The compositional and structural organization of the news commentary and features of its verbalization (on the material of Chinese and English languages)

Niu Wenjuan

This article is devoted to the study of the structural and compositional features of the organization of the news commentary in the Chinese and British media. The similarities and differences in the compositional structure of the studied genre have been identified, constant and changing elements have been revealed. In the course of the analysis, the superstructure of the genre and the features of its verbalization have been found out, which show a number of differences in non-closely related languages.
Keywords: genre, news commentary, structural and compositional organization, superstructure.

Настоящая статья посвящена рассмотрению структурно-композиционных особенностей организации жанра новостного комментария в китайских и британских СМИ. Установлены сходства и различия в композиционной структуре исследуемого жанра, выявлены постоянные и изменяющиеся элементы. В ходе анализа была определена суперструктура жанра и особенности ее вербализации, которые в неблизкородственных языках проявляют ряд отличий.
Ключевые слова: жанр, новостной комментарий, структурно-композиционная организация, суперструктура.

Introduction. The news commentary, which we understand as a discursive genre, which is a culturally, socially, situationally determined type of text with a certain structural and linguistic organization and orientation on the specific goal – the analysis of information previously reported in the press and influence on the addressee, is popular with readers, because it provides objective information not about the event itself, but about the essence of what is happening, possible causes and consequences. This determines the relevance of its differentiation according to various criteria among many other genres of the press, since there is still no clear definition of its genre features, which makes it difficult to conduct research within the framework of comparative historical, typological and contrastive linguistics.

Thus, A.V. Kolesnichenko considers the commentary as «a continuation of the news with the aim of clarifying or evaluating it», distinguishing the explanatory commentary and the evaluative commentary [1], which are characterized by their own structure and language.

V.I. Konkov singles out the analytical commentary, the object of which can be any element of the life of society, which is perceived by this society ambiguously, in other words, this is a reaction not to a text, but to an event [2, p. 90]. We can also single out the comment-explanation, the comment-forecast [3].

Studying different types of the commentary from the point of view of the theory of speech genres, T.I. Steksova summarizes that the commentary is not a single genre, but a set of genre variations, among which are the scientific commentary, the comment-note as a special case of the scientific commentary, the commentary in print media, the analytical commentary, the protest commentary (as a kind of analytical commentary) and the Internet commentary [4].

In Taiwan, there are two methods for classifying the news commentary. According to Lin Dachun's three-category method, the news commentary is divided 1) according to the identity of the review reporter (review reporters, including editorial editors and columnists); 2) according to mass media (printed mass media and / or electronic media); 3) according to the nature of the news commentary (the military news commentary, international news commentary, political news commentary, social news commentary, the cultural and educational news commentary, the economic news comment) [5].

Wang Ming divides news commentary into eight types according to their functions: explanation, debate, inspiration, exploration and judgment, persuasion, evaluation, memory, and suggestion [6]. Such a classification is hardly applicable, since the news commentary as a genre can perform several functions, and we are unlikely to find a «pure» single-functional example [7].

In mainland China, there are also several genre classifications, according to which, according to the principle of unity of content and form, this genre is divided into five types: the suggestive commentary, the reasoned commentary, the rebuttal commentary, the commentary and the explanatory commentary [5]; Yu Ning and Li Demin offer three main classification methods: 1) by the content of comments (political, economic, legal, educational), sports, military and national defense comments,

international relations, international comments and social comments); 2) the form and specification of comments (leading articles, articles by newspaper reviewers, short reviews, editor's and post-editor's note, columns); 3) according to the connection between comments and the news (concert commentaries, solo commentaries, self-playing commentaries [8]); according to the third classification, news commentaries are divided into five categories depending on their form and functions: 1) editorial articles; 2) articles by newspaper columnists; 3) brief comments; 4) editor's notes; 5) comments to columns [9]. In our opinion, all proposed classifications are devoid of the linguistic basis and do not offer criteria for genre differentiation of the news commentary among other news genres.

Therefore, the purpose of this work is to identify the regularities of the structural and compositional organization of the news commentary and the features of its verbalization, which are one of the main differentiating features of the news commentary genre, allowing to identify similarities and differences between news commentaries on the material of the Chinese and British press.

Research results and discussion. News texts in general, which dominate quantitatively in the mass media, exist as a number of varieties – genres in which certain models of cognitive activity are fixed, adequate to specific communicative situations and understandable to everyone. Possessing a number of stable features that can be considered as a «working tool of the author» who explores reality, <…> as a set of type-forming features» [10]: the subject (content); the function (target setting to reflect reality for a particular cognizing consciousness); the method; as well as formal features: the nature of narration (the method of presenting information in the text); the role of the fact; aesthetic fixation of the author's modality (the role of the author); structural and compositional features; stylistic devices, genres are subject to classification, and such a feature as the structural and compositional organization plays an important role.

Based on this criterion, some linguists distinguish between texts built on obligatory or usual informative models and non-regulated texts [11, p. 116]; genres with a closed, rigidly fixed structure (law) and with a relatively free, open structure (article) [12, p. 28]. As we can see, in the listed typologies there is an opposition between the genres of phatic speech and the genres of informative speech. But in our opinion, it is the structural-compositional criterion that is fundamental in determining the genre, since such characteristics as intentionality, the choice of language means and the way the material is presented to the reader cannot, as we believe, be reliable parameters for genre modeling, since they are due to subjectivity of a reader's perception and interpretation of the text.

In this article, we turn to the study of the structural and compositional organization of such a genre as the news commentary, which is a culturally, socially, situationally determined type of text with a certain structural and linguistic organization and a focus on the analysis of information previously reported in the press and the impact on the addressee.

The practical analysis based on 100 news commentaries in the Chinese newspaper «Guangming» and 100 news commentaries in the British newspaper «The Guardian» showed the following results. In their structure in Chinese and English, news commentaries have such compositional elements as the title, the lead, the main body, which is represented by 1) the reference to a news event, 2) the author's reflection on the news, and 3) the conclusion. But we have noted that in Chinese news commentaries the lead may be omitted while in English ones the lead is always present. Besides, there is one more element in the main body – the latest development in the news event, which is not typical of English news commentaries. Let's consider the following examples:

The title: «被殴打至产生不可逆损伤, 谁来保护 "少年的Ta"» [13].

The lead: none

The main body: 1) the reference to a news event: «一群女孩手脚并用, 殴打另一名女孩, 还将其推入小河中, 并举起手机录制视频; 被打女孩上身可见伤痕, 跪在地上向施暴者说 "对不起" ...... 这是近日在网上流传的一个视频» [13];

2) the latest development in the news event: «这起霸凌事件已经造成了恶劣的后果. 被打女孩左耳鼓膜穿孔, 眼睛有异物插入, 造成了视力下降, 属不可逆的损伤. 目前, 海南省临高县教育局已对此事展开调查学校已对受害学生进行了探望公安部门正在尝试协助双方家属处理后续事宜» [13];

3) the author's reflection on the news:

«但是, 在此之前必须要追问的是: 事情是怎么发展到如此严重的地步的? 假如视频没有曝光, 女孩能向谁求助?» [13];

"从学校看, 被打女孩连续被控制人身自由6天, 老师没有发觉和作出反应吗? 从社会看, 视频显示暴力行为发生在户外, 在这 6 天里, 有没有人发现? 发现之后是否采取了措施? 此外,

如此严重的霸凌不可能突然发生,在此之前,施暴者是否已经与被打女孩发生过矛盾冲突? 学校有没有及时介入?" [13];

4) the conclusion: *«就目前的信息来看, 这场延续6天的欺凌竟然无声无息,没有任何一个人、任何一个组织发觉并报告,让人遗憾. 被欺凌者令人心疼, 施暴者则令人心痛.谁来保护被欺凌者? 谁来引导施暴者走出暴力? 针对未成年人的保护措施又是如何集体失灵的? 一个个问号亟待拉直, 当地有关部门应当以详尽的调查来回应社会关切, 并严肃追责,尽快堵上未成年人保护网上的漏洞»* [13].

Thus, we see that in Chinese news commentaries the compositional structure has such elements as the title, the lead (in the example above it is omitted), the main body which includes four elements which come one after another.

Let's consider an example of an English news commentary:

The title: *«A tragic accident should not have landed Auriol Grey in prison. The UK justice system is stuck in the dark ages»* [14].

The lead: *«The UK's obsession with jail time is counterproductive and cruel. There are better ways to deal with wrongdoing»* [14].

The main body:

1) the reference to a news event: *«Auriol Grey, <...>, was walking along a footpath in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, and was infuriated to see a bicycle coming towards her. She waved her arm at it, <...>, lose her balance and fall into the road, where she was hit by a passing car and died. An act of what <...> was followed by a terrible accident. Grey is now serving three years in prison for manslaughter»* [14];

2) the author's reflection on the news: *«Britain's judicial system is obsessed <...>. Prison conditions are so bad that a Dutch court refused to extradite a convict to Britain on grounds of its "inhumane" jails.*

Rishi Sunak is this week unveiling new community punishments for those who break the law, but he might first inquire into why these have failed in the past. <...>

Opposition to asbos led the Cameron government in 2014 to replace them <...>».

Always in the background has been the threat of prison. <...> [14];

3) the conclusion: *«Over half of British prisoners on short sentences now reoffend soon after release; <...>. One reason is that, for many people, any prison sentence renders them unemployable. It is effectively for life. Jails should be for rehabilitation or public protection. They are no deterrent or they would not be full.*

It is impossible to see what public good is served by imprisoning Grey. Deterrents cannot prevent accidents; we can only see what lessons can be drawn <...>. As for punishment, modern penal theory is built round <...>» [14].

It is noteworthy that in both language versions of the news commentary, the composition has the constant structure without changing the sequence, like, for example, in the event note, whose body of the text can be built on the principle of an inverted pyramid and begin with the summarizing lead containing the most important information about the event (answers to the questions «What? Who? Where? When? Why?») [15, p. 36]. The difference lies in the additional compositional element in the Chinese news commentary – the latest development in the news event, which concentrates on the details of the news itself.

Further analysis of the structural and compositional organization of the news commentary on the material of the Chinese and English-language press made it possible to single out its superstructure in the genre under study, which organizes the semantic structure of the news commentary and is an intermediate level between the macrostructure and the compositional structure of the text, which is presented as the surface structure.

In this work, we follow the cognitive-communicative approach and consider the structure of the news commentary as the semantic structure, or the add-on that has the following model: PNAcC, where P is a problem caused by a particular event, N is the news related to the problem and previously covered in the media, Ac – the author's commentary on news events and their consequences, C – conclusion. Thus, we see that in the superstructure of the news commentary on the material of the Chinese and English languages, four semantic components are distinguished, which are part of its structure in 100 % of cases and form the prototypical structure of the news commentary. Consider the following examples:

P: *«考公"巡考"? 机会成本得算清*

考完国考考上海,考完上海考江苏,考完江苏考浙江...... 能报考的省考轮着考一遍. 这并不理性,更像是 "抓到篮子都是菜" 的盲目赶考.

考到哪算哪我们把全国的公务员岗考一遍<...>近日, 这一句"巡考宣言" 成为社交媒体上的热议话题 据报道, 相关话题下, <...>.

考公 "巡考" 的出现, 折射当前高校毕业生面临的严峻就业形势. 对此, 有人提议<...>» [16].

N: «考公热近年来高烧不退, 其中不乏盲目跟风者. 据报道, 2023 年度国考计划招录3,71万人, 有近260万人报名过审, 而报名确认人数为194,8 万人. 实际参加考试人数与录用计划数之比约为,<...>. 实际参考人数为,<...>. 从中可见, 有不少报名者在报名时并没有真正想好,<...>» [16].

Ac: «各地省考, 为选择考公的学生提供了考试机会, <...>. 但不得不说, "巡考" 并非理性选择, <...>.

有的高校毕业生就此成为<...>, 在考研和考公都没 "上岸" 后, 再进入<...>» [16].

C: «总之, 高校应该引导毕业生理性定位, 在评估自己的实力之后, 确定适合自己的择业目标, 不能把择业的希望维系在考公这一条道上. 另外, 高校要努力<...>» [16].

As we can see from the Chinese news commentary above, the problem is outlined in the title and the lead. The discourse markers of this component of the prototypical structure of the Chinese-language news commentary are the phrases «evaluative adjective + common noun +verb» naming the problem: *irrational, holding a blind test, opportunity cost, consider, take*, etc. The discursive markers of the «news» component are event verbs, adverbs of time, personal pronouns, lots of quantifiers: *«The upsurge of applying for civil servants has been very high **in recent years**, and there are many blind followers among **them**. According to reports, **37,100 people** will be recruited in the 2023 national examination plan, and nearly **2,6 million people** have **signed up** for the review. The ratio of the number of **people** who **pass** the qualification review to the number of recruits planned is about **70:1**. The number of confirmed applicants was **1,948 million**, the actual number of references was **1,525 million**, and nearly **1,1 million candidates** gave up taking the exam after the registration was approved. It can be seen from this that **many applicants** did not really **decide** whether they need to **take** the civil service examination when they signed up, but just signed up first <...>»*.

The discursive markers of the author's analysis in Chinese news commentaries are mostly action verbs, expressive-evaluative adjectives, nouns and adverbs, comparative constructions, which gives the opportunity to the addressee to see the author's analysis of the current situation, which is seen in the following example:

«各地省考, 为选择考公的学生提供了考试机会, 这也就让 "巡考" 成为一种可能. 但不得不说, "巡考" 并非理性选择, 这既增加自己的考试成本, 也会付出择业的机会成本 — 花这么多时间参加国考、省考 "巡考", 如果最终还是没有 "上岸", 会错过其他就业机会.

有的高校毕业生就此成为"就业困难户", 3 月之前都在考研、考公, 没有时间去人才市场, 也没有好好准备求职简历, 在考研和考公都没 "上岸" 后, 再进入人才市场择业. 而这个时候, 不少同学已经和用人单位签订就业协议了» [16].

From the example above we can see that the author's commentary is filled with the comparison and evaluation, besides there we see the author's opinion which is marked with the personal pronoun *I* together with the modal word *have to* and the verb of saying.

The final component of the structure of the Chinese-language news commentary is the conclusion, which is the result of the author's analysis of the news event in combination with advice what should be done to deal with the existing problem. At the language level in the Chinese-language news commentary this component is marked in most cases by verbs of action in the present and future tenses, modal verb *should*, which expresses advice. Let's consider the following example:

«总之, 高校应该引导毕业生理性定位, 在评估自己的实力之后, 确定适合自己的择业目标, 不能把择业的希望维系在考公这一条道上. 另外, 高校要努力拓宽毕业生就业渠道, 通过校领导走访企业, 获得更多人才订单, 以及创新促进大学生就业方式, 如线上线下相结合组织人才招聘会、开展 "直播带人" 等毕业生推荐活动, 等等, 为高校毕业生提供除考公、考编之外的其他就业选择» [16].

Such a conclusion sounds straightforward and detailed. Besides, in the conclusion we often come across a lot of questions.

Further analysis of the English-language commentaries has shown that the components of the prototypical structure of the news commentary are a little different from the Chinese ones:

P: «<...>David Carrick, the officer <...> as he pursued a parallel career as a prolific sex of-fender<...>: dozens of rapes and sexual offences against 12 women, over two decades, including imprisoning one of his victims, naked and terrified, in a tiny cupboard under the stairs <...>» [17].

N: «You read of David Carrick, the officer who kept his uniform, his badge and, for many years, his gun even as he pursued a parallel career <...>, and of course you are sickened by the evil he has done: dozens of rapes and sexual offences against 12 women, over two decades, <...>» [17].

Ac: «The horror is familiar. We felt it when another serving Met officer, Wayne Couzens, raped and murdered Sarah Everard in 2021. <...>. The pattern is so clear that <...>. So what can be done? <...>» [17].

C: «There are remedies, starting with a system that investigates the suspect instead of the vic-tim rather than <...>. But the first step will be <...>. Yes, we should tear down and replace the Met <...>. It lies within» [17].

As we can see from the English news commentary, the problem is outlined in the title and the lead, too. The discourse markers of this component of the prototypical structure of the English-language news com-mentary are the phrases «evaluative adjective + common noun» naming the problem: *rotten justice system, striking workers, excess death rates, etc.* As for the discursive markers of the «news» component, they are event verbs, verbs of reading, writing and speaking in combination with nouns denoting the heroes of the news event, the event itself, which was previously reported in the media, adverbs of place and time.

Both in Chinese and English news commentaries we are dealing with the news core of the genre under study, which is further surrounded by the analytical context, which allows us to speak about a two-layer structure of the news commentary genre, where a news event that stimulates the raising and coverage of a more global topic is layered on the analytical context with subsequent author's conclusions.

The discursive markers of the next component of the prototypical structure of the English news commentary – the author's analysis – are action verbs, modal verbs *can, could, may, might*, expressive-evaluative adjectives, nouns and adverbs, comparative and superlative adjectives, com-parative constructions, cardinal numerals, which together provide the addressee with an analytical picture of the whole situation, as in the following example:

*«But through the fog of **disruption** and **crisis made worse** by industrial action, something **is emerging** that **is posing** a potent **counterargument** to the **anti-strike sentiment** so **deeply embedded** both in British political culture and legislation. **Strikes have come** at a time when the old regime **is dying**, but another has not yet **taken its place** – now is the time of **monsters**, as the quote goes. But it **could** also be a time of **breakthrough**.*

*<...> The government is a **mardy mess**, **veering** between **long periods of absence and sudden bursts of pugnaciousness**. Labour, on the other hand, takes the moral **high** ground, but is absent on the actual ground. Starmer **rightly points out** that the nurses' **strike is a "badge of shame"** for the government, but then **bans** frontbench Labour MPs from showing **active support for the strikes**»* [18].

The final component of the structure of the English-language news commentary is the conclu-sion, which is the result of the author's analysis of the news event in combination with the existing problem, at the language level in the English-language news commentary is marked in most cases by verbs of being in the present and future tenses, modal verbs *should* and *would*, which express advice and / or the subjunctive mood, as well as nominations of the existing problem and conclu-sions in combination with expressive-evaluative lexemes. Consider the following example:

*«When there **are** no real **solutions** on offer, that unfulfilled sense of **common cause** can be-come welded in **a furnace of frustration**, and then used as a tool **to hammer** politicians. For too long, British politics has **successfully** operated on <...> **the blessed** and **the unfortunate** than there **is** proximity; <...>, **striking workers** <...>, because they **are** somehow **responsible** for their **mis-fortune**. It's **a powerful illusion**. But when there are more **losers** than **winners**, it **could be an illu-sion** that is **ripe for piercing**»* [18].

In the example above, we see the addresser summing up his analysis, reflecting on the lack of real solutions from British politicians regarding unemployment, stating disappointment in the current system.

Conclusion. Thus, having studied news commentaries on the material of non-closely related lan-guages – Chinese and English – we have identified the features of their compositional and structural or-ganization. Chinese news commentaries practically have the same compositional structure as English ones: the heading, the lead and the main body, consisting of the reference to a news event, the author's

reflection on the news and the conclusion. But in Chinese news commentaries the lead may be missing, so it's not the constant element of the composition. Besides, the Chinese news commentary has such an element as the latest development in the news event, which is not typical of the English one.

The structural specifics of news commentaries in both language variants is represented by the model *PNAcC*, where P is a problem caused by a particular event, N is the news related to the problem and previously covered in the media, Ac – the author's commentary on news events and their consequences, C – conclusion. The practical analysis has shown that in the superstructure of the news commentary on the material of the Chinese and English languages the four semantic components are the same and form the prototypical structure of the news commentary. The features of verbalization of the components of the prototypical structure of the genre under study are as follows: they have different discursive markers which sometimes coincide like in the use of comparative constructions in *the author's analysis,* the modal verb *should*, future tenses in *the conclusion* as well as expressive-evaluative lexics. On the other hand, the verbalization of the components of the prototypical structure of the news commentary in both languages has differences, which have been identified and presented above.

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