in which media, journalists, and audience collectively define what acquires the status of public information. Social media have helped audiences to have a greater incidence of these collective definitions. Based on these considerations, this paper analyzes the selected case study focusing on three axes: the news disseminated, the way it is conveyed, and the identification of the position of enunciation from which the news text starts.

## **2 Enunciation in contemporary communication contexts**

In the last decades, social communication has been crossed by abrupt technological changes that have transformed, among other aspects, media enunciation. Before the internet, the media, today called traditional, had a clear delimitation that contributed to defining how they circulated their content. These limits, which characterized radio, television, and print media, have been blurred since the emergence of web 2.0 in the early 2000s, thanks to the possibility that citizens and

civil organizations now have access to the generation and distribution of content previously restricted to certain privileged actors. The expansion of positions of enunciation also expanded the supply of content and, consequently, its consumption. Before the internet, social actors representing political, social, or economic power in society needed the media to reach public opinion. Today, governments, companies, representatives of various collectives, social movements, referents in disciplines such as art, politics, and sports, and anyone with access to the network of networks, have the possibility of generating, sharing, and (re)distributing content in their social media, which shows an enunciative expansion that has crossed the production, distribution, and consumption of discourses (Fairclough, 2003).

However, despite this enunciative blurring, the media have continued with their tasks of informing, entertaining, and being a space for the promotion of goods and services, a role that had to adapt to these new forms of enunciation. The changes in the media discursive ecosystem have led to the emergence of “new discursive arenas that no longer obey the ‘classic’ rules in the struggle for interpretative power and in which the limits of what can be said are consciously exhausted and transgressed with greater intensity” (Müller, 2020, p. 21).

**Table 1**  
*Characteristics of discursive arenas Müller (2020)*

	<b>Classic Media / Elite Discourses</b>	<b>Social Media Discourses</b>
Institutionalization	institutionalized	de-institutionalized
Content Production / Consumption	professional media creators = producers; users = consumers	professional media creators = producers and consumers; users = producers and consumers
Communication Direction / Interactivity	unidirectional; one-to-many	multidirectional; many-to-many, many-to-one, one-to-one
Gatekeeping	editorial boards	none / almost no gatekeepers
Access	strictly limited access; elitist	potentially open access; egalitarian
Discursive Power	tied to access	tied to reception

Müller (2020, p. 27)

This transformation of open enunciation, previously exclusive to traditional media, has been a fertile ground for the coexistence of diverse enunciative spaces. The expansion of enunciation leaves the environments of interpersonal interaction and in digital media has the possibility of reaching larger audiences. In previous works (Gambetta, 2021a, 2021b; Gambetta & Huertas, 2022) a categorization of enunciators has been proposed, which with the passage of time and the transformations in social media, has been expanded. The categorization, originally proposed by Gaambetta (2021a) and expanded by Gambetta & Huertas (2022), includes the following enunciators: legitimized enunciator; official enunciator; parallel enunciator; independent enunciator; common enunciator; media enunciator; citizen enunciator; artificial enunciator; institutional enunciator; and community enunciator.

The table below (table 2) describes the actors that represent each position of enunciation, the main contents disseminated by them in their social media accounts, and the expectation generated by the publications at the level of value load in using language concerning the type of text shared and the purpose of the communication. For this work, a simple scale of four levels was created to help identify the expectation of the value load in the texts: neutral/low/medium/high load. These are related to questions of text form: with linguistic marks at the lexical/grammatical level in written texts, or multimodal elements – such as emoticons, memes, and others –, in genres that have been born with digital interaction. Logically, opinion texts are expected to present a higher value load than informative texts, which correspond, according to the proposed levels, to neutral or low.

**Table 2**  
*Positions of enunciations*

<b>Category of Enunciators</b>	<b>Social Actors</b>	<b>Content Shared</b>	<b>Purpose of the Communication</b>	<b>Value-load Expected</b>
<b>Legitimized</b>	Traditional media	Information, advertising, entertainment	Inform, sell, entertain	Neutral/Low
<b>Official</b>	Governments, organizations	Information on management and issues involving	Inform	Low/Medium
<b>Parallel</b>	Churches, labour unions, parties	Information about objectives, activities, initiatives	Inform, engage, mobilise	Medium/High
<b>Citizen</b>	Alternative media	Participative communication	Inform and generate alternative spaces	Medium
<b>Independent</b>	References in areas like journalism, sport, arts, etc.	Opinions and reflections on topics of interest	Inform and express opinion	Variable
<b>Common</b>	Individual roles as professionals or citizens	Give opinions, reflect on their own and others, on current topics	Comment, express opinions, share topics of their interest	Medium/High
<b>Community</b>	Leaders of small organizations (clubs, neighborhood associations and small collectives)	Information of interest to the collective, invitations to participate	Inform, invite, mobilize	Medium/High
<b>Media</b>	Influencers in different fields	Different content according to their profile. Private Views. Opinions on products and services	Gaining followers to monetize	Medium/High
<b>Bot</b>	Bots, Generative Artificial Intelligence	(Dis)information. Virtualization of automated contents and texts	Multiplying the dissemination of content	Medium/High
<b>Institutional</b>	Businesses, nonprofit organizations in general	Information about the company's or organization's projects	'Raise awareness of your products/ services'	Medium/High

(Gambetta & Huertas, 2024)

The categories presented are intended to facilitate possible analytical approaches to the circulation of discourses in social media. Since this is a scenario in constant transformation, the characterizations should always be reviewed and adjusted based on the cases studied.

The present categorization is framed within a broader definition proposed by Müller (2020) who, from social media discourse studies, proposes three positions from which certain individuals or

groups take place as issuers. Firstly, those who already have a privileged position in relation to discursive power in the media; secondly, those who hold a favorable position within the social media; and those who do not have these levels of access, which allows them to participate in debates within the social media or share experiences knowing that their reception will be scarce. The table below positions in dialogue the categorizations of enunciation in the contemporary media ecosystem:

**Table 3**

*Dialogue between enunciation categorization proposals on digital social media*

Authors	Position of Enunciation		
Muller (2020)	Individuals/groups with privileged access	Favorable position within the media	No privileged position in any media
Gambetta (2021a; 2021b), Gambetta and Huertas (2022)	Enunciator: Legitimized Official Artificial	Enunciator: Parallel Independent Media-based Institutional	Enunciator: Common Citizen Community

In order to fulfill the objective of identifying and characterizing the position of enunciation from which the news published on December 21, 2022 by workers of the El Observador (Chans, 2022)<sup>2</sup> starts, we will work on three of the proposed categories: the legitimized enunciator, the independent enunciator and the common enunciator. Privileged access to social media defines the first category, while the independent enunciator refers to individuals or groups with a favorable position, and the common enunciator encompasses those who lack such privilege (Müller, 2020). In this section, we expand the description of the categories represented in table 2, in relation to the category of enunciators that are of particular interest for this work.

The category of legitimized enunciator is made up of the traditional media, i.e. positions of enunciation that legitimately represent the enunciative space formed by journalists and communicators who make up the media, who as such have had the responsibility of mediating between information and the public opinion and who have historically been a fundamental pillar for societies in providing access to information, transmitting values, enabling



debates and generating consensus. Although the traditional media, throughout their history, have faced harsh criticism for their monopoly in setting the agenda, often related to corporate decisions, they have undoubtedly been responsible for verifying, checking, processing, and interpreting information in their role as mediators of public opinion. There are several stories in which the media have contributed, thanks to rigorous and risky investigations, to change the course of history. The enunciative expansion of the digital ecosystem has forced them to share the possibility of disseminating content with other diverse positions of enunciation; however, their legitimate role as mediators in the sociocultural contexts in which they are immersed, requires them more than ever to maintain for themselves the enunciative legitimacy in an ecosystem where an innumerable amount of data from sources that in many cases are unverifiable for a common user, transit.

Those referents who have acquired a voice of their own, detached from the media or organization they belong to, are in the role of independent enunciator through their expertise, transcending their fields of work or affiliations. In this grouping are journalists who have become referents beyond the media to which they belong, as well as artists, scientists, politicians, athletes, and other individuals who have stood out within their occupations for their positions in the digital media and who have projected their voices in these spaces. Despite typically being integrated into their respective organizations, these individuals retain an independent voice, enabling them to express their opinions freely on matters they care about or oppose. In social media, these enunciators have gained a significant number of followers, which is what gives them, in the codes of digital interaction, legitimacy as independent enunciators. The focus on followers is not only on the number of followers –which can even be obtained by buying packages – but also on the repercussions that their publications usually generate in networks, thanks to various forms of interaction such as likes, comments, shares, and others.

They differ from the common enunciator because although he/she is also a private user of the network, he/she is not a public figure and does not have a significant number of followers with whom he/she interacts on a large scale. These are the only individuals who today use the network exclusively from a personal voice, who produce and share contents of their particular life, to connect with other users, give their opinions or interact either with relatives, or even with strangers, to please or gain followers, but it is that enunciator who before “rarely agreed to express himself in a media” and today finds in these digital media channels of expression that

he believes to manage “at his free will” (Gambetta & Huertas, 2022, p. 142).

These unique positions of enunciation had a special role in the participation of the debate around the analyzed topic. Some enunciators had a role as protagonists, for having been responsible for the publications, and others for their participation in the debate that was generated because of the fact in the digital sphere, specifically in the social media X as a discursive arena in which the interaction took place.

### **Why X?**

The social media X, formerly Twitter, could mark a territory in contemporary digital communication by characterizing itself as a means to express everyday experiences in a few words. Every day, millions of users use this microblogging social media to read and learn about current affairs, participate in public debate, support social causes, or share “small everyday irritations” through messages of a few characters (Tumasjan et al., 2010; Zappavigna, 2012). Over time, X has expanded its features and forms of interaction, transforming the ways of consuming and producing content, contributing to the “post web 2.0” ecosystem where those who were previously mere receivers of information can now also produce it (Buckingham, 2005, p. 4).

In this presumed horizontality, which in a way breaks with the hegemony and verticality of content production/distribution, diverse enunciators converge in these environments, both communication professionals and amateurs – public figures from show business, sports, or politics, among others –; and audiences are dispersed generating new affinity niches (Aparici & García Martín, 2018, p. 75). The paradoxical idea that everyone can become an enunciator breaks with the classic monopoly of the “mass broadcasting pole” reserved for traditional media and gives rise to discursive transformations in the dynamics of newsworthiness (Rublescki, 2011, p. 339). The platform’s features, which dynamize interaction on the network, such as hashtags, discussion threads, and trending topics, pluralize the ability to mark topics, points of view and discussions, and the news agenda itself (Martínez-Fresneda & Sanchez, 2022). This has generated that traditional media turn to X as a source of access to huge flows of “live” social data, to anticipate the topics that are about to explode and create news, and even capitalize on them: analyze these flows and translate them into profitable algorithms (Van Dijck, 2016).

### **Context: #casoastesian case**

Accused of falsifying documentation for the issuance of Uruguayan passports to Russian citizens, the then-head of the Presidential Security Service of Uruguayan President Luis Lacalle Pou, Alejandro Astesiano, was arrested in September 2022 (La Diaria, 2022a). The former official already had, according to media reports a year earlier, a criminal record and more than twenty police investigations for multiple crimes, such as theft, fraud, misappropriation, and damage, among others, a record that did not prevent him from continuing in office (La Diaria, 2021).

Astesiano was indicted in 2022 and since then he has remained in custody while his involvement in multiple corruption crimes is being investigated, aggravated by his role within the building where the offices of the Executive Branch are located, known in Uruguay as Torre Ejecutiva (Executive Tower). Multiple media outlets have accused the former presidential custodian of collaborating with criminal networks, manipulating documents, offering favors, engaging in money laundering, and exploiting access to the Ministry of the Interior for surveillance and information gathering.

This case, which still occupies the attention of the Uruguayan media, had a wide repercussion in social media X, where it remained in the first places of debate for 5 months. Several positions of interaction were identified around the discussion, including the media (legitimized enunciator), political parties (parallel enunciator), journalists (independent enunciator), government actors (official enunciator), representatives of political parties (parallel enunciator), among others.

During the process, approximately 1.300 WhatsApp dialogues from the cell phone of the former custodian were leaked to the press, which integrated the investigative folder of the case. These chats reveal Astesiano's communication with ministers, political leaders, diplomats, police chiefs, and businessmen, among others (La Diaria, 2022b). In December 2022, several media had access to them and began to disseminate them. One set of these messages revealed a fact that generated great public impact since they exposed how Astesiano had requested six months before, information to the executive subdirector of the National Police (high position of the Ministry of Interior), about the destination of a personal trip of the president's ex-wife, Lorena Ponce de León, after having publicly announced their separation. The particularity of the case was, on the one hand, that Astesiano used his position as head of security to obtain personal information about the

then ex-partner of President Lacalle Pou, and on the other hand, how this information was shared by the media.

### Rebel journalists

Before journalists from El Observador shared the news on their X accounts, M24 radio's news program and MVD Noticias, the primary newscast of Montevideo's public television channel, TV Ciudad, initially reported the information from the mentioned chats. Although the latter program has a live broadcast schedule, given the public transcendence of these events, the production of the program decided to also use X to broadcast more details of the event. Before its live broadcast, the newscast made several publications on this social media, exposing screenshots of WhatsApp conversations, framed in what became publicly known as "the Astesiano case" (MVD,2022).

### Figure 1

*Captures of publications in X from the newscast MVD noticias*



(MVD, 2022)

Following the broadcast of these conversations between Astesiano and security members by the municipal public media, other media outlets also decided to cover the story, including journalists from the newspaper El Observador.

In their role, the journalists of this newspaper wrote an informative note on the events, to publish in the edition of December 20, 2022. However, the newspaper's board of directors did not allow its publication. Faced with this refusal, a group of journalists decided to use their personal X accounts to publish it anyway, without naming the newspaper. In a joint, orchestrated, simultaneous way, and with identical texts in form and content, from their accounts on this social media, the workers of El Observador spread the news. The tweets have two images that correspond to the body of the article and are preceded by the same copy: "Astesiano requested personal information about Lorena Ponce de León to Jorge Berriel, three of the Ministry of the Interior. You can read it here" (Chans, 2022).

This shift in enunciation, where journalists distanced themselves from the newspaper to use their personal X accounts as a medium, marked a turning point in news circulation practices within Uruguayan media. In the first place, the workers placed their duty to inform above any media restriction, and to carry out this purpose, they used digital social media, which allowed them to conclude their professional work. This synchronous action put in the public debate several axes of discussion: the mediating role of the media, the role of journalists, freedom of speech and press, the duty to inform, and a questioning of how to define what information is of public interest and what belongs to the private sphere of individuals.

### **The what and the how of the analysis**

For the analysis of this work, the sample is made up of publications in X accounts from journalists working on El Observador. As a temporal starting point, the publication of the deputy editor-in-chief of the media, from his personal account, on December 20, 2022, was taken as the starting point. This tweet spread the text "Astesiano asked for personal information about Lorena Ponce de León to Jorge Berriel, three of the Ministry of the Interior. You can read it here", and also at the same night, other editors of the newspaper shared two images showing the original text of the unpublished journalistic note.

The analysis of the sample will be carried out from the theoretical and methodological bases proposed by critical discourse studies of social media (Khosravinick, Unger, and Wodak, 2016); the categorization of position of enunciation in the digital ecosystem (Gambetta, 2021a; Müller, 2020) and studies on discursive genres (Bakhtin, 2002) and news as discourse (Van Dijk, 1990; Fontcuberta,

1993; Aruguete, 2015).

In order to contextualize the interaction of these tweets with other positions of enunciation, publications by users of other written or audiovisual media on the subject were taken into account. As well as the information shared or disseminated by independent enunciators, mainly journalists from other media, who used their personal X account as a space to transmit relevant information about the events, or who expressed their opinion about the case of censorship of El Observador's workers. X stands out for being an ephemeral digital environment, which sometimes causes news or controversies to have a lot of effervescence and public notoriety for a short period. Therefore, the repercussions of this news piece and the prohibition to publish it occurred mainly during that night and for a maximum of 48 hours afterwards.

### **Journalists in the news: case analysis**

This paper aims to analyze the publication of Uruguayan journalists from three perspectives: the first is oriented towards newsworthiness, the second towards the characteristics of the text produced by the group of communication professionals, and the third is aimed at identifying the position of enunciation from which information is disseminated.

### **Three news articles for the 'price' of one**

On 20 December 2022, when the journalists of the newspaper El Observador published these facts in their personal accounts on X, three news were released synchronously: 1) the use of public resources by the former head of presidential security to obtain personal information about the (ex)wife of the president; 2) the censorship of a newspaper in relation to the publication of a news article; 3) the rebellion of journalists against this censorship. The first of these, the original one, was the information published by the journalists of the newspaper El Observador. The other two were born, symbiotically, together with it.

The first, as mentioned, reported that the former head of security for the Uruguayan president had requested information from Interior Ministry authorities about a personal trip by the president's wife, who was separated from him. This information emerged from the security chief's WhatsApp chats leaked from the judicial file in which evidence was gathered to convict him of

several crimes.

The second, which emerges alongside the first, was that the newspaper *El Observador* censored the dissemination of the above information. Even though nobody explicitly reported this fact, the group of journalists' own decision to publish the news on their networks "at any cost", after the media direction had forbidden it, ended up constituting another informative novelty. Thus, the third one configures this 'disobedience' of the workers to the orders of the management, by appealing to their personal accounts of X as a social media. As a result, the reader who accessed the information from this action was able to find out about the three events at the same time. This affirmation that three news events were transmitted simultaneously does not refer to three texts of the journalistic genre of news, but to the very newsworthiness: the presentation of an event that was previously unknown to readers, and the impact on the public debate that they generated.

The repercussions of these events generated extensive debates around the above-mentioned points of discussion, mainly on social media, reflected in the interaction between different positions of enunciation, fundamentally related to freedom of expression, the duty to inform, the mediation of the media and the limits of news about what is public and what is in the private sphere. All of this besides the debate generated on social media by the revelation of how an official of the Presidency had misused public resources and taken advantage of his degree of influence to obtain private information. The original censored newspaper article was published in two attached images, along with the body of the tweet as the context of the facts (Chans, 2022). Some of the newspaper's staff did this on their account, following the same format as the original publication by the journalist and deputy editor-in-chief of the newspaper, Martín Natalevich (figure 2), while others just retweeted this content.

## Figure 2

Example of a tweet shared simultaneously by journalists



(Natalevich, 2022)

This first step in the analysis of the publication is important because it takes into account the logic of social media. If the original article had been published in the newspaper for which it was written, the other two pieces of information that were born with it would not have been generated. This means that if the article would not have been censored by the media direction, the only information disseminated would have been that the former head of security of the Uruguayan president had requested information from the Ministry of the Interior about a trip of the first lady, therefore, we would not be facing a triple news story. The logic of social media, which allows this dislocation towards other discursive arenas such as social media, but at the same time towards other positions of enunciation that were not originally intended, made it possible for censorship to come to light and gain greater public attention than the news itself, and mainly the choice of journalists not to obey this prohibition and migrate to other spaces in order to fulfill their ‘mission’ of informing public opinion of facts they consider relevant.

In all cases, those who published the article from their personal accounts on X did so with the same content as the tweet, using a text as a news headline (figure 2), which indicates ‘you can read it here’ regarding the image and not a link as usual. Similarly, although their



affiliation to the media can be identified in most cases in their biography on the social media, as a characterisation as users, there is no reference to the newspaper at any point in the publication or in the images that compose the original article. This can be inferred from knowledge of the context, the individuals and their subsequent impact.

### **News out of place**

The information shared in X consists of the article written to be published as such. The text follows the journalistic guidelines required of the informative journalistic genre that is called news (also known as a news article). That is, in a simplified form: a headline with what is to be highlighted about the event; a subhead with additional information, the relevant and most updated data about the case in the first paragraph, contextual information towards the end of the body of the text, reliable sources – the chats in this case – and a style of writing typical of informative journalism that includes the limited use of adjectives, adverbs, subjective appraisals, among others (Fontcuberta, 1993).

From the perspective of critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a meeting point of methodologies and theories focused on social problems from the analysis of the role of discourses in the production and reproduction of strategies and roles of power (Van Dijk, 2003), a first approach to discursive structures allows us to identify those elements that complement the linguistic structure, such as social cognition, beliefs, evaluations, emotions or social structures, and which thus configure the central theme of the discourse.

Distinguishing this ‘subject matter’ of the discourse makes it possible to observe its ‘semantic macrostructures’, which include the most important information of a discourse, explain the overall coherence of texts, reflect those societal and political structures that variously define groups, their relations or social processes. These global meanings can be highlighted in linguistic structures such as titles, headlines, summaries, abstracts, and topic statements or conclusions, which allow both to assign topics, highlight meanings, as well as to control comprehension, and influence the formation of so-called ‘mental models’ of the discourse event (Van Dijk, 2003, p. 152).

One of the main characteristics of journalistic articles that constitute them as ‘news’ is the integration of key information in the headline and the subhead in order to understand what the text is about, what is newsworthy, and what is central to the problem. In this case, the headline ‘At Astesiano’s request, police chief gave

him information about Lorena Ponce de León's personal trip', is accompanied by a subhead that adds relevant information to the context: 'The former head of presidential custody received information about a flight by the president's ex-partner'.

Thus, we can see that the central theme of the news item is the request for information on a personal matter, that the president and the woman involved are no longer in a relationship, that Astesiano has been dismissed from his position, and that he misused police and political security instruments to obtain this information. However, as is typical of this genre of communication, objectivity tends to prevail in its construction. Misuse' can arise from a careful reading, knowledge of the context, and the subjective opinion of the person approaching the information.

The journalists do not explain why they are publishing a news item on their personal accounts; however, despite the objectivity of the headline, when they say 'You can read it here' they are establishing direct contact with their followers/readers and affirming that it is possible to access this information in this space (and not in any other). At no point in the headline, nor in the invitation to read, nor in the body of the news item itself, does the group of journalists mention that this information should have been published in the newspapers. Although the entry 'You can read it here' does not mention where it cannot be read, the articulation of a publication that is carried out at the same time, by a team of journalists from the same newspaper, with the same headline and the same copy, suggests a disruptive collective attitude, which creates an alternative space to the one they usually use in the medium in which they work as journalists. The dissemination of a news piece that incorporates the expected elements for a text framed in the journalistic genre of 'news' (Fontcuberta, 1993; Fontcuberta & Borrat, 2006), also published as an informative/journalistic article.

It's evident that the content distributed aligns with the traits of informative journalism, often seen in traditional print publications. The journalists did not express themselves with content of a personal nature, nor with linguistic forms that include expressions with a marked subjectivity; on the contrary, they followed the form that they would have adopted in the newspaper in which they work, keeping in this way their expected enunciating role, only transferring the text to another environment, but with a certain use of the legitimacy of their own link with the journalistic media.

### **Unidentified speaker**

According to the classification of enunciators used in this study (Gambetta, 2021a; Gambetta & Huertas, 2022; Müller, 2020), although the traditional medium is the newspaper *El Observador*, the journalists who wrote the publication in X did so from their personal accounts, not as members of the newspaper. Their enunciative role would have been different if, instead of publishing the news on a blank page, without reference to the newspaper, they had done it by sharing the news published by the newspaper itself, as it was intended. Here, the enunciation, despite being from a personal account, would have been as an active part (team of journalists) of a legitimized enunciator (media). Therefore, since the position of enunciation from which the news item(s) originates does not correspond to the traditional media, but rather to a set of personal accounts, we are not dealing with the legitimized enunciator.

For this reason, this position of enunciation could be identified with the category of independent enunciator (Gambetta, 2021a). That is to say, journalists who, due to their trajectory, their number of followers, or thanks to a profile with their own voice beyond the organization to which they belong, have developed over the years from their personal accounts on X a status of enunciation of their own, characterized by a more free brand of subjectivity, in which they share not only information but also their opinions and positions on various issues on the public agenda. Nevertheless, this group of journalists doesn't hold this viewpoint. This is mainly because they are not individuals who, according to the logic of social media, have an outstanding performance in their social media outside the sphere of the media to which they belong, as they do not have a sufficiently significant number of followers to represent an important space of expression in the logic of these digital media, nor do they produce content on the scale required by the networks to consolidate certain positions of enunciation. In contrast, their viewpoints on this particular case were rooted in the traditional media's model of information relay. There was, therefore, an explicit care to respect the predictability of the discursive genre in which they were expressing themselves (Bakhtin, 2002). In terms of value-load, which is expected to be low in journalism, this publication aligns with that standard.

You can't simply categorize these "rebel" journalists as regular online commentators, because they have a unique style of high-value, personal expression in their posts and comments. Even though the workers of *El Observador* expressed themselves from their personal accounts, as mentioned above, they did so with the

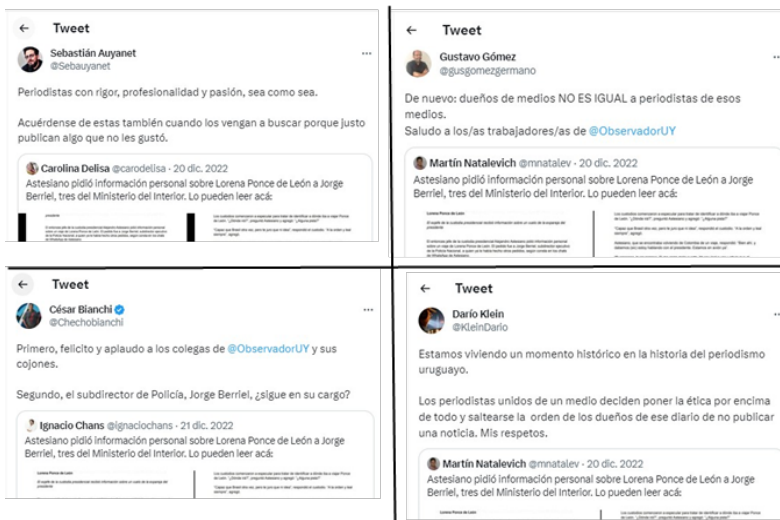
journalistic rigor characteristic of legitimized enunciator, focusing on the news, complying with the editorial requirements of their genre, and disseminating to make it public knowledge.

This publication, which is typical of how content is created and shared on social media platforms like X, quickly generated many responses due to its collaborative nature. However, the focus of the debate was not so much on the original information, which had already been shared by other sources from different approaches, but rather on what was generated because of this publication, as recent news: censorship and rebellion. Two of the aforementioned types of enunciators – independent and common – played a prominent role in the interaction/reaction generated by the tweet.

Although the group of journalists from El Observador did not express themselves from the positions of enunciation categorized as legitimized, independent, or common, other social actors participated in the interaction generated in the networks and did contribute from these spaces of expression. Both journalists from other media, from their role as independent enunciators, and the particular users of X, from their voice as common enunciators, echoed the publications with their opinions on the active role taken by these journalists. Criticisms and comments primarily centered on the mediatizing role of communication professionals, as well as broader issues concerning censorship and freedom of the press.

**Figure 3**

*Repercussion on X of the event, by Independent Enunciators*



X. Multiple users

**Figure 4**

*Repercussion on X of the event, by Common Enunciators*



*X. Multiple users*

These forms of action allow us to conclude that the journalists who disseminated a news item in X on 20 December 2022 did so from a disruptive and unpredictable enunciation position. Although it has certain characteristics of the other enunciators mentioned, it is not like any of them. A discursive behavior, which thus configured a benchmark for the usual practices of the Uruguayan journalistic media, a value that was attributed by other journalists belonging to other media and recognized by the citizenry, who are ultimately its target audience. The publication established an innovative and unprecedented position of articulation within Uruguayan journalism. This unique stance arises from the hybridization of diverse categories while simultaneously defying clear categorization. A disruptive hybrid, as a mode of enunciation, is proposed, intended to enable the emergence of enunciations that synthesize or blend characteristics of existing categories, while simultaneously enacting a rupture in the limitations that delineate each category. We are thus faced with a ‘space’ that contemplates this dynamic enunciative blurring that materializes, in this case, in the X social media.

**3 Final reflections**

The features of digital social media, which have been consolidating and expanding since web 2.0, have made possible the multiplication of positions of enunciation in the contemporary media ecosystem, which today is no longer made up exclusively of traditional media. Various social actors have taken on leading roles in these discursive arenas, through the power that technological advances have given them so that they can become creators and distributors of content.

Although historically there have been positions of privilege from which discourses are constructed, it was the traditional media that held the monopoly of mediatization, which is clearly no longer the case.

This work contributes to highlighting this blurring of media enunciation and allows us to characterize other positions of enunciation that coexist with traditional media in the discursive spheres of the digital environment. However, the most compelling step aims to demonstrate that while the categorization of positions of enunciation can be a useful tool in understanding contemporary media/discursive interaction, it is even more important to note that the delimitation of positions of enunciation is in permanent instability and dynamism. Unexpected positions of expression can emerge in 'onlineness', either because the interests of content consuming are constantly changing (clearly (mis) oriented by algorithms), or because the boundaries between previously established categories of enunciators can be reconfigured.

The study of the case of the journalists of *El Observador* has shown that these professionals did not express themselves either as legitimized enunciators, that is, as part of the medium, as common enunciators, or as independent enunciators. Instead, they did it from a place that represents a little of each of the above, and at the same time none of them. A position of enunciation which, although it responds to the sum of individual accounts, had a collective expression, since the publication not only replicated form and content, but was conveyed in X at the same time by all the members of the newspaper who decided to join in. In other words, the blurring of enunciative borders is also framed by other permeabilities, such as the individual and the collective. This enunciative blurring culminates in a redesign in categorization, to give rise to these unpredictable movements that the digital ecosystem allows, creating a space that we call, due to the characteristics described above, a disruptive hybrid enunciator.

On the other hand, this work allows us to visualize how X's own tools such as retweeting – as a form of sharing – offer the possibility of replicating and extending the dissemination of content generated in accounts in more delimited positions of enunciation. This, enhanced by the fact that journalists who have configured themselves as independent enunciators, legitimized the action of their colleagues, not only by retweeting the unpublished news but also by expressing their solidarity or agreement with the 'rebellious' publication, helped to put the event in the public orbit. A repercussion that showed how certain logics of social media have put traditional media logic in doubt, and at the same time,

generated new discussions about how the media agenda is established, and what role the traditional media play as public mediators today.

## NOTES

- 1 This and all translations into Spanish of this work were carried out by the authors with the help of digital translation tools in case of doubts.
- 2 One of the Tweets published by the different journalists was taken as a reference, randomly.
- 3 The Montevideo municipality is currently governed by Eng. Carolina Cosse, one of the main leaders of the opposition party to the national government, the Frente Amplio. However, the municipality's media are considered public media, since they are managed by municipal resources.

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