

# THE JOURNALISTIC UTTERANCE ON TWITTER

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Brasileira de  
Pesquisadores em  
Jornalismo

MABEL OLIVEIRA TEIXEIRA  
*Universidade Católica de Pelotas, Brazil*

**ABSTRACT** - This article aims to discuss the impact of the characteristics of the Twitter platform on the application of standard journalistic technique (TRAQUINA, 2008) during the creation and production of news releases as tweets and, at the same time, it seeks to identify their specifications regarding traditional journalistic utterances. Through the analysis of 134 tweets collected from newspaper profiles of *Folha de S. Paulo*, *Zero Hora* and *Diário Popular*, we have obtained indications that led us to confirm our central assumption. In other words, the hierarchical pattern and purpose that guide the creation of standard news, and therefore, the special language that characterizes traditional journalism, begin to give way to models that are more horizontal and interactive, that redesign the standard technique (based on the model of the Inverted Pyramid) and thus, modify journalistic writing - interfering in its discursive effects (GOMES, 2000).

**Keywords:** Journalistic language. Journalistic utterances. Journalistic tweets. Twitter.

## O ENUNCIADO JORNALÍSTICO NO TWITTER

**RESUMO** - O artigo discorre sobre o impacto das características da plataforma Twitter para a aplicação da técnica jornalística padrão (TRAQUINA, 2008) durante a constituição e produção das notícias veiculadas como *tweets*; e, ao mesmo tempo, busca apontar suas especificidades em relação ao enunciado jornalístico tradicional. A partir da análise de 134 *tweets*, coletados dos perfis do jornal *Folha de S. Paulo*, *Zero Hora* e *Diário Popular*, obtivemos indícios que nos levaram a confirmar nosso pressuposto central, ou seja, que o padrão hierárquico e objetivo que orienta a constituição da notícia padrão e, portanto, da própria linguagem que caracteriza o jornalismo tradicional, começa a ceder espaço a modelos mais horizontalizados e interativos que remodelam a técnica padrão (baseada no modelo da Pirâmide Invertida) e, conseqüentemente, modificam o enunciado jornalístico - interferindo em seus efeitos discursivos (GOMES, 2000).

**Palavras-chave:** Linguagem jornalística. Enunciado jornalístico. Tweets jornalísticos. Twitter.

## INTRODUCTION

The use of computers and especially the Web has generated technical, morphological and cultural alterations, causing deep changes in the way of producing and reproducing texts, in the support of writing and in communicational activities. Through this revolution, mankind became a creator and user of tools, assuming the lead in technology and, concomitantly, being affected by it in all aspects of its existence. Therefore, when we speak of new technological devices, we are simultaneously discussing all social, economic, historical and cultural procedures that are symbiotically associated with technical developments.

That said, we consider the subject of our study, the journalistic utterances on Twitter, as the legitimate result of this new historical moment marked by the central role of information exchange, social organization in cybernetic networks and horizontalization of the communication processes. Twitter, utilized as a platform for media and social networking site, is a system that collaborates with the enhancement of connective, comprehensive, more democratic and egalitarian characteristics, which postulated the Web as the definitive milestone of the so-called information era (CASTELLS, 2010).

Briefly, we can say that Twitter is a microblogging site that can be used for various purposes, such as interacting with other users, publishing and receiving news, replicating and discussing information contained in the platform, etc. Since its launching in 2006, Twitter has gained tremendous popularity due to the simplicity of its interface and to the effectiveness of its tools for the exploration of the most striking features of the Web and the network society: immediacy, interactivity, personalization, hypertextuality, mobility and convergence (MIELNICZUK, 2002).

Focused on simplicity and ease of handling, Twitter works through the publication of content (called tweets) that should always be restricted to 140 characters and designed to answer the following question: What is happening? To answer this question, Twitter users can send their tweets via the web, mobile Internet, e-mail, etc. It is worthwhile to emphasize that the most important feature of Twitter is that it allows information to be produced by all and for all through a continuous flow of content exchanges, interactions and hyper connections.

Seeking to characterize the journalistic utterance on Twitter, we will support our efforts on a triad of elements: the standard technical model of news creation (standard journalistic utterance), the standard journalistic language and the new possibilities that come with the tool,

Twitter. We intend to achieve our goal by focusing on the following questions: how did the characteristics of the Twitter platform influence the application of standard journalistic technique in the creation and production of news released as tweets, and what are its possible special aspects with relation to the traditional journalistic utterance? Our main hypothesis is that the hierarchical pattern and purpose that guide the production of the standard news, and therefore, the characteristic language of journalism that we recognize, are beginning to give way to more horizontal and interactive models, redesigning the standard technique (based the model of inverted pyramid), and thereby changing the journalistic utterance.

To answer the above questions, we will base our analysis on 134 news tweets that will make up the material of our corpus. The material for analysis was collected on June 16, 2011 from Twitter profiles from the newspapers *Folha de S. Paulo*, *Zero Hora*, and *Diário Popular*, as explained in our methodology. Our motivation for preparing this study is mainly linked to a personal concern about the effects of new communication tools in the creation of the news, and at the same time, to the academic interest in exploring a phenomenon that is underway with still scarce scientific investigation.

### **The standard journalistic utterance**

Working with the notion of “field of knowledge,” Traquina (2005) defines journalism as a selective reality constructed through numerous processes of social interaction between professionals of the journalistic field and sources, other journalists and the society in which it is inserted. This “selective reality” pointed out by Traquina is ultimately the conformation itself of the news that, more than being the expression of reality, is the product resulting from social interactions.

Therefore, journalism is an activity represented by its principal product, the news - a social construction which journalists utilize as a specific knowledge, materialized through specialized procedures of narration, in particular, the model of the Inverted Pyramid (IP)<sup>1</sup>. Thus we may say that by the techniques of narration adopted for the creation of the news, journalism is accomplished through its own language, or as Traquina (2008) prefers, the “journalese” that produces and guarantees stability for its utterances<sup>2</sup>.

To understand this language, we need therefore to observe the elements that constitute the structure of the IP (FRANCO, 2001), namely: a) the Lead, the first paragraph of the news that aims to encompass the

main information of a fact (“what?”, “who?”, “when?”, “where?”, “how?” and “why?”); b) the Sublead (which may be composed of “how?” and of “why” or of a further exploration of these); c) paragraphs of context; and d) secondary or irrelevant material for understanding the text. Exploring the concept of the Lead, Sousa points out that this “is in the first place, the paragraph that introduces the theme of the text and, secondly, the paragraph that sets the tone for the rest of the text” and therefore emphasizes that “the structure that was adopted for the text determines the *lead*” (FRANCO, 2001, p. 221, italics added).

The standard journalistic technique stipulates for journalists certain established (but not immutable) rules of textual organization of their writing. The intervention imposed on products of journalistic speech is, above all, a mechanism that consolidates a special language with the activity. In the words of Traquina,

The journalistic language must have certain traits that will make it understandable: a) short sentences; b) short paragraphs; c) simple words (avoid polysyllabic words); d) a direct and economic syntax; e) conciseness; and f) the use of metaphors to enhance the understanding of the text [...] The “journalese” is usually forced into a specific format in the press: the inverted pyramid, which became dominant in American journalism around 1900 (TRAQUINA, 2008, p. 46).

The standard journalistic language is thus a discursive construction intersected by the values, ideologies and historical milestone of a primarily typographic, industrial and positivist society - the nineteenth-century society - that consolidated the Western model of news, that is, the IP. This “way of saying” of journalism substantially connected to its “knowledge of narration”<sup>3</sup> (TRAQUINA, 2008) is a reflection of a characteristic speech of modern culture which sought and prized universal messages and the fixation of meanings considered immanent (LÉVY, 1999).

This being the case, we bring journalism to the core of our discussion by pointing out that, in the general sense, the news is synonymous to “journalistic utterance” (CORREIA, 2011), understood as the product of the act of enunciation<sup>4</sup>. Nevertheless, if the utterance is the “observable” result of the action of the subject speaking, then, journalism being responsible for the action process of reporting, it is logical that the primary utterance of journalism will always be news. What interests us particularly, are the specific characteristics that the journalistic enunciation assumes on adopting a specific technical system that seeks to stabilize the form of utterance in interaction with society.

We use the research done by Mayra Gomes (2000), when dealing with journalistic utterance through the sciences of language, to propose such characteristics. The result encountered by this author led us to define the standard journalistic utterance as: a) impersonal, b) hierarchical, c) concise, d) assertive/verifiable, e) objective, and f) excluding.

We emphasize that all the characterizations mentioned are achieved through the technical writing strategies that are triggered at the time of the journalistic utterance. Therefore, its effects are configured using the symbolic system of language which, when put into action, generates specific meanings in a given context. Thus, all the characteristics of journalistic utterances are reflections of a technique that ultimately aims to transform the news into an objective report that can achieve the desired effect of reality. In this way, journalistic activity is carried out by means of a set of practices and techniques that aim at the stability of the news enunciations-, created and consumed as products that function as organizers of the social space and mediators of the information chaos - legitimizing itself through referential discourse<sup>5</sup>.

### **Twitter and its technical elements**

Researchers like Castells (2010), Levy (1999), Santaella and Lemos (2010), Recuero (2009) and Zago (2008) point out, each from his particular viewpoint, the establishment of a new society that is “achieved” and “established” in innovative communication processes that constantly create hybrid languages updated by network interaction. These social and therefore linguistic phenomena establish a new context for the journalistic utterances, a new symbolic universe in which they start to produce new meanings and values. Through the various tools for collaboration and interactivity available on the Web, users became accustomed to produce and share their content and, at the same time, collaborate with content created by others. Sites like Twitter are a direct reflection of this phase of permanent interaction and intense democratization of spaces for the dissemination of a great variety of discourses<sup>6</sup> and the representation of the most diverse subjects.

Since its appearance, Twitter had at least two major types of uses and utilizations: it became, at the same time, a popular tool for conversation and for information. The growing number of media and professional journalists that have adopted Twitter as a powerful news tool is certainly a strong refutation of the idea that the Web and its tools would mark the end of professional journalism. However, the manner of informing gains new characteristics and possibilities as Twitter is, in

essence, a social networking site<sup>7</sup>. Thus, the value of the information circulating on Twitter is not only linked to its origin, but also to the debate that it evokes (ZAGO, 2008).

The characteristics of journalistic practice in Twitter are largely a reflection of the tool's specific aspects that, according to Zago (2008), can be summarized as follows: updating by mobile devices, limitation of 140 characters for messages, automatic updating and configuration as a social networking site. Therefore, based on the ideas of the author, we note that the tool's specific aspects cause its contents to have characteristics of instantaneity; hyper conciseness; agility/extreme speed; interaction/conversation.

We emphasize that the attainment of these characteristics depends not only on the possibilities of the system, but also on its utilization. We can briefly summarize that Twitter has its own linguistic system which users apply to produce messages and meanings. As basic elements of the tool's language we have: the *link*, a simple method of passing from one point of a document to another internal or external point; the *retweet* (RT), a mechanism used to indicate that the content being posted comes from another user; the *hashtag* (#) that can be understood as an indexer of themes, topics and/or key words that bring together related content; the at sign (@) whose definition is given by Ramos (2010, p. 38) as "synonym of people (...)" has a magnetic force in the language, especially in its syntax", that is, the at sign is the symbol that precedes the *TwitterName* which is the identification of each user in the system.

The last three elements mentioned above (RT, # and @) characterize a new micro syntax system specifically for Twitter. This system is the reflection of the restriction of 140 characters and it is an example of the minimal fluency in micro syntax which is a basic requirement for navigation and successful insertion into the tool (LEMOS; SANTAELLA, 2010). The presence of these coding elements is so completely rooted in Twitter's very functioning that the failure to comply with them makes the communication and exchange impossible. Journalism being an activity involving the transmission of messages, there would not be another way to explore the media potential of the Twitter tool other than through utilization of its syntax, its language and its organization. Thus, the journalists entered into a process of assimilation and utilization of new signs, adapting and exploring the new possibilities to their activity. Therefore, we should explore what are the effects of this process in the journalistic utterances produced.

## Methodology

For our research, we delimited as potential subjects only the content published by news organizations that have adopted Twitter as a communication tool. Our subject of study is “journalistic tweets”, in other words, the products carried by news organizations in their profiles on Twitter. To approach the heterogeneity of newspapers that have established their web spaces, we chose subjects that did not belong to the same group, and at the same time, that did not have the same coverage area.

Therefore, we decided to look into the tweets published by: a) a newspaper with national expression, *Folha de S. Paulo* (FSP); b) another one of special prominence in the state of Rio Grande do Sul (RS), *Zero Hora* (ZH); c) a representative of the journalism carried out in the south of RS, *Diário Popular* (DP). To limit the number of tweets that constitute our corpus and at the same time, to avoid criteria that could predispose a selection based on the quality or richness of data from tweets, we restricted as a criterion for tweets selection the specific material collection period: June 16, 2011. The tweets published by the newspapers selected were collected manually in all the profiles. At the end of our collection, we reached a total of 134 tweets.

With the delimited corpus, we tried to gradually apply some systematization that would aid in the understanding of the most relevant features. Our first step was to identify the subjects and to quantify the number of tweets published by each one and concomitantly, to identify the respectively uses that they made of the main technical characteristics offered by Twitter. The result obtained by this first look is shown in Table 1:

Table 1 – Data collected from selected profiles

	<b>Folha de S. Paulo</b>	<b>Zero Hora</b>	<b>Diário Popular</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Identification</b>	@folha_com	@zerohora	@diariopopularRS	--
<b>Followers</b>	118,280	93,589	6,873	218,742
<b>Number of follower users</b>	66,934	9,810	64	76,808
<b>Tweets collected</b>	52	35	47	134
<b>Use of links</b>	50	32	40	122
<b>Use of @</b>	12	04	--	16
<b>Hashtags</b>	--	--	05	05
<b>Retweets</b>	08	02	--	10

Source: Elaborated by the author

Table 1 shows that the technical possibilities of the Twitter platform, especially the link, retweets, hashtag and at sign, are being

effectively utilized for the creation of “journalistic tweets.” The use of Twitter micro syntax elements characterizes the hybridity that pervades the “journalistic tweets,” that is, at the same time that we found the presence of elements of the journalistic texts’ standard technique, we also found the inclusion of micro syntax elements originating from Twitter. The sum of these elements gives rise to a new, different, and specific language, which is revealed by the new utterances produced.

### **Analysis: the journalistic utterance on twitter**

From the analysis of “journalistic tweets,” we will highlight some of the differences between them and traditional utterances. Simultaneously, we will point out some effects and motivations for the appearance of these singularities and their material marks in the utterances analyzed. To summarize and visualize some of these marks, we suggest studying Table 2:

Table 2 – Alteration of the characteristics of the standard utterance

<b>Characteristics of the standard journalistic utterance</b>	<b>Major marks of alteration of characteristics</b>
Impersonal	Exclamation points, interaction with users and the presence of <i>emoticons</i> .
Ranking according to relevance	The information is not organized according to its relevance, presence and appearance of the “micro lead” link.
Assertive/verifiable	Users’ intervention in the content posted.
Objetive	Exclamation points, interaction with users, the presence of <i>emoticons</i> .
Concise	Micro lead and 140 characters.
Exclusive	Interaction with users, user intervention, presence of <i>emoticons</i> and use of exclamation points.

Source: Elaborated by the author

In Table 2 above, we can observe in the right-hand column the representation of the aforementioned characteristics of the standard journalistic utterance, and as noted in the left-hand column, some of the textual and linguistic evidences that mark the alteration in the characterization or reformulation of the standard utterance when presented in the tweet format. Seeking greater dynamism, we will present below each one of the characteristics of the standard utterance and simultaneously, notations regarding their alterations or inapplicability in tweets.

When talking about the impersonality of the standard journalistic utterance, Gomes (2000) emphasizes that it is accomplished by means



of the strategy of telling the facts about a third person by use of the verb in the third person (he/she/they). By adopting this linguistic strategy, the news flows on as if there were no placement of values or mediation permeating the utterance. However, in journalistic tweets, the impersonality of the standard utterance begins to be neglected on the basis of the explicitly dialogical character of Twitter. This phenomenon is explained by the presence of unusual elements to the standard journalistic language, as we see in the tweets below:

Table 3 – Tweets with dialogic marks

	<b>folha_com</b> Folha de S.Paulo @kevinschwaantz De nada! =) 23 hours ago
	<b>zerohora</b> Zero Hora @ricardo_souza Ricardo, corrigimos o texto. Obrigado 30 minutes ago

Source: Elaborated by the author

In the tweets observed, we see the explicit establishment of dialogues. In these utterances, journalistic language gives way to the interactive language of the environment, there are direct references to specific enunciatees that are inserted and expressed in the journalistic statement. More than that, the last tweet expresses a character not only interactive but also collaborative between ZH and the user Ricardo\_Souza. Another interesting observation can be viewed in the first tweet where there is an indication of the gender of the speaking subject through the use of the adjective “*obrigado*” (thanks) and the typographic representation of this through inserting an *emoticon* that expresses satisfaction and informal speech.

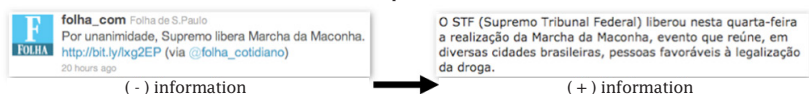
The contents of the tweets presented do not have any news or informative characteristics, but they share the same space in the informational flow. Therefore, we can point out that the interactive and dialogical characteristics of Twitter potentially act in the creation of journalistic utterances. The equality of spaces between users coerces journalism to publicly make correction in real time; the journalistic utterances apparently unshakable and unquestionable become more fragile due to the more democratic and instantaneous interaction stimulated by the tool.

The hierarchy characteristic of information imposed by the IP on the standard utterance takes us back to the urgency of the journalistic report and its quest for objectification of the events that prove to be

current. On Twitter, the hierarchy of IP gives place to a structure that obeys the logic of hyper conciseness, hypertextuality, personalization, extreme agility and potentially infinite interconnection of content. This hypertext dynamic of the structure is linked to the informational aspect of a network by which information needs to be at the same time elementary (agile, essential and hyper concise) and interactive (allowing its exponential exploitation).

When we analyzed the first data that we highlighted in the presentation of the corpus, the extensive use of links in the creation of tweets became clear. We point out that the contents of these tweets often appeared as external news that was linked in turn to other information cells and so on. Drawing a parallel with the standard journalistic text, we could say that each cell corresponds to a paragraph of the printed text. However, unlike paragraphs of printed news that are ranked according to the newsworthiness of their content (IP), the information cells we found through our corpus do not follow this logic. The example below shows that between the tweet (on the left), considered as cell 1, and the lead (on the right) of linked news, considered as cell 2, there is not any hierarchy based on the importance of data between the cells, but that the difference between them is based on the amount of information shown:

Table 4 – Gradual exploration of information



Source: Elaborated by the author

Based on this observation which was confirmed in all tweets with links, it seemed clear that the news creation that we observed did not refer to the traditional model of IP, but rather the model of the Lying Down Pyramid proposed by Canavilhas (2006). According to the author, when the information cells that are part of the news report are inserted into the Web hypertext environment, they usually start to obey a different logic from that applied to standard news where each cell, in the case of paragraphs, seeks to establish a descending hierarchy based on the importance of the data presented. In sum, Canavilhas (2006) shows us that the journalistic exploration of the fact shall no longer comply with the criterion of relevance of the IP, but an exploration that will gradually add through new cells<sup>8</sup> a greater amount of detail with relation to the elements presented. By looking at the example given in Table 4, we see that the information of the tweet (permission given for the demonstration

in favor of marihuana) is augmented by a further exploration of the details in the lead of the linked news, but this does not present any hierarchical difference in relation to the tweet that remains focused on the main fact (permission for the demonstration in favor of marihuana). Thus, we can say that between cells 1 and 2 there is no hierarchical difference between the data presented. Therefore, our look at the corpus confirmed the scheme proposed by Canavilhas (2006), since the tweets analyzed functioned within the macro context of the online news (with its multiple hyper connected cells), as a initial information unit from which readers could move towards an exploration that gradually extended the approach of each of the elements presented in the tweet. Within this horizontal perspective, the tweet ends up formatting itself as a kind of the base unit that introduces the news event, which will be supplemented with details at each new link, at each level of the Lying Down Pyramid.

Any application of the technique of IP, highlighted in the lead, serves as an effect of a short say, devoid of complexity, which aims to capture the fact in its essence. If the standard news is considered to be a concise utterance (short sentences, direct syntax, lead), the journalistic tweet (one sentence with 140 characters, micro syntax) can be considered to be the extreme point of this characteristic, symbolized by the creation of the “micro lead.” From the 134 tweets that constitute our corpus, 91% (122 tweets) are aimed at providing important data for the understanding of a factual event, that is, they focus on reporting something. We dwelled upon these examples to identify the presence of the elements of the lead. The result was: 122 tweets responded to the question “what?;” 99 responded to the question “who?;” 14 to the question “when?;” 45 to the question “where?;” 13 to the question “how?;” and 10 to the question “why.” In accordance with the findings, it seems clear that the tweets analyzed could not have been originated by the mere transposition of the lead, since some of the elements seem to be systematically neglected. It appears obvious that with the limitation imposed by Twitter, a text with a maximum of 140 characters, the full dissemination of the lead would be an almost impossible task. Nevertheless, Zago (2008) indicates that journalists not only started using Twitter, but they also made it one of the most efficient means of reporting. This was possible thanks to a phenomenon that we chose to call “micro lead,” that is, a new essential informative core that is even more concise – “hyper concise” – than the traditional lead, which focuses on addressing only the following questions: “What?,” “Who?.”

On classifying the standard utterance as assertive/verifiable,

we mentioned once again Gomes (2000) when, in dealing with the journalistic utterance, he brings the journalistic discourse closer to the historical discourse since both deal with the facts reported as if they were linguistically linked to a privilege of being: what has happened is reported, not what has not happened or is doubtful. On Twitter, this idea seems to be at the mercy of the interactive and polysemic context of the platform that imposes an inherent character of incompleteness, an aspect of “version” that is always open to the meanings and verification of the users. In this symbolic environment, the “truths” are always considered multiple and provisional. Thus, the standard language strategies become limited and insufficient to cancel the effects generated by the system’s language. Although most of the tweets analyzed maintain a language that seeks the traditional objectivity of the fact reported by an impersonal and verifiable creation, the interaction with other users, the presence of certain graphic signs (!) and the use of links<sup>10</sup> interfere in a certain way in the symbolic articulation that aims to generate a referential illusion by means of a language that seeks to hide the signs of the subjects of the utterance.

The use of graphic signs that express emotion and/or emphasis is contrary to the standard journalistic technique - the use of this type of punctuation usually can only be accepted when inserted in quotes or in very specific cases. The use of the exclamation point marks the presence of the enunciator subject - this means that its occurrence in journalistic utterances (news) is one of the novelties that mark a very specific language of journalism within Twitter, in which the impersonality and objectivity of the traditional language, characteristics previously non-negotiable in journalism, begin to give way to a less bureaucratic and more interactive language.

The game of referentiality of the speech is the main assumption of the *objectivity* of the standard news, that is, an utterance is sought that does not present the signs of the enunciator to achieve a sense of impartiality, objectivity and truth. However, the conversational nature of the Twitter platform interferes in this game, since it requires the interaction between utterances and subjects that meet and face each other in the same information flow. Moreover, the news in Twitter is never given as a full report; the specific logic of cyberspace gives rise to the multiplicity and the inability to grasp the whole, either by the excess of information available or by the diversity of conflicting utterances or by the countless paths that can be followed – it is what Lévy (1999) calls a non-totalizing universal which is typical of content generated on the Web.

Thus, the characteristic of *exclusion of the signs of the reader and of the media/ journalist*, observed in the standard language, also suffers from interference regarding its applicability as a function of interactivity that the network language assumes. If in the standard utterance there is a permanent exclusion of the marks of the enunciator and enunciatee in order to emphasize the characteristic of objectivity of the news - eliminating the conversational relationship - on Twitter, this language strategy confronts the basic principles of the environment itself, and thus it ends up being abandoned at some point in the name of interaction. We note in the corpus the presence, although sometimes hidden and discreet, the subjects of the utterance process (through the use of emoticons, graphic punctuation, conversation with readers, etc.). These are indications of a change in journalistic practice that is beginning, instead of neglecting, to interact with the “readers” and accept their contributions in the production/reproduction/editing of the texts - as seen through the tweets shown in Table 3. This change appears to be connected with the interactive, informal and dialogical nature of the environment itself; this new practice is potentially significant, since it can generate, among other things, substantial changes in the relationship of the media/journalists with their sources.

Twitter turns every user into a collaborator and in a virtual source of varied information, easily accessible and hyper concise; all this dynamism and heterogeneity favors the journalistic exploitation of this universe of endless new “sources” and potential collaborators. In sum, we believe that the news as a tweet started to inhabit a new symbolic universe, completely reconstructed and with new meanings by means of this new language that emerges from the collaborative and hypertextual informational flow that does not deny mediation, but assumes it as the only form of existence. Thus, the journalistic utterances on Twitter start to present singularities in relation to the standard utterance based on the characteristics that permeate it, which are: *hypertextuality, hyper conciseness, interactivity, universality and collaboration*.

### Conclusion

When we began this research, we proposed to investigate and answer the following question: how did the characteristics of the Twitter platform influence the application of standard journalistic technique in the news disseminated in the form of tweets, and what are its possible specific aspects in relation to the traditional journalistic utterance? To reach a satisfactory conclusion, we indicated that we

would use as a guide the exploration of a triad of elements that permeate our problem, namely: the standard technical model for news creation, the standard journalistic language and the possibilities and characteristics of the tool, Twitter. Therefore, we will summarize here the elements explored plan and we will simultaneously present the comments that encompass our research.

We saw earlier in this article that the notion of journalism as a specialized activity becomes firm and connected with the stabilization of its own specific knowledge: what is news and how it is produced (TRAQUINA, 2008). We emphasize that this journalistic product is, first of all, a social construction that was stabilized within a specific socio-historical context, the context of the society of writing (LÉVY, 1999), through procedures which originated a unique language of journalism, “journalese” (TRAQUINA, 2008), and a technical structure of narration, the Inverted Pyramid (IP) and, concomitantly, the lead. Thus, our theoretical framework presented the news as the standard utterance of journalistic speech whose technique (including its language and format) is seen as a strategy for promoting a speech idealized by the value of objectivity. We have seen that the context in which journalism and its procedures were developed ended up by influencing the recognition of standard journalistic utterance by means of the typical characteristics of the referential discourse (GOMES, 2000), that is: impersonality, hierarchy, assertiveness, verifiability, objectivity and exclusion.

After we presented the standard technical model of news creation and standard journalistic language (characterizing its utterances), we focused on presenting Twitter as a media space and at the same time, as a social network site. We emphasized that some of the technical possibilities of the tool – such as the limit of 140 characters per message, the (manual or automatic) updating via mobile devices, and especially its configuration as a social network site (ZAGO, 2008) - stimulate and influence the production of utterances characterized by their hyper conciseness (made possible by the elements of micro syntax) hypertextuality (unique characteristic of the web tools), agility and speed (potentiated by the automatic updating and use of mobile devices for publication) and, finally, interaction/ conversation (the dialogical characteristic is typical and crucial both for the maintenance of the social network site as well as to ensure the visibility and relevance of the users).

By working with the material aspect of the corpus, we realized that journalistic tweets present textual elements coming from both the standard journalistic language as well as from the language that emerges

from Twitter. However, through analysis, we also realized that, despite the journalistic tweets falling back on the typical linguistic strategies of the standard technique, their mere insertion in the Web environment and utilization of language elements of Twitter interfere and sometimes limit the characteristics effects of standard journalistic speech (as was shown briefly in Table 3). Therefore, based on the analysis of the corpus, our first conclusion is that the characteristics and linguistic elements of the Twitter interfere in the effects of the standard journalistic language.

On Twitter, the interaction and collaboration with the other users and contents are the basic condition for defining the degree of visibility, influence and credibility that the media/journalist will attain in the structure of the system (ZAGO, 2008). Thus, we believe that Twitter requires the journalistic language to begin to accept the dialogical character of the utterances, and at the same time, a certain level of informality and permeability in the speeches to ensure their relevance within the network. This fact could be observed in the material of conversational tweets exchanged between Twitter users and media/journalists. In sum, we believe that the process of meaning of the new journalistic utterances is no longer based on the assumption of an enunciative self-sufficiency able to deny any interference between fact and report, but rather it is based on the interconnection, interaction and collaboration necessary for participation in the explicit dialogue of Twitter.

During our analysis, we were able to observe the changes that appear in the unique textuality of the utterances by means of elements that characterize the interaction, the hypertextuality, the dialogue and even the interference of the enunciator and of the enunciatees in the creation of the tweets. We have seen that, by being inserted into the Web's hypertext environment, the journalistic tweet becomes part of a non-linear (macro) structure of information exploration in which it assumes the role of "base unit" from which it can move towards a greater detail of the .data presented by exploring other previously linked information cells. Thus, the journalistic utterance on Twitter appears to be no longer linked to hierarchical architecture of the IP, but rather to the model proposed by Canavilhas (2006) when dealing with the architecture of the news on the Web, the Lying Down Pyramid. However, we emphasize, as does the author mentioned above, that we are not suggesting that the model of the IP is being replaced or invalidated in the context of the Web; our data only leads us to agree with Canavilhas (2006) when he says that in a hypertext environment, the IP tends to be restricted to the internal structure of some informative cells. Thus, we suggest a second conclusion which indicates

that the standard technical structure is changed if observed through the (macro) structure of online news.

It is worth emphasizing that the limitation of characters for messages already prevents the internal organization of the journalistic tweets from being accomplished by means of the IP or from representing a mere transposition of the traditional lead. Making an analogy with the standard utterance, the journalistic tweet might function, based on the characteristics of conciseness, as the lead. However, our observation of the corpus showed that the journalistic tweet gives rise to a differentiated structure centered on the presentation of three essential elements: “what?,” “who?,” and “where?” Thus, we believe that limiting the tool results in a hyper-concise structure that we call “microlead.” We show in our analysis that the hyper-conciseness required for the desired fluency of journalistic utterances on Twitter encourages utilization of the Twitter micro syntax elements by media/journalists (LEMOS; SANTAELLA, 2010). We perceived that the inclusion of micro syntax elements (RT, @ and #) in the preparation of journalism utterances not only indicates the assimilation of technical resources, but mainly a reformulation in the form of communication. Therefore, our third conclusion refers to the appearance of the “micro lead” as a new format that emerges from the journalistic tweets, functioning as a base unit, hyper-concise, of the (macro) structure of the online news exploration and not as a hierarchically more relevant cell as occurs with the lead of the standard utterance.

If we work with the idea that the standard journalistic language is characterized and permeated by the writing society, product of the nineteenth century, we believe that the Twitter journalistic utterance is characterized by the logic of the network society. Thus, our second concern throughout this research was to demonstrate that the traditional characteristics of the journalistic utterance begin to make room for new elements that involve the characteristics of *hypertextuality*, *hyperconciseness*, *interactivity*, *universality* and *collaboration*. These characteristics end up by permeating all the utterances constructed and transmitted by means of the tool and become the specific aspect of their contents. Twitter’s relationship with journalism is still too recent for us to make consistent predictions about the future of this partnership. With certainty, we can only say that Twitter is occupying more and more space as a social media support by means of which news is constructed, utilized and re-signified through the interaction of information and various subjects.



## NOTES

- 1 The Inverted Pyramid is a technical model of writing that seeks the exposure of informational elements in descending order of importance. The model has gained special prominence in western journalism after the Second World War (1939-1945), but its origin is linked to the nineteenth century and to positivist thinking.
- 2 The enunciation is understood here as the “observable” result of the action of the speaking subject (BAKHTIN, 1995). Therefore, the utterance is what is said as an assimilation of the language in its updating through the speech act. Thus, the utterance appears as a form of mediation that ensures the placement in utterance-speech of the virtualities of the language.
- 3 When referring to the journalistic “knowledge of narration,” Traquina (2008) makes it clear that journalism has a specialized form to tell its stories. This narrative knowledge guides the format of the news through stabilized utterances. Thus, the knowledge of narration can be translated by the techniques (IP and Lead) that solidify the format of the news and shape the “journalese”.
- 4 The enunciation is identified as an action that promotes “what is said”, that is, the utterance (GOMES, 2000). Therefore, it has an actional nature and exists through the utterance. Every utterance has the presence of at least two subjects in discourse, the enunciator (the one who speaks) and the enunciatee (to whom the speech is directed).
- 5 We can define referential discourse as the discourse of truth, that is, the one that seeks to erase the marks of the inevitable mediation between the real fact and its construction as an utterance or sign element.
- 6 We understand the term discourse as a set of utterances regulated in the same discursive formation (FOUCAULT, 1973, p. 97). According to the author, the discourse is “a set of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in time and space that defined in a given period, and for a specific social, economic, geographical or linguistic area, the conditions of the enunciative function”.
- 7 The Social Network Sites are spaces used and intended for the expression of social networks (set of actors and their connections) on the Internet (RECUERO, 2009). According to Boyd & Ellison (2007), for a system to be considered a Social Network Site, it must permit: the construction of a representation of the self, by means of the profile or personal page; the interaction by means of comments/messages; and public exposure of

the social network of each actor.

- 8 We clarify that Canavilhas (2006) does not suggest an extinction or suppression of the IP model, but he indicates that the hierarchy is represented by the model, in the Web, is restricted to the internal exploration of each informative cell. That is, the news expressed in an online newspaper can be structured through the IP, but the hypertextual macro structure that connects the news to other informative cells (such as videos, tweets, files, etc.) will be supported by the Lying Down Pyramid.
- 9 In the tweets, the explicit presence of the link suggests a kind of “intermediate source” between the utterance and reality.

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**Mabel Teixeira** is Master of Applied Linguistics from the Catholic University of Pelotas (UCPel), Brazil. Doctorate student in the Graduate Program in Applied Linguistics of UCPel. E-mail: [mabel.ppg@gmail.com](mailto:mabel.ppg@gmail.com)

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