

HARD NEWS REVISITED: A CASE STUDY OF VARIOUS APPROACHES TO AN INCIDENT AT A PRIMARY SCHOOL AS REFLECTED IN THE MEDIA

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ABSTRACT:

The study highlights various approaches to an incident at a primary school as reflected in the media. The authors analyze different media outputs and by using numerous examples prove the most important features of the news. They supplement their quantitative analysis with a qualitative analysis of the media outputs of selected news portals and focus on several key elements: title of the media output, content of the article, and signals of addressee orientation in the texts. The analysis is based on the comparison of the time of publication of the media output, the method of processing information and the headlines. Additionally, the study gives valuable information on the meaning of timeliness, conflict, proximity, and surprise. The research presents an exhaustive analysis of different forms of hard news production, forms of its reproduction, and media channels dividing media sources into three groups: news presented in serious portals, official sources, and tabloid news portals. Such an approach gives the opportunity to specify signals of addressee orientation in the headlines and the text body, typical of each media group. The results of the analysis vividly show what common and specific signals of addressee orientations in media sources, forming three groups – official, serious, and tabloids present hard news on their portals.

KEY WORDS:

emotional journalism, hard news, media market, media output, tabloid news portals, traditional and new media

1 Introduction

Media of all kinds play an important role in society. They have always been considered not only an important source of information but also of knowledge. Their function is to inform, educate, and entertain.¹ It is obvious

¹ See also: GÁLIK, S.: Philosophical Reflection of the Influence of Digital Media on Current Education. In *Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)*, 2020, Vol. 60, No. 1, p. 100-106; WIDERA, Z., SARNA, P.: *Komunikacja medialna placówek oświatowych jako instytucji usług publicznych – studium przypadku*. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego, 2015.

to everyone that the volume of produced and transmitted information is constantly growing. On the one hand, more information may mean a higher level of awareness, but on the other hand, it may cause informational chaos and, paradoxically, make access to the necessary information more difficult.² The same event is usually reported by several media, which often compete to publish information first or to bring new and interesting information. Moreover, the appearance of the Internet led to the creation of the united information space, a special virtual environment formed by a collection of many media streams.³ The Internet has created unlimited space and the ability to instantly update content, adding both text and audio-visual information.⁴ To differentiate themselves from competing media and to engage readers, journalists often use different ways of text processing, which includes not only an emphasis on the headlines but also on the overall way of processing media output.⁵

We expect media of any kind to bring us relevant and up-to-date information, which is important to us and thus satisfies our information needs. In addition, we expect certain forms of entertainment and relaxation from the media, which is reflected in the structure and content of broadcasting. As Gáliková Tolnaiová states, it can be generally accepted that content communicated through the media helps us understand the meaning of everyday life.⁶ Besides, Erofeeva and Ushnikova speak about modern mass media as of means of using efficient strategies which help spread media texts representing a national worldview by their ability to support sustainable cultural meaning and provoke a mass response from the target audience.⁷ Therefore, media are considered the 'mirror' of modern society; it is the media, which shapes our lives⁸ and molds public opinion.⁹

The audience often searches for information by entering keywords or accessing their content through social networks. Due to the number of different media on the media market, they have a choice of several alternatives and it can be assumed that several factors will have a huge influence. At the same time, readers often search not only for the information itself but also for content that will provide them with added value. These are photos, authentic videos, testimonies of witnesses or participants in events. All in all, as Levitskaya and Fedorov state, today, not only simple computers and smartphones but also modern TVs connected to the Internet, give users (based on their personal preferences) the opportunity for the individual choice of media texts.¹⁰ The role of the media is thus changing and the boundaries between the various types are gradually being blurred.

2 Media and Their Types

Let us start by considering different classifications of media. In terms of historical development, we can divide the media into two basic categories, namely traditional and new media. Both perform an important informative and entertaining function; the difference is mainly in the ratio of these two forms of media content, but especially in the way it is displayed, the scope and processing into the final form.

2 See also: MINÁRIKOVÁ, J., BLAHÚT, D., VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: Hi-Tech and Eye-Catching Alike: Information in the Multiplatform Era. In *European Journal of Media, Art & Photography*, 2020, Vol. 8, No. 2, p. 118-126; PORTER, T., POTCOVARU, A.-M., ZAUŠKOVÁ, A., ROWLAND, Z., GRUPAČ, M.: Smartphone Addiction Risk, Anxiety Symptom Severity, and Depression Psychopathology. In *Review of Contemporary Philosophy*, 2020, Vol. 19, p. 57-63.

3 Compare to: ČÁBYOVÁ, L., KRAJČOVIČ, P.: *The Role of SoLoMo Marketing and Media in the Communication of Eco-Innovations*. Budapest : Wolters Kluwer, 2020.

4 PITOŇÁKOVÁ, D.: Public Relations and Journalism. In *Communications: Scientific Letters of the University of Žilina*, 2012, Vol. 14, No. 1, p. 49-54.

5 See also: WIDERA Z.: Citizen Journalism – The Future Dilemma. In PETRANOVÁ, D., MAGÁL, S. (eds.): *Megatrends and Media – Critique in Media, Critique of Media*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2016, p. 203-205.

6 GÁLIKOVÁ TOLNAIOVÁ, S.: Media and Truth in the Perspective of the Practice and Life Form of the Modern "Homo Medialis". In *Communication Today*, 2019, Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 4-19.

7 EROFEEVA, I., USHNIKOVA, O.: Media Text Energy as Collective Cultural Memory Reflection. In *Lege Artis. Language Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, 2017, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 1-46.

8 PRIHODKO, A., PRAVDOVÁ, H., HUDÍKOVÁ, Z.: Evaluation of "Brexit" Phenomenon in Slovak and English Media Texts. In *Lege Artis. Language Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, 2020, Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 211-262.

9 STASHKO, H. et al.: Media Images of Slovak and Ukrainian Presidents: 'I/We' Binary Pronominal Opposition in Political Speeches. In *Lege Artis. Language Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, 2020, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 350-389.

10 LEVITSKAYA, A., FEDOROV, A.: Typology and Mechanisms of Media Manipulation. In *International Journal of Media and Information Literacy*, 2020, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 61.

Diachronically, traditional media that include newspapers, radio, and television are among the oldest, and therefore they also have the adjective "traditional". Because of their ability to reach a wide range of audiences, they are often referred to as mass media. At present, new or online media are often referred to as social media. In addition, according to Krajčovič and Čábyová, there exist non-traditional and specialized media, where the latter can be characterized as a combination of traditional and new media focused on specific areas.¹¹ In addition, Panasenko states that while considering different approaches to media sources classification, we must bear in mind that print, oral, and digitalized media (newspaper articles, radio commentaries, TV reportages, e-versions of journals, etc.) always have the text at the background of their output.¹²

It is worth noting that Dobrosklonskaya offers the following parameters of media text analysis: method of production (author's – collective); form of creation (oral – written); form of reproduction (oral – written); channel of propagation (mass media) – press, radio, TV, the Internet; functional and genre text type (news, commentary, features, advertisement), and thematic dominant (stable media topic).¹³

Concerning news authorship, pieces of information presented in media are often anonymous. Moreover, authorship is directly connected with the type of journalism and journalistic messages belonging to this or that type. Oral and written messages are connected to the channels of production and all journalistic messages can be attributed either to journalism of emotional or rational types. In this study we use the principle of journalistic messages subdivision belonging to journalism of the **rational type** (analytical journalism), journalism of the **emotional type**, and online journalism, specified by Panasenko,¹⁴ in choosing examples for our case study.

Stable media topics are connected not only with the type of media, but their quality, i.e. official and tabloid press. We have chosen media output from different sources. It is obvious that official statements of the incident we analyze belong to journalism of the rational type; whereas the texts abounding in emotively charged words can be found in tabloids or the so-called tabloid press. Thus, messages belonging to journalism of the emotional type attract their audience by various pieces of information, which are called hard and soft news.

3 Hard News, Soft News, and Media Sources

Turow mentions such typical features of hard news as timeliness, conflict, proximity, and surprise.¹⁵ Hard news is always connected with some disaster, for example murder, fire, flood, earthquake and, of course, war conflicts.¹⁶ The analysis of material conveying hard news shows that the events they describe in most cases imply victims and our illustrative material will prove it.

Some media inform about events that, apart from being novel, attract the target audience (viewers, readers or listeners) with the help of interesting facts from the social or personal lives of celebrities. Such pieces of information in journalism are called soft news, to which belong events in the social lives of famous people, their weddings, divorces, and the birth of their children.¹⁷

An article in *Encyclopædia Britannica* specifies the difference between hard and soft news. Hard news is usually connected with a recent event or incident considered to be of general local, regional, national or

11 See: KRAJČOVIČ, P., ČÁBYOVÁ, L.: *Mediálny trh a možnosti jeho inovácií*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2016.

12 PANASENKO, N.: Functional-Semantic Types of Speech in Journalistic Messages. In PETRANOVÁ, D., MAGÁL, S. (eds.): *Megatrends and Media: Critique in Media, Critique of Media*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2016, p. 52.

13 DOBROSKLONSKAYA, T. G.: *Medialinguistics: A Systematic Approach to the Study of the Language of the Media: Modern English Media*. Moscow : Flinta, 2008, p. 52.

14 PANASENKO, N.: Functional-Semantic Types of Speech in Journalistic Messages. In PETRANOVÁ, D., MAGÁL, S. (eds.): *Megatrends and Media: Critique in Media, Critique of Media*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2016, p. 53-55.

15 TUROW, J.: *Media Today: An Introduction to Mass Communication*. 4th Edition. London : Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2011, p. 305.

16 See more: PANASENKO, N., GROCHALOVÁ, P., GROCHALOVÁ, L.: 'War' as a Piece of Hard News in British and Slovak Media. In *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 2017, Vol. 13, No. 6, p. 87-100; PANASENKO, N., GREGUŠ, L., ZABUZHANSKA, I.: Conflict, Confrontation, and War Reflected in Mass Media: Semantic Wars, their Victors and Victims. In *Lege Artis. Language Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, 2018, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 132-163.

17 See more: PANASENKO, N., GROCHALOVÁ, P., GROCHALOVÁ, L.: Topic 'Wedding' in British and Slovak Journalism of Emotional Type. In *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 2018, Vol. 14, No. 3, p. 63-75.

international significance, or with such topics as cannibalism, terrorism, etc., whereas soft news is related to infotainment, tabloid journalism, stringer journalism, citizen journalism, embedded journalism, and market-centred journalism. Soft news usually centres on the lives of individuals and has little, if any, perceived urgency. Hard news generally concerns politics, economics, international relations, welfare, and scientific developments, whereas soft news focuses on human-interest stories and celebrities. Soft news is often presented by female journalists and is addressed to women.¹⁸ According to Stashko, possible reasons for that can be connected with emotionality, vulnerability and empathy, typical of women. Moreover, women understand other women better as they might experience similar stories in their lives, so they (female speakers) have a higher chance to manipulate the audience.¹⁹ Speaking about manipulation, it is also worth mentioning that different communicative devices function as effective manipulative instruments too. They can be operated to encourage, impose, or incite the reader/interlocutor to some particular desirable behaviour.²⁰ It, however, does not protect readers from media tilt and disinformation.²¹

When informing about these events, media sources try to provide information first, so they can consolidate the position of a leader. It is especially relevant to the news, where the individual media compete with each other.

However, the competition appears not only among different types of media channels (such as TV, radio, print media) but also among different types of media, which are shown in Table 3. As the specifics and specificities of television, radio broadcasting or periodicals do not allow information to be disseminated immediately, but only after their processing and subsequent inclusion in the broadcast (in the case of periodicals, the process is the longest, as it depends on printing, distribution, and sales of individual issues). The online media gain a competitive advantage and we share the opinion of Višňovský, who writes that we live in the era of the Internet with corresponding sequences.²²

It explains why today almost all media use social networks, through which information can be disseminated almost immediately and shared with a wide audience. In this way, we can monitor the different work of the media, the way they approach the processing of information, its dissemination and further updating.

Now let us discuss how the media market is presented in Slovakia and what channels of propagation are the most popular in disseminating information.

4 An Incident at the Primary School in Vrútky

On June 11, 2020 at around 10:00 a.m. there was an armed attack at the primary school in Vrútky, in which the perpetrator fatally injured one person and injured several other people. Vrútky is a town in central Slovakia, located in the Žilina Region, in the district of Martin. The Police of the Slovak Republic were the first to officially report the incident via the social network *Facebook*. In the report, the police published initial information about the attack at the primary school in Vrútky. They reported that one victim and the assailant were killed in the attack. Later they informed that the school staff must have been attacked by unknown men. They also published two photos from the crime scene.

18 Soft News. In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. [online]. [2020-10-18]. Available at: <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/soft-news>>.

19 STASHKO, H.: Phonetic and Syntactic Stylistic Means in Media Space: Manipulation or Emotional Commonplace? In *Communication Today*, 2018, Vol. 9, No. 2, p. 132-142.

20 See more: GNEZDILOVA, Ya.: Autonomous Metacommunicative Lexicon and Its Specifics in Manipulative Discourse. In *Lege Artis. Language Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, 2017, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 42-89; IZUTSU, K., IZUTSU, M. N.: Mental Gaze Monitoring and Form Manipulation: Distinct Conceptions of Language Production and Its Management. In *Lege Artis. Language Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, 2017, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 47-96; STASHKO, H.: Phonetic and Syntactic Stylistic Means in Media Space: Manipulation or Emotional Commonplace? In *Communication Today*, 2018, Vol. 9, No. 2, p. 132-142.

21 PANASENKO, N., MOROZOVA, O., GALKOWSKI, A., KRAJČOVIČ, P., KRYACHKOV, D., PETLYUCHENKO, N., SAMOKHINA, V., STASHKO, H., UBERMAN, A.: COVID-19 as a Media-cum-Language Event: Cognitive, Communicative, and Cross-Cultural Aspects. In *Lege Artis. Language Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*, 2020, Vol. 5, No. 2, p. 122-210.

22 VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: *Aktuálne otázky teórie a praxe žurnalistiky v ére internetu*. Trnava: FMK UCM, 2015, p. 3.

5 Methodology of Analysis

As far as one of the features of hard news is its timeliness or novelty, we analyzed the number of media outputs and their media impact for the period of June 11 – 18, 2020 in a total of 2,047 media, of which 1,626 were online sources (mostly news portals and websites), 376 titles of periodicals, 39 television stations, and 6 radio stations. In addition, all press agencies operating in Slovakia were included in the analysis and media outputs. Such a variety of information channels gave us a possibility to obtain a real picture of depicting this incident in many media resources, both written and oral.

We supplemented the quantitative analysis with a qualitative analysis of the media outputs of news portals for this period. As part of the analysis, we focused on several key elements: title of the media output, content of the article, and signals of addressee orientation in these texts.

At the next stage, we analyzed and compared the time of publication of the media output, the method of processing information, and the headlines. Afterwards, the monitored news portals were divided into three groups:

- opinion-forming media (*www.dennikn.sk*, *www.sme.sk*, *www.pravda.sk*, *www.hnonline.sk*);
- tabloid news web portals (*www.cas.sk*, *www.pluska.sk*);
- website and news portal of the *Press Agency of the Slovak Republic* (*www.tasr.sk*, *www.teraz.sk*).

We concentrated our attention on one piece of hard news and with the help of visual aids we showed which properties of hard news were the most important in this case, how this piece of news was presented in different media channels, what methods of presentation were used by journalists and signals of addressee orientations (hereinafter referred to as SAO) by the publishers. To obtain authentic and precise data we used the programme MONITORA – a web application for monitoring media outputs (articles, news, etc.) in the Slovak media according to keywords and topics. The generalized results of our analysis are displayed in Table 3.

Our study has the following prerequisites:

P1: We assume that most media outputs will be published by tabloid media.

P2: We assume that the first information about the attack will be provided by a press agency.

P3: We assume that serious media will not use tabloid headlines.

6 Analysis of Media Outputs

The official report by the *Slovak Police on Facebook* was almost immediately shared by news portals, and the official report became the basis for news information, which the individual media gradually supplemented and updated.

During the period of June 11 – 18, 2020, a total of 1,834 media outputs were published on this topic, mainly by online media (1,380 articles), followed by print media (204 articles). 109 broadcasts were delivered on television and 43 broadcasts on the radio. Press agencies published 98 agency reports. More detailed results are shown in Figure 1.

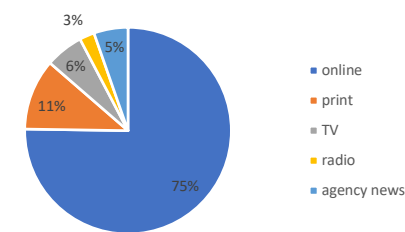


Figure 1: Proportion of media outputs by individual media types
Source: Own processing (data: MONITORA)

The total media impact of these contributions was 5,566.82 GRP (Gross Rating Point = GRP presents the true media image as it reaches the widest audience. Values are based primarily on the readability and viewership of individual media and are expressed as a percentage).

The highest value was achieved by online media (4,515.59 GRP), followed by print media (716.9 GRP), television (312.31 GRP) and radio (22.02 GRP) broadcasting. The GRP of agency news was not measured, because media outputs of the news agencies are not for the public. The media outputs of news agencies are for media to work with (Fig. 2).

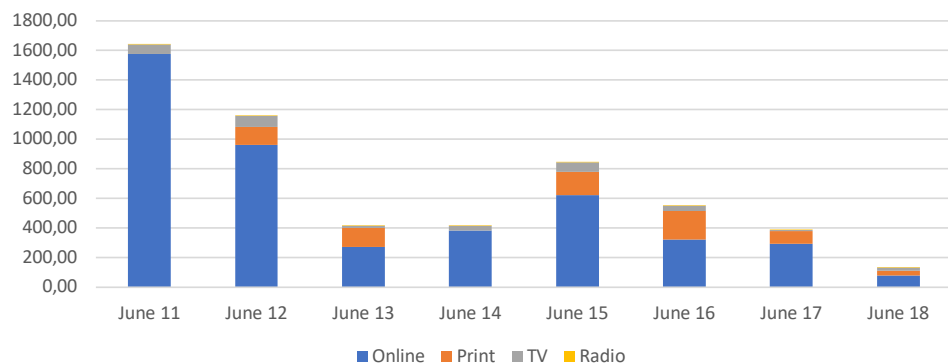


Figure 2: Media image (GRP) of contributions by individual media types

Source: Own processing (data: MONITORA)

The largest number of shares was recorded on the first day of the incident when 129,139 shares of posts about the incident were recorded on social networks (Fig. 3).

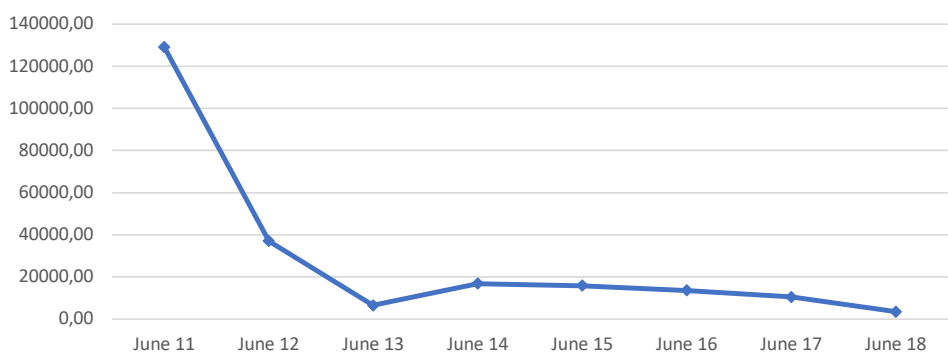


Figure 3: Number of posts shared on social networks

Source: Own processing (data: MONITORA)

On the first day of the incident, the largest number of media outputs was recorded when the media published 630 articles. The major part of articles was published by online media (537), the least by radio (7). Not a single article was published in the print media on that day, as this topic could only become apparent the next day (the greatest specificity among the media). However, print media were the second most common type of media to report on the incident in Vrútky. From the data presented in Figures 2 and 3, we vividly see that society's interest in the incident in this Slovak town is slowly decreasing, which once again proves such a feature of hard news as timeliness. The detailed comparative analysis of the results concerning media outputs during the respective period is shown in Table 1 and Figure 4.

Table 1: Number of media outputs in individual media types for the period of June 11 – 18, 2020

	June 11, 2020	June 12, 2020	June 13, 2020	June 14, 2020	June 15, 2020	June 15, 2020	June 17, 2020	June 18, 2020	overall
online	537	277	78	98	160	120	75	35	1,380
print	0	38	38	0	45	50	26	7	204
TV	27	27	4	7	24	10	2	8	109
radio	7	12	3	2	6	6	2	5	43
agency news	59	14	1	4	5	5	7	3	98
overall	630	368	124	111	240	191	112	58	1,834

Source: Own processing (data: MONITORA)

Figure 4 graphically presents the data from Table 1 to visualize the development of the number of media outputs in individual media types within the announced period.

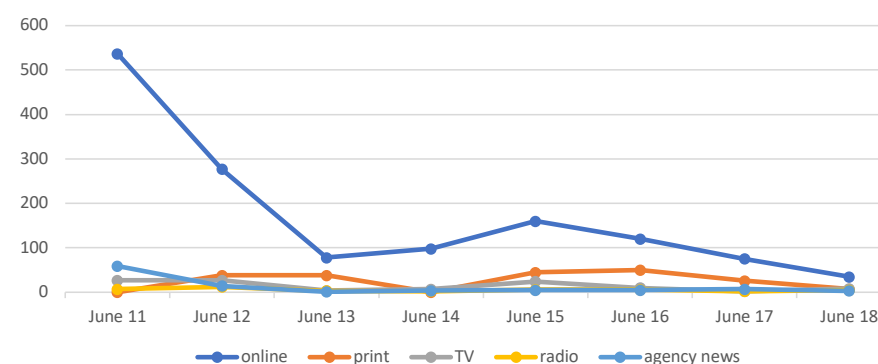


Figure 4: Development of the number of media outputs in individual media types for the period of June 11 – 18, 2020

Source: Own processing (data: MONITORA)

The data presented in Table 1 and Figure 4 show that notwithstanding the gradual loss of interest in this piece of news, the Internet remains the most read channel of information.

Among the first media to report the incident was the news portal *Denník N* (www.dennikn.sk), which at 10:43 shared the official report of the Slovak Police in its news application "Minute by Minute" with the following text: "The attacker at the primary school in Vrútky stabbed the deputy principal to death, the police shot him dead. Two children and two other adults, including the principal, were also injured in the attack. The attacker was a 22-year-old man from Martin."²³

From the article above we can see that the editors of the news portal already had other information available, which the Slovak Police did not publish in their official report. While the Slovak Police informed about the attack on school staff by an unknown man, *Denník N* reported that the attacker was a 22-year-old man from Martin, who stabbed the deputy principal of the school and that the perpetrator was shot dead by the police.

Another update appeared at 11:24 with reference to the daily *Nový čas*, in which it was reported that the school principal, two teachers, and two schoolchildren had suffered injuries.

The news portal *TASR* (*Press Agency of the Slovak Republic*) (www.teraz.sk) also published the information about the tragedy at around the same time as *Denník N*. At 10:45 *TASR* shared the official report of the *Slovak Police on Facebook*.

23 *Útok na škole vo Vrútkach: Útočník dohodol zástupcu riaditeľky, zranil dve deti a dvoch dospelých, polícia ho zastrelila*. Released on June 11, 2020. [online]. [2020-10-08]. Available at: <<https://dennikn.sk/minuta/1927171/>>.

Interestingly, the news agency published the details of the perpetrator (to the same extent as *Denník N* at 10:43) at 11:35, almost one hour later. The agency referred to the information from the Slovak Police.

The analysis of other media outputs shows that the press agency (*TASR*) provided the media with additional information, which was published with reference to the respective source. *TASR* reporters also went directly to the scene of the tragedy, from where they provided photographs (capturing the victims of the perpetrator and the investigating police) to the media. These were again the first to be published by the news portal of *Denník N* in the application “Minute by minute”, specifically at 11:33.

7 One Event – Many Pieces of Hard News

We will start our analysis with the media sources, which are considered to be serious press. The first separate article was published by *Denník N* on its news portal at 11:18. The article summarized basic information about the attack supplemented by other findings and the author’s own photographs directly from the crime scene.

In his article, the author also referred to the information obtained by *TV Markíza* and information from the press briefing of the President of the National Council of the Slovak Republic and the Minister of Education of the Slovak Republic. The article had the headline: “*During the attack on the primary school in Vrútky, the deputy principal died, and the attacker also injured the children. The police shot him dead.*”²⁴

We evaluate this headline as neutral, depicting the situation.

A separate article was also published by the news portal of the daily *SME* (*www.sme.sk*) at 10:58 with an update at 14:56 (2:56 p.m.). In addition to the basic information, the article also provided other findings and testimonies of the witnesses. The article included the photographs and videos taken from the *TASR* press agency and the Slovak Police. The conclusion of the article was supplemented by an overview of similar incidents in schools that had taken place in Slovakia in the past. The article had the title: “*The attacker at the school in Vrútky stabbed the deputy principal. The police shot him dead.*”²⁵

We rate it as stylistically coloured with a deliberate emphasis on the manner of the perpetrator’s attack.

The news portal *TASR* (*www.teraz.sk*) approached the processing of the headline even more significantly. The title was: “*We watched MASSACRE at the SCHOOL in Vrútky ONLINE.*”²⁶

The title is stylistically coloured, deliberately highlighting the words “massacre” and “school” with the help of graphical means, i.e. in capital letters, which can be considered as SAO pointing out the incident and attracting attention.

The news portal of the daily *PRAVDA* (*www.pravda.sk*) published a post on the incident in Vrútky at 11:24 with an update at 21:29. We deliberately accentuate the time of the publication, because it is very important for hard news. The article contained basic information supplemented by other findings, mediated information, and statements. The title of the article “*Attack in school in Vrútky claimed 2 dead and 5 injured*”²⁷ can be rated as stylistically neutral.

In a similar way to the news portal of *Denník N*, the news portal of *Hospodárske noviny* (*www.hnonline.sk*) also reported about the situation. However, it did not provide the first information until 11:32, almost an hour after the official announcement of the incident by the police on social networks. The contributions referred to continuously mediated information and reactions of politicians, city representatives, local governments or information published by other media. The title was: “*Attack at school: Vrútky is reported to*

have had two victims, the lives of the injured are out of danger.”²⁸ In addition to serious media, the topic was also addressed by tabloid media. The first information was published by the daily *Nový čas* on its news portal (*www.cas.sk*) at 10:58. This was the initial information about the incident with the headline, which announced an extraordinary police intervention amplified by an exclamation mark: “*Extraordinary police intervention! Attack at the primary school in Vrútky: Two persons died.*”²⁹

The news portal of the tabloid daily *Plus 1 deň* (*www.pluska.sk*) also addressed the topic, bringing a series of articles with a stylistically significant colour.

The largest number of articles were published by the news portal of the *SME daily* (*www.sme.sk*), with a total of 64, followed by the *Slovak Press Agency* (*www.tasr.sk*), with a total of 61, and the news portals of the *Nový čas daily* (*www.cas.sk*), with a total of 59 and *Denník N* (*www.dennikn.sk*), with 58 contributions. More detailed results are shown in Table 2 and Figure 5.

Table 2: Number of media outputs in the monitored news portals for the period of June 11 – 18, 2020

News portal	June 11, 2020	June 12, 2020	June 13, 2020	June 14, 2020	June 15, 2020	June 16, 2020	June 17, 2020	June 18, 2020	overall
dennikn.sk	27	11	1	3	5	4	6	1	58
sme.sk	13	15	1	7	10	7	5	6	64
pravda.sk	8	5	1	5	2	2	1	0	24
hnonline.sk	12	3	0	3	3	1	1	0	23
tasr.sk	36	11	1	1	6	6	0	0	61
cas.sk	16	12	9	5	10	3	3	1	59
pluska.sk	15	12	2	3	6	5	5	2	50
teraz.sk	8	5	0	3	5	1	1	0	23

Source: Own processing (data: MONITORA)

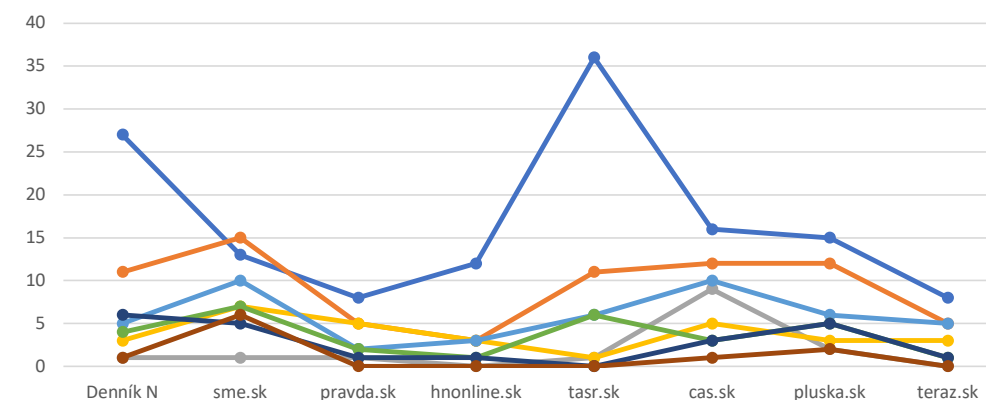


Figure 5: Development of the number of articles in the monitored news portals

Source: Own processing (data: MONITORA)

24 *Pri útoku na základnej škole vo Vrútkach zomrel zástupca riaditeľky, útočník zranil aj deti. Polícia ho zastrelila.* Released on June 11, 2020. [online]. [2020-10-08]. Available at: <<https://dennikn.sk/1927282/utok-na-zakladnej-skole-vo-vrutkach/>>.

25 ORVISKÁ, V., KOPKA, R.: *Útočník v škole vo Vrútkach dobodol zástupcu riaditeľky. Polícia ho zastrelila.* Released on June 11, 2020. [online]. [2020-10-08]. Available at: <<https://domov.sme.sk/c/22423802/na-zakladnej-skole-vo-vrutkach-zasahuju-policajti.html>>.

26 *MASAKER v škole vo Vrútkach sme sledovali online.* Released on June 11, 2020. [online]. [2020-10-08]. Available at: <<https://www.teraz.sk/slovensko/masaker-na-zakladnej-skole-vo-vrutkach/473223-clanok.html>>.

27 *Útok v škole vo Vrútkach si vyžiadal 2 mŕtvych a 5 zranených.* Released on June 11, 2020. [online]. [2020-10-08]. Available at: <<https://spravy.pravda.sk/domace/clanok/554173-policia-zastrelila-utocnika-ktory-mal-napadnut-zamestnancov-skoly-vo-vrutkach/>>.

28 *Útok v Škole: Z Vrútok hlásia dve obeť, zranení sú mimo ohrozenia života.* Released on June 11, 2020. [online]. [2020-10-08]. Available at: <<https://slovensko.hnonline.sk/2162095-utok-v-skole-z-vrutok-hlasia-dve-obete-zraneni-su-mimo-ohrozenia-zivota>>.

29 *Mimoriadny zásah polície! Útok na základnej škole vo Vrútkach: Dvaja ľudia zomreli.* Released on June 11, 2020. [online]. [2020-10-08]. Available at: <<https://www.cas.sk/clanok/990664/mimoriadny-zasah-policie-utok-na-zakladnej-skole-vo-vrutkach-dvaja-ludia-zomreli/>>.

From the data seen in Table 2 and Figure 5, all the media sources, including both official portals and tabloid news portals during the two days after the incident, kept their readers informed. Then the number of publications diminished to be followed by the second wave of interest in this incident, caused, perhaps, by some new details of the police investigation.

The next stage of our research consisted in the comparison of the media outlets and individual news portals headlines. We carried out a linguistic analysis of the headlines paying attention to the vocabulary (stylistically neutral words, terms, colloquialisms, etc.), emotively charged words, means of stylistic syntax (all kinds of repetition, elliptical sentences, aposiopesis, rhetoric questions, etc.), which in many cases can be considered as signals of addressee orientations. The advantage of many media texts is the use of graphical stylistic means, i.e. specific fonts, colours, added photos, etc. All these stylistic devices could be found in tabloids, whereas in official news literary vocabulary prevailed.

8 Signals of Addressee Orientation as an Important Feature of Emotional Journalism

The results of the analysis showed that most tabloid headlines were used by tabloid news portals. Most often, they contained emotional phrases, stylistically marked and coloured words. An interesting finding is that the two headlines of the news portal of the *Press Agency of the Slovak Republic* were also of tabloid character. The titles of the individual news portals with marked elements of tabloids are shown in Table 3. We placed serious news portals first (*dennikn.sk, sme.sk, pravda.sk, hnonline.sk*) and marked them in blue, tabloid news portals – second (*cas.sk, pluska.sk*) and marked them in yellow, and the web page and the news portal of the Press Agency of the Slovak Republic – last and marked them in green. We chose the first ten examples of the headlines of each news portal.

We marked different SAO: emotively charged words, words with negative connotation, exclamatory and interrogative sentences – in bold and red, locations – in italic and blue, evaluative components – in brown with dashed underline, mentioned names of politicians and authorities – in violet with double underline, temporal component – in green with single underline.

Table 3: Signals of addressee orientation in the headlines of different Slovak media sources

Media source	Headline	Type of signals
dennikn.sk	During the attack on the primary school <i>in Vrútky</i> , the deputy principal died , and the attacker also injured schoolchildren. The police shot him dead	words with negative connotation, location
	<i>In Vrútky</i> they say that the attacker was called Ivan (report)	location, words with negative connotation
	A teacher was last murdered by a student <u>in 1997</u> . Until now, schools have been protected by being locked	words with negative connotation, temporal component
	Myths about killings in schools : the mentally ill usually do not kill , greater security <u>may</u> not help	words with negative connotation, location, evaluation
	Violence in Vrútky through the eyes of the <u>Kotleba</u> political party – there is a fear of that	words with negative connotation, location, definite politicians' names
	<u>The Interior Minister</u> sees gaps in police training. They should also be trained to disarm an attacker with a knife	mentioned authorities, words with negative connotation
	Policemen hesitated to shoot until the last moment , a video <i>from Vrútky</i> shows	evaluation, words with negative connotation, temporal component, location
	American expert: Police <i>in Vrútky</i> fi red <u>legitimately</u> , but made <u>tactical mistakes</u>	location, evaluation
	Police: If you're afraid to call 158, you can alert us through the app	words with negative connotation
	A student recalls teacher Jaroslav Budz	stylistically neutral

sme.sk	The attacker stabbed the deputy principal at the school <i>in Vrútky</i> . The police shot him dead	words with negative connotation, location
	The former student at the school <i>in Vrútky</i> stabbed the deputy principal. The police shot him dead	location, words with negative connotation
	<u>Politicians</u> condemn violence in schools after the attack in Vrútky	mentioned authorities, words with negative connotation, location
	<u>Mayor of Vrútky</u> : Former student attack at school (video)	mentioned authorities, words with negative connotation, location
	<u>Gröbbling</u> plans to increase safety <i>in schools</i>	definite politicians' names, location
	A good and pleasant person , they remember the teacher <i>from Vrútky</i>	evaluation, location
	At the school <i>in Vrútky</i> , its former student attacked with a knife, killed a teacher, and attacked schoolchildren	location, words with negative connotation
	Highlights of the day: A former student attacked at the school with a knife	metaphor, words with negative connotation, metonymy
pravda.sk	Schools usually protect only one door from attackers	metonymy, words with negative connotation
	The injured persons after the man <i>from Martin's attack</i> are not in a <u>critical state</u>	words with negative connotation, location, evaluation
	Police shot dead an attacker who attacked school staff <i>in Vrútky</i>	words with negative connotation, location
	<u>Politicians</u> react to the tragedy in Vrútky , condemn the violence in schools	mentioned authorities, words with negative connotation, location, evaluation
	<u>Police President Lučanský</u> at the scene of the attack in Vrútky	definite officials' names, words with negative connotation, location
	The place where the police neutralized the attacker in Vrútky	words with negative connotation, location
	The place where the police disposed of the attacker from the school <i>in Vrútky</i>	words with negative connotation, location
	<u>Gröbbling</u> : There must be a sense of security at school	definite politicians' names
hnonline.sk	<u>Minister Krajčí</u> on the condition of the injured people	definite politicians' names, words with negative connotation
	Drama in Vrútky : The police shot the attacker dead at school. <u>Lučanský</u> is heading to the place	words with negative connotation, location, definite politicians' names
	Attack at the school: Two victims report <i>from Vrútky</i> , <u>Lučanský</u> is heading to the place	words with negative connotation, location, definite officials' names
	Attack at school: Two victims report <i>from Vrútky</i> , four persons are <i>in hospital</i>	words with negative connotation, location
	<u>Matovič</u> reacts to the attack in Vrútky : Fools live among us and we cannot prevent such situations	definite politicians' names, words with negative connotation, location
	Attack at school: Two victims report <i>from Vrútky</i> , four persons are in hospital	words with negative connotation, location
	<u>Mayor of Vrútky</u> : The attack at the school was committed by its former student	mentioned authorities, words with negative connotation
	We must contend with the fact that the disturbed individuals will want to repeat the attack in Vrútky , warns an expert	words with negative connotation, location
The tragedy in Vrútky : A knife indicates a deliberate attack	words with negative connotation, location	
<u>Jurínová</u> about the attack in Vrútky : <u>We thought that when it happened in America, we would not be affected</u>	definite politicians' names, words with negative connotation, location, evaluation	

cas.sk	Extraordinary police intervention! Attack at the primary school in Vrútky: Two persons died	words with negative connotation, location, exclamatory sentence
	President Čaputová feels a huge regret over the tragedy in Vrútky: Words full of compassion	definite politicians' names, emotively charged words, location
	Misfortune in Vrútky: Prime Minister and Ministers express sincere condolences to the bereaved	words with negative connotation, location, definite politicians' names, emotively charged words
	The attacker at the Joint School in Vrútky was its former student: Did he have mental problems?	words with negative connotation, location, interrogative sentence (sign of speculation or controversy)
	Police President Lučanský on the tragedy in Vrútky: There must have been only one attacker, the police were also injured!	definite officials' names, location, evaluation, words with negative connotation, exclamatory sentence
	Desperate fight of rescuers for the life of the victim from Vrútky: The injured were taken to Martin's hospital	words with negative connotation, location
	Gröbbling wants to discuss increasing school safety: This is how the Minister would like to deal with the situation	definite politicians' names, evaluation
	Minister of the Interior Mikulec on horror in Vrútky: The injured are out of danger, one policeman is being operated on	definite politicians' names, words with negative connotation, location
	Deputy principal killed in Vrútky attack: Accident is investigated as a fatal work accident	words with negative connotation, location
	Attack in Vrútky: Of the two injured children, the boy is worse off, the teacher is being operated on	words with negative connotation, location
pluska.sk	Politicians' reactions to the TRAGEDY IN VRÚTKY: Touching words of the President, the horror of the deputies	words with negative connotation, location, evaluation, definite politicians' names, graphical means (capital letters)
	SHOCK The attacker at the school in Vrútky was a former student who was not a problem, says the mayor	words with negative connotation, location, authorities, graphical means (capital letters)
	ONE DETAIL: Why did he go to kill armed with a KNIFE criminalist surprised by the attack in Vrútky?	words with negative connotation, evaluation, location, interrogative sentence, graphical means (capital letters)
	Mikulec gave touching words to the survivors of the tragedy in Vrútky, but the police refer to THIS!	definite politicians' names, evaluation, words with negative connotation, location, exclamatory sentence, graphical means (capital letters)
	OPEN CONFESSION of a family attacker: THIS could be the cause of a terrible attack!	words with negative connotation, graphical means (capital letters), exclamatory sentence
	BLOODY DRAMA at the primary school in Vrútky: Two dead and severely injured principal!	graphical means (capital letters), words with negative connotation, location, exclamatory sentence, evaluation
	FROZEN words of Krajčí about the condition of the injured from Vrútky: THERE ARE THE CHILDREN, THE TEACHER AND THE POLICE!	epithet, emotively charged words, definite politicians' names, location, exclamatory sentence, graphical means (capital letters)
	At the school in Vrútky, the cameras were NOT installed: We thought that when it happened in the USA, it didn't concern us!	location, exclamatory sentence, graphical means (capital letters)
	Horror at the primary school in Vrútky: An unknown man attacked the workers, the police had to shoot!	words with negative connotation, location, exclamatory sentence
	BLOODY DRAMA at the primary school in Vrútky: Two dead and severely injured principal!	epithet, words with negative connotation, location, evaluation exclamatory sentence, graphical means (capital letters)

tasr.sk	B. Gröbbling heads to Vrútky, expresses his sincere condolences to the survivors	mentioned authorities, location, emotively charged words
	The attacker at the Joint School in Vrútky was its former student, says the Mayor	words with negative connotation, location, mentioned authorities
	Statement: The Commissioner for Children condemns any violence in schools	mentioned authorities, evaluation, words with negative connotation
	OSZZS: The wounded were taken to Martin's hospital after the incident in Vrútky	words with negative connotation, location
	In connection with the tragedy, the Ministry of Education strengthened the crisis counselling line with psychologists	words with negative connotation, mentioned authorities
	R. Mikulec: I express my sincere condolences; I believe that the children and staff will be fine	definite politicians' names, emotively charged words
	The League for Mental Health offers help in coping with grief after the tragedy in Vrútky	mentioned authorities, words with negative connotation, location
	The accident in Vrútky is being investigated by a labour inspection as a fatal work accident	words with negative connotation, location, evaluation, definite name of institution
	M. Krajčí: None of the five patients is in critical condition	definite politicians' names, words with negative connotation
	There is no record of the incident at the joint school, said Mayor of Vrútky	words with negative connotation, location, mentioned authorities
teraz.sk	DEAD AFTER SHOOTING: Cops intervene in elementary school	words with negative connotation, location, graphical means (capital letters)
	We watch MASSACRE at the SCHOOL in Vrútky ONLINE	words with negative connotation, location, graphical means (capital letters)
	The Mental Health League offers help in coping with grief after the tragedy	words with negative connotation, definite name of the institution
	Post-traumatic care is very important after the incident in Vrútky	words with negative connotation, location
	Krajčí: None of the injured in Vrútky is in a critical condition	definite politicians' names, words with negative connotation, location, evaluation
	There is no record of the incident at the joint school, said Mayor of Vrútky	words with negative connotation, location, mentioned authorities
	Hundreds of people honoured the memory of teacher Jaroslav Budz	hyperbole, evaluation

Source: Own processing

Table 3 presenting the detailed analysis of the headlines in three groups of media sources needs specific comments. We use our marking system for different purposes. As the table includes the results of the linguistic analysis, we mark SAO respectively. In a sense, this marking system is also SAO for the reader of this article. Such an approach facilitates an understanding of the publisher's intention to attract the reader's attention to specific detail. The means of this attraction are different and depend on the level of publication quality.

Most sources mention the location of this incident. Vrútky is a small town with a population of 7,748 people (as of 2019). For a short period of time it attracted the attention of the whole Slovak Republic because of the tragedy which took place there. No wonder that practically every headline bears its name.

Many politicians expressed their condolences to the families of the victims. Each media source tried to interview the main representatives of the state, such as the President or Prime Minister. Members of Parliament and outstanding politicians eagerly cooperated with official and serious media sources.

The so-called tabloid news portals, which are placed second and marked in yellow in our table deserve special attention, we see that in periodicals of such a type graphical means, like capital letters, colours, exclamatory and interrogative marks, some stylistic devices like metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole, and epithet are very widely used.

Another group of signals typical of all these three sources are words with negative connotation and emotively charged words, which prevail in most headlines.

9 Conclusion

The role of media in informing the public about current topics is one of the most important that media play. Through news and journalistic contributions, they bring information about social, political, cultural, or economic issues. The way in which individual media process information, varies and depends on several factors.

One of them is the very nature of media and whether it is the so-called serious or tabloid medium. Although both types aim to provide up-to-date information, the way they do so is often different. A characteristic feature of the tabloid media is that they focus mainly on information related to the personal lives of famous people, scandals, or shocking information, which belongs to journalism of the emotional type, is called hard news and is the object of our research.

The incident, which took place on June 11, 2020, is one of the events that significantly affected society in terms of its scope and also by its impact. Of course, it also aroused media interest, which resulted in numerous media outputs. For the period of June 11 – 18, 2020, a total of 1,834 media outputs were published. Most contributions came from online media, which published more than 75% of the total media content. However, this also stems from the fact that online media represent the largest segment in the media market. They make up almost 80% of the total number of the monitored media.

As part of our analysis of the media content, we focused on seven news portals and the portal of the *Press Agency of the Slovak Republic*. The results of the analyses and comparisons of the media content showed that the topic was covered by news agencies as well as by tabloid media. The topic resonated quite intensely in both types of media, which produced a great deal of information and which was continuously updated and supplemented with new information. The key in this case proved to be the “Minute by Minute” application, through which the news portals published on-going information and monitored the development of the situation.

We debatably evaluate the meaning and the role of the tabloid headlines, which tried to attract readers and draw attention to themselves. This practice is typical of the tabloid media, but an interesting finding is that the contributions and titles of the news portal of the *Press Agency of the Slovak Republic* also had a vivid tabloid character. Thus, we perceive the use of tabloid elements and techniques in news of these types of contributions as expedient to gain the greatest possible readability.

Assumption no. 1 was not confirmed. Most media outputs were published by the *Slovak Press Agency*. Among the news portals, most articles were published almost proportionally between tabloids and serious media.

Assumption no. 2 was not confirmed. The first information was published by the news portal of *Denník N*. The Press Agency informed about the event a few minutes later.

Assumption no. 3 was not confirmed. The serious news media mostly used news headlines, except for the news portal of the Press Agency of the Slovak Republic, which used significant tabloid headlines for two articles.

The results of our analysis vividly show what common and specific SAO in media sources forming three groups – official, serious and tabloids present hard news on their portals.

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Abbreviations

GRP – Gross Rating Point

OSZZS – Operačné stredisko záchranej zdravotnej služby (Emergency Medical Service Operation Center)

SAO – signals of addressee orientation

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