



Melodramatic Profiles of Chilean Newscasts: The Case of Emotionalization

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Introduction

Since the 1970s, many authors have described, criticized, and debated the way journalistic news coverage, particularly television news, has devolved from informing about socially relevant events into news programming that focuses on easy, entertaining, and superficial topics. Several authors have referred to this process with terms such as *videomalaise* (Robinson, 1975, quoted in Mutz & Reeves, 2005); *infotainment* (Watson & Hill, 2003, p. 140, quoted in Lozano, 2004), and *tabloidization* (Blumler & Gurevitch, 1995; Gripsrud, 2000; McManus, 1994, quoted in Uribe & Gunter, 2007).

Such concepts refer to the excessive coverage of events with scarce social relevance (e.g., sports and show business), the simplification of relevant events by focusing on personal stories, and the exacerbation of emotion through rhetorical procedures such as close-ups and music.

These ways of treating news can be linked to melodrama's characteristics as described by various Latin American authors (e.g., Aprea & Soto, 1998; Fuenzalida, Corro & Mujica, 2009; Hernlinghaus, 2002; Martín-Barbero, 1987; Mazziotti, 1995; Monsiváis, 2000; Mujica, 2010): archetypal characters that represent the struggle of good versus evil, pathetic enunciation and pain's visual representation, the inclusion of rhetorical figures of excess, music aimed at increasing the audience's emotional attachment, and focalization on the personal and on characters' domestic struggles.

Scholars like Uribe and Gunter (2007) suggest that this type of coverage undermines the press's role to illuminate democratic societies (McManus, 1994). Other authors consider these processes to be inseparable elements of audiovisual language that can work as tools to attract the audience to relevant events (Macdonald, 2000).

This scenario posits questions about the presence of such melodramatic coverage in Chile. This article considers the exacerbation of emotion in four Chilean prime-time newscasts.¹ Through content analysis, the authors seek to identify the melodramatic profile of each newscast and to determine which elements are most commonly used in Chilean television. Such an examination allows an evaluation of the pertinence of these conceptualizations in the Chilean case by measuring emotionalization features in the current local television journalism.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review ***From Melodrama to the Melodramatic***²

Modern melodrama is a genre that became widespread and industrially produced and distributed through 19th-century French theater. Its main characteristic is the representation of a “moral polarization and schematization” (Brooks, 1995, p. 11) in which archetypal characters (e.g., the maiden, the son, the mother, the villain, the lovers) represent the triumph of good over evil.

In formal terms, melodrama is characterized by emotional exacerbation through hyperbole and rhetorical resources such as music. The genre complements pathetic enunciation—which seeks to stir emotion in the public based on the terror and compassion caused by the characters’ suffering—with the detailed portrayal of that pain (Aprea & Soto, 1998; Gledhill, 1987).

Martín-Barbero (1987) highlights this in his analysis of television and telenovelas, although his characterization of the genre includes features that are also perceptible in other so-called less frivolous³ audiovisual productions, such as author films and long-format journalistic pieces, that use melodrama’s rhetoric of excess and its focus on the personal and the domestic. These types of productions do not fit easily into a fixed definition of the genre; they are not necessarily telenovelas or tearjerkers, but melodramatic traits are frequently present in them (Herlinghaus, 2002; Mujica, 2010). These considerations allow for a more flexible consideration of the limits of the genre and permit the tracing of these features in cultural products that seek to inform audiences rather than entertain them, like television journalism, the focus of this study.

Melodrama in Television Journalism: Personalization and Emotionalization

Literature suggests that there are two central melodramatic traits: personalization—the informative focus on the private/personal/concrete over the public/social/abstract (Macdonald, 2000; Schulz & Zeh, 2005)—and emotionalization—information about emotions and their exacerbation through audiovisual rhetorical resources that appeal to senses and empathy over the ability to reason (Grabe,

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² Segments of this section have been taken from the first author’s doctoral dissertation (Mujica, 2010).

³ Melodrama has often been considered by film and literary criticism as superficial and uncritical mass entertainment (Frye, 1991; Smith, 1973).

Zhou, & Barnett, 2001; Grabe, Zhou, Lang, & Bolls, 2000). This article focuses on the second trait, emotionalization, which is the most commonly mentioned in the literature to characterize the melodramatic genre.

A first consideration in this regard is the definition of emotion, which has been studied from multiple theoretical frameworks and areas of knowledge. Some scholars use indistinctly the terms *emotion* and *affect*, while others distinguish these concepts as well as other notions such as emotionality, emotional state, feeling, and mood (Abelson, Kinder, Peters, & Fiske, 1982; Bachmann, 2011; Bucy & Grabe, 2008; Ekman, 1984; Glaser & Salovey, 1998; Marcus, 2000; Scherer, 2005; White, 1999). Based on Shields' (2002) work, this study understands emotion as a short-term adaptive response that does not result from deliberation or reflection and, because of that, does not necessarily have the most advantageous consequences in the long term (Mesquita & Markus, 2004; Shields, 2002; Tomkins, 1984, 1991).

Following Wierzbicka (1999), this study assumes that emotions are expressed at every level and in any language: grammar, tone, facial gestures, and body gestures—that is, hand movements, tears, laughter. The current study also adopts Wierzbicka's classification of emotion to identify emotions displayed and described in the information provided by the narrator and sources' discourse, tone, and gestures.⁴

Past research also links the following audiovisual resources to exacerbation of the emotional intensity of television contents:

1. Dramatic musicalization—that is, music added through montage to connote the emotional state of characters or a dramatic circumstance (Fuenzalida et al., 2009).
2. Video maneuvers that break canons of realist audiovisual representation such as slow or fast motion, and color modifications, which the literature links to an appeal to sensationalism (Grabe et al., 2000, 2001).
3. Camera movements such as zooming in—closing in on objects and characters without moving the camera—and, with opposite effect, zooming out, panning, and tilts (Aumont & Marie, 1990; Russo, 2003).

Even if emotional experience is personal, emotional expression is subject to social control (Rodríguez-Mosquera, Fischer, & Manstead, 2004), to the point that emotions become relevant and have relational meaning in the context of people's social life (Thoits, 2004; Wierzbicka, 1999). In this sense, what is understood as the correct or natural emotion to express in a given situation depends on each

⁴ Wierzbicka's (1999) classification is: (a) something good happened (e.g., joy, happiness, satisfaction); (b) something bad happened (e.g., sadness, sorrow, despair); (c) something bad can/will happen (e.g., fear, angst, terror); (d) I don't want this to happen (e.g., anger, rage); (e) thinking about other people (e.g., envy, compassion, admiration); and (f) thinking about ourselves (e.g., embarrassment, pride, remorse). These categories were used because they broadly include Ekman's (1984) traditional division, but with identifying features that were easier for coders.

society, and what might be considered as totally adequate in one culture can be seen as inappropriate in another (Planalp, 1999). To recognize some of these social conditions in the case of Chilean journalism, this study considered the rules and rulings of the Chilean National Television Council and the Media Ethics Council as well as the literature recommended by members of these institutions. This allowed for the identification of some standards shared by professional institutions in Chile regarding the functionality of the description and representation of emotions for action in society (Gronemeyer, 2008); emotion as an element of closeness and proximity (Antezana, 2009); and emotion as the spectacularization of information (Alessandri, 2011; Consejo de Ética de los Medios, 2010; Gronemeyer, 2008, 2011; Oyanedel & Alarcón, 2010).

Criticism on the Use of Melodramatic Features in Journalism

When it comes to melodrama in news, the most pervasive belief is that a dramatic coverage of news undermines the press's role to illuminate democratic societies (McManus, 1994, quoted in Uribe & Gunter, 2007). The achievement of entertainment goals through the selection of sensationalist stories or through production maneuvers can depict more colorful news—yet not necessarily more informative news (Blumler & Gurevitch, 1995).

García Avilés (2007) argues that a spectacle-oriented approach to socially relevant events is detrimental to the commitments to generate a debate on the issues that affect citizens and to construct a public space open to the expression of different social sectors. Along these lines, for instance, Condeza (2005a, 2005b) criticized the use of melodramatic features in coverage of youth.

The use of melodramatic resources in television journalism is not to be taken lightly, considering that it might have consequences for the way in which audiences understand and interpret news content. Empirical evidence suggests that melodramatic stories diminish the public's capacity to recall information and their understanding of complex issues (Milburn & McGrail, 1992) and can result in faulty information (Grabe et al., 2000; Prior, 2003).

Other authors defend the use of melodramatic elements, arguing that these features might contain contextual information and informed references to political processes. Audiences learn from entertainment and soft news programs in a different fashion than they do from hard news. Learning would be oriented toward attitude change rather than factual knowledge (Kim & Vishak, 2008; Moy, Xenos, & Hess, 2005; Young, 2004) given soft news's appeal to emotions over intellect (Fuenzalida, 2002; Puente, 1997).

Such debate posits questions over the incidence of melodramatic coverage in Chilean television. This article presents the results of a content analysis that measures the presence of emotional melodramatic elements in prime-time newscasts in Chilean over-the-air television with nationwide coverage.

One of these networks is Televisión Nacional (which can be broadly considered as similar to public service television). It is a state-owned public broadcaster, autonomously governed and financed through advertising (Fuenzalida, 2000). Its state ownership makes it possible to link it to the European television

model, and its bylaws set its mission as the usual triad of information, education, and entertainment. However, this network does not receive state funding (other than special grants open to all networks, so it depends heavily on advertisement and commercial financing strategies).

Another examined network is Canal 13, which at the beginning of this research project was owned by the Catholic University, and in that sense it assumed public service functions (Godoy, 2000). In August 2010, 66% of the network was sold to private hands, while the university maintained a 33% stake in the ownership. The other two channels, MEGA and Chilevisión, are commercial, privately owned broadcasters.

This project explores the use of emotional resources in these networks' prime-time newscasts. The goal is to identify the melodramatic profiles and to determine which are the emotionalizing elements most frequently used in Chilean television journalism.

Methods

This study is based on a quantitative content analysis, a technique through which the meaning of certain messages—in this case, television news stories—is examined to extract accurate and generalizable inferences (Neuendorf, 2002). The analysis included the prime-time newscasts of the four main over-the-air television channels in Chile: Televisión Nacional de Chile (TVN), the functional equivalent of the public television model; Canal 13 (C13), which was university-owned at the beginning of the study and currently is controlled by private hands (66% of ownership); and Chilevisión (CHV) and MEGA, both commercial channels. The unit of analysis was each news story, defined as a single information content unit delimited by changes in format or topic.

The codebook included identification items—broadcaster, story length, date, and topic—and several emotionalization items: tone of the narrator, emotional information provided by the narrator (that is, the reporter), tone of the sources (every person other than the journalist or the news anchor shown speaking on camera), emotional information provided by the sources, emotional gestures of the sources, camera movement, image repetition, use of soft focus, color change, distortion, zoom-in, zoom-out, panning, dramatic literalization through music, and the total number of adjectives per story.

Six coders, including a research assistant, independently coded the sample. A preliminary intercoder reliability test revealed some confusion among coders, especially regarding sports news, so the coding instructions and the codebook had to be amended. A final intercoder reliability test, based on 10% of the sample, resulted in satisfactory levels of agreement. Cohen's kappa calculations for categorical variables ranged between 0.61 and 1.0, values that indicate substantial agreement among coders and are thus acceptable (Viera & Garrett, 2005, p. 362). For the numerical variable, number of adjectives, intercoder reliability was measured as a determination coefficient (Pearson's correlation, $r = .86$), used by researchers to measure covariation instead of agreement. Instances of precise agreement among coders were unlikely, and thus covariation was a more adequate criterion (Neuendorf, 2002, pp. 151–153).

The sample included two periods: one constructed week from the first half of 2009 and another constructed week from the first six months of 2011. This resulted in 1,217 stories and 4,043 news sources; 532 stories correspond to the 2009 sample and 685 to the 2011 sample.

Results

Of the 1,217 stories analyzed, 283 were from TVN, 342 from Canal 13, 285 from MEGA, and 307 from CHV. MEGA had the longest stories (137 seconds on average); while Canal 13 stories were the shortest (109 seconds on average). The most frequent topics were sports (29.3%), internal order (19.1%), social sectors (9.1%), and national politics (6.1%). The rank-order of these topics was similar in all of the channels included in the sample, although MEGA privileged accidents over national politics (6.3% versus 3.9% of its stories) and TVN broadcasted more stories about national politics than about social sectors (8.8% and 7.1%, respectively).

In general terms, the tone of the narrator was mostly informative (72.8% of stories), followed by a passionate tone (24.6% of stories). In the case of the sources, the proportion of passionate tones was higher (35.9%), though the informative tone prevailed (61.3%). In almost a third of all stories (30.4%), the narrator rather than the sources delivered information about emotions, with a similar proportion of positive and negative emotions (14.4% and 16.0%, respectively). In the case of the sources, the delivery of information about emotions was higher than in the narrator's case (39.5%). The analysis of the gestures of the sources reveals that slightly more than a third of the news sources (36.5%) delivered emotional information through body language (see Table 1).

Table 1. General Distribution and Channel Breakdown of Emotionalization Through Story Narrator and Sources in Chilean Newscasts.

| Emotionalization resource | TVN (% of stories) | Canal 13 (% of stories) | MEGA (% of stories) | CHV (% of stories) | Total (% of stories) | Significance |
|---|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| Narrator's passionate tone | 27.6 | 22.2 | 28.3 | 22.8 | 24.6 | n.s. |
| Information about positive emotions by the narrator | 15.5 | 15.2 | 16.8 | 10.1 | 14.4 | n.s. |
| Information about negative emotions by the narrator | 12.7 | 14.6 | 16.8 | 19.9 | 16.0 | n.s. |
| Sources' passionate tone | 36.7 | 37.2 | 35.2 | 34.9 | 35.9 | n.s. |
| Information about positive emotions by sources | 17.1 | 19.9 | 18.1 | 15.9 | 17.6 | $p < .01$ |
| Information about negative emotions by sources | 18.3 | 22.7 | 19.7 | 23.9 | 21.6 | $p < .01$ |
| Sources' positive emotional gestures | 15.8 | 17.7 | 17.6 | 13.1 | 15.8 | $p < .05$ |
| Sources' negative emotional gestures | 19.2 | 19.4 | 20.7 | 22.7 | 20.7 | $p < .05$ |

A breakdown by network shows different emotionalization profiles. Even though the proportion of stories with a narrator with a passionate tone and of stories with emotional information provided by the narrator were similar in all newscasts, CHV's sources provided significantly more negative emotional information, while in Canal 13 they favored positive emotions ($\chi^2 = 19.16$, $df = 6$, $p < .01$). The emotional body language of the sources also varied among the newscasts. For example, CHV tended to include a higher proportion of sources that showed negative emotions through their gestures, and it also was the channel less likely to include positive emotional gestures ($\chi^2 = 15.33$, $df = 6$, $p < .05$).

The use of audiovisual resources related to the exacerbation of emotion was more varied. Even though 38.5% of stories included changes in camera speed (slow motion and fast motion), and over a fifth included image repetition, soft focus and color change were used in less than 10% of stories. Distortion was used in only four stories (0.3% of the entire sample).

The use of emotional exacerbation resources also varied from one newscast to another. Even though a comparison based on the additive index of audiovisual resources did not show significant differences between channels ($F = 1.031$, $df = 3$, n.s., ANOVA), an analysis of each of the resources analyzed revealed different emotionalization patterns (see Table 2).

For example, CHV used image repetition and zoom-in in 29.6% and 89.9% of its stories, respectively, which was significantly more than the other newscasts, especially in comparison to Canal 13 ($\chi^2 = 38.34$, $df = 3$, $p < .001$; and $\chi^2 = 32.78$, $df = 3$, $p < .001$, respectively). Canal 13 was more likely to use zoom-outs and panning, in 63.7% and 89.5% of its stories, respectively ($\chi^2 = 21.59$, $df = 3$, $p < .001$; and $\chi^2 = 25.37$, $df = 3$, $p < .001$). TVN stories had a significantly higher proportion of changes in camera speed (50.6% of its stories; $\chi^2 = 11.79$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$). All of the newscasts opted for color change in relatively similar frequencies, and in the entire sample there were only four cases of image distortion, three of them in CHV and one in MEGA.

Table 2. Distribution of Audiovisual Emotionalization Resources in Chilean Newscasts by Channel.

| Emotionalization resources | TVN (% of stories) | Canal 13 (% of stories) | MEGA (% of stories) | CHV (% of stories) | Total (% of stories) | Significance |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Changes in camera speed | 49.5 | 33.3 | 33.0 | 39.4 | 38.5 | $p < .001$ |
| Image repetition | 19.4 | 11.1 | 26.0 | 29.6 | 21.2 | $p < .05$ |
| Soft focus | 7.4 | 3.8 | 8.4 | 10.7 | 7.5 | $p < .01$ |
| Color change | 6.0 | 7.0 | 7.0 | 6.5 | 6.7 | n.s. |
| Distortion | 0 | 0 | 0.4 | 1.0 | 0.3 | n.s. |
| Zoom-in | 88.0 | 75.1 | 79.3 | 89.9 | 82.8 | $p < .001$ |
| Zoom-out (rev)* | 23.7 | 36.3 | 25.3 | 21.5 | 27.0 | $p < .001$ |
| Panning (rev)* | 5.7 | 10.5 | 5.3 | 1.3 | 5.8 | $p < .001$ |
| Inclusion of music that literalizes emotions | 13.4 | 7.6 | 11.2 | 9.8 | 10.4 | n.s. |

* The presence of zoom-outs and panning is considered an attenuation of emotionalization, so these variables were reversed coded. Thus, the number reported represents the percentage of stories *without* these resources.

A breakdown by story topic also suggests different patterns of emotionalization. Stories about sports were more likely to favor a passionate tone from the narrator, changes in camera speed, and zoom-ins, while stories about accidents relied more often on the narrator reporting about negative emotions. Stories about internal order used music literalization and soft focus more frequently (see Table 3).

CHV had the higher mean number of adjectives per story, significantly higher than two other channels. In turn, TVN included the least number of adjectives per story on average. While CHV averaged 7.75 adjectives per story, MEGA averaged 7.43, Canal 13 6.01, and TVN 5.59 ($F = 4.828$, $df = 3$, $p < .01$, ANOVA).

**Table 3. Distribution of Emotionalizing Audiovisual Resources
in Chilean Newscasts by Story Topic.**

| Emotionalization resources | Topic 1 (% of stories) | Topic 2 (% of stories) | Topic 3 (% of stories) | Topic 4 (% of stories) | Topic 5 (% of stories) | Topic 6 (% of stories) | Topic 7 (% of stories) | Topic 8 (% of stories) | Topic 9 (% of stories) | Topic 10 (% of stories) | Topic 11 (% of stories) | Significance |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| Passionate tone (narrator) | 6.8 | 4.3 | 11.6 | 14.8 | 30.0 | 18.9 | 4.3 | 24.0 | 44.1 | 28.3 | 21.9 | $p < .001$ |
| Information about positive emotions (narrator) | 1. | 4.3 | 1.7 | 18.5 | 6.7 | 9.0 | 4.3 | 2.7 | 26.4 | 40.0 | 16.1 | $p < .001$ |
| Information about negative emotions (narrator) | 10.8 | 8.5 | 20.7 | 13.3 | 16.7 | 25.2 | 8.7 | 41.3 | 10.4 | 1.7 | 15.5 | $p < .001$ |
| Passionate tone (sources) | 32.0 | 26.0 | 34.6 | 23.9 | 34.1 | 36.2 | 37.3 | 35.5 | 43.2 | 34.1 | 36.8 | $p < .001$ |
| Information about positive emotions (sources) | 13.8 | 19.5 | 4.3 | 17.2 | 5.7 | 11.0 | 16.9 | 6.4 | 30.6 | 48.4 | 22.3 | $p < .001$ |
| Information about negative emotions (sources) | 22.5 | 24.7 | 30.4 | 13.3 | 21.1 | 28.6 | 18.6 | 31.2 | 15.6 | 0.5 | 17.2 | $p < .001$ |

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|---------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------------|
| Positive emotional gestures (sources) | 7.1 | 14.3 | 2.1 | 17.9 | 8.1 | 11.9 | 15.3 | 4.6 | 26.6 | 46.2 | 22.3 | $p < .001$ |
| Negative emotional gestures (sources) | 20.9 | 10.4 | 32.7 | 17.9 | 25.2 | 26.4 | 17.8 | 29.1 | 13.0 | .0 | 15.7 | $p < .001$ |
| Changes in camera speed | 18.9 | 12.8 | 26.7 | 31.5 | 36.7 | 27.0 | 47.8 | 36.0 | 62.6 | 33.3 | 31.0 | $p < .001$ |
| Image repetition | 8.1 | 8.5 | 30.2 | 14.8 | 33.3 | 19.8 | 30.4 | 30.7 | 16.6 | 21.7 | 23.2 | $p < .001$ |
| Zoom-in | 77.0 | 66.0 | 85.8 | 77.8 | 90.0 | 84.7 | 82.6 | 70.7 | 87.9 | 76.7 | 81.9 | $p < .01$ |
| Zoom-out (rev)* | 27.0 | 31.9 | 28.0 | 20.4 | 20.0 | 22.5 | 26.1 | 25.3 | 30.1 | 23.3 | 26.5 | n.s. |
| Emotionally literal music | 66.7 | 25.0 | 51.9 | 25.0 | 37.5 | 63.0 | 33.3 | 64.3 | 23.5 | 11.1 | 43.1 | $p < .001$ |

Note. Topic 1 = national politics; Topic 2 = international politics; Topic 3 = internal order; Topic 4 = economy; Topic 5 = transportation; Topic 6 = social sectors; Topic 7 = society; Topic 8 = accidents; Topic 9 = sports; Topic 10 = culture and fashion; Topic 11 = other.

* The presence of zoom-outs is considered an attenuation of emotionalization, so this variable was reversed coded. Thus, the number reported represents the percentage of stories *without* this trait

Discussion

This study explores the inclusion of emotionalizing resources in prime-time newscasts on Chilean television. The results show that emotionalization is common, but not extensive, in Chilean newscasts. About a third of news stories from the analyzed channels included at least one emotionalizing resource.

However, adoption of these features is heterogeneous: not all stories included all emotionalizing resources, and their use was concentrated in two or three resources per story. The three most frequent resources were zoom-ins, changes in camera speed, and the use of music that literalizes emotion. Regarding information about emotions, the most common resources were the selection of sources that verbally deliver emotional information, that have a passionate tone, and that showcase negative emotions through their gestures.

There was a low level of intervention of images through resources such as soft focus and color change. This suggests a more naturalist audiovisual treatment of topics. This could be further explored in a more detailed look into the data.

It is possible to identify some patterns of emotionalization in the way the analyzed newscasts treat information. As was expected, TVN, the functional equivalent to a public service channel, maintained generally lower levels of emotionalization. However, it was one of the networks with the highest levels of passionate tone of the narrator, which can be explained by the station's high proportion of sports coverage (the highest in the sample). This perception is confirmed considering that TVN showed high levels of stories on internal order and politics, topics that do not lend themselves to a narration with a passionate tone, but the network had high levels of passionate tone of the sources as well as sources delivering information and gestures about negative emotions.

In the case of Canal 13, it is interesting to note the prominence of some emotionalization features, such as sources with a passionate tone, given the public service vision that the broadcaster historically recognized. However, it is necessary to remember that this analysis included data from 2009 and 2011, when the network was solely owned by a university. As such, future studies could evaluate whether there were significant differences after the change in ownership.

The results regarding CHV's newscast are in line with this broadcaster's news agenda and editorial principles. The results showed a high presence of negative emotions provided by both narrator and sources, which fits with a news agenda that prioritizes crime and stories on internal order. However, the data might appear inconsistent with the low levels of passionate tone of the narrator (in comparison to other channels). This can be explained by the fact that, even though CHV extensively covered crime stories—a staple feature of tabloidization—these stories were covered within the logics of what is considered serious journalism: more based on the factual and abstract side of the news than on highlighting emotions. For example, CHV's coverage of a car crash would include witnesses to say how, where, and why the accident happened, but would not expand on the victim's pain.

MEGA's results are even more consistent with what the literature understands as tabloid, popular, or commercial journalism and infotainment: passionate tone by the narrator, high provision of information about positive emotions by the sources, and emotional body language (negative and positive) of sources combined with moderate levels of image repetition, soft focus, and frequent use of adjectives. MEGA's news agenda was dominated by stories on internal order, social sectors, sports, and society.

In terms of the presence of emotionalization resources by topic, even if the expectation was that softer topics would be more emotional (and, in fact, that could explain TVN's emotionalization patterns, given its high coverage of sports), surprisingly, it was traditionally hard news topics such as the economy that tended to show higher levels of emotionalization. It is possible that this was an attempt by the newscasts to attract the audience's attention toward topics deemed more important.

These results serve to advance various lines of inquiry. One of them is the study of the procedures used in these broadcasters' newsrooms that might explain the use of these emotional exacerbation resources. Possible hypotheses in this sense are related to newspeople's perceptions of the public's interests, judgments about journalistic audiovisual language and newsworthiness criteria, and the professional training of these gatekeepers. The authors are already doing the fieldwork to shed some light on these issues.

Another issue stemming from these results has to do with the normative character of emotionalization. The limits established for its use and media considerations over the appropriateness of emotional expression have been set in professional and ethical codes. The assessment of what Chilean professional institutions have defined in this sense has more to do with situational evaluations—the discussion occurs only if a given situation seems worthy. Accordingly, these professional institutions' resolutions are related to the coverage of high-profile cases. The Media Ethics Council, for example, says that emotion has to be justified and that it has to be part of the information conveyed, not an unrelated addition to it. As such, the emotionalization phenomenon in newscasts also demands a qualitative analysis of stories to determine whether they follow these guidelines. Numbers, even if they provide valuable information, are not enough in this case.

It is also necessary to remember that emotions have a sociocultural character, which affects their modes of expression. In this sense, it is hard to determine whether the results show an exaggeration of emotional information by the newscasts or if they reflect the overall emotionalization patterns of Chileans' discourses. Answering this is beyond the scope of this study, but suggests possible future research, such as an experiment, which the authors are working on to establish the effects of emotional information in the evaluation, recall, and comprehension of news by local audiences.

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