MEDIA GENRE OF BBC MONITORING BRIEFING: RHETORICAL APPROACH

Bostandzhy O. V.
Kyiv National Linguistic University
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0009-0000-3567-9824
olha.bostandzhy@knlu.edu.ua

This article examines the rhetoric of text organisation in the media hypogenre of the BBC Monitoring briefing defined as a verbalised techno-textual schema of interaction between producers and mass audience, intended for reviewing reports from other media outlets about one or more events. The application of the rhetorical canons to the study of BBC Monitoring briefing texts brings about the following findings. The texts, accompanied by photo materials and infographics and placed in the centre of a webpage consist of the headline, the "At a glance" introduction, and the "Full Story" section. The introduction briefly outlines the main events indicated in the headline. The "Full Story" section elaborates on the content of both the headline and the introduction. Both sections are structured symmetrically to the headline, i.e. front the linguistic units referring to media sources or event participants while the predicates denote their activity. The selection of nominative units in the text depends on the subject matter, which in the reports under analysis covers the war in Ukraine, Russia's relationships with the former Soviet republics, new allies, enemies, as well refers to state institutions. The analysis of forty headlines representing the BBC Monitoring briefing hypogenre reveals two main characteristics of word usage. First, most headlines begin with reference to the source of information by constructions that consist of a country name and the type of a media source. These are followed by predicates that denote the action of the referents named at the beginning of a paragraph. Second, the predicates are combined with subordinate clauses or constructions that denote the event itself.

Keywords: *genre, media genre, text, rhetoric, BBC Monitoring, briefing genre.*

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У статті розглянуто риторику організації текстів медійного гіпожанру стислого пояснення (briefing) ВВС Моніторингу, який трактуємо як техно-текстову схему взаємодії між продуцентами й масовою аудиторією задля короткого узагальнення повідомлень інших ЗМІ про одну або кілька подій. Застосування риторичних канонів текстопобудови дозволило зробити низку нових висновків про гіпожанр стислого пояснення ВВС Моніторингу. Тексти

досліджуваного медійного гіпожанру розміщуються в центрі вебсторінки, супроводжуються фотоматеріалами та інфографікою й складаються із трьох секцій. Вони включають заголовок, вступну секцію At a glance / «Загалом», яка перераховує головні події, та секцію Full Story / «Повністю», що деталізує зміст заголовку та вступу. Обидві секції мають будову, симетричну до заголовка, та висувають на початок абзаців одиниці на позначення медійних джерел інформації або учасників подій. Водночас предикати, що іменують мовлення, характеризують діяльність учасників подій, позначених на початку абзаців. Текстовий відбір номінативних засобів залежить від тематики тексту, яка в проаналізованих повідомленнях охоплює війну в Україні, російські відносини з колишніми радянськими республіками, з новими союзниками і ворогами, а також повідомляє про діяльність державних інституцій. Аналіз сорока заголовків текстів досліджуваного жанру виявив дві основні характеристики слововживання. По-перше, більшість заголовків починається з посилання на джерело інформації конструкціями, що складаються з назв країн і різновидів медійних джерел, які супроводжуються предикатами на позначення дії референтів, винесених на початок заголовку або текстового абзацу, по-друге, предикати сполучаються з підрядними реченнями та конструкціями на позначення власне події.

Ключові слова: жанр, медійний жанр, текст, риторика, BBC Моніторинг, жанр стислого пояснення

Introduction.

The emergence of new media genres (Miller & Kelly, 2017, p.1-34) drives the academic interest in their study (Kathpalia, 2022, p. 3), as an individual's perception of reality is primarily shaped by the influence of mass media (Fotopoulos, 2023, p. 3; Crothers & Lockhart, 2020, p. 151). One of the new media genres is *BBC Monitoring*, which covers texts designed to "track and analyse media narratives across the globe" (BBC Monitoring. Customer Media Insight). The analysis of the monitoring texts on the BBC's official website (BBC Monitoring) reveals that they belong to a number of genres, providing grounds to interpret monitoring as a *hypergenre* that encompasses a whole range of genres (Яхтонова, 2014, p. 214; Shulinova, 2020, p. 150). These genres include *news alerts, round-ups, programme summaries, reports, references, newsletters*, and *insights* (BBC Monitoring. Our Offer). Texts of the Insights genre provide expert analysis of news reports from various mass media outlets, incorporating a deep understanding of local media and cultural landscapes (BBC Monitoring. Our offer). This genre encompasses a number of texts, including *explainers, briefings, analysis, name in the news*, and *timeline* (BBC Monitoring. Specialisms). While retaining the core characteristics of the parent genre, these texts have acquired a number of additional, more specific, features that distinguish them from other sub-classes of this genre in terms of structure and volume, lexical content, the construction of referential chains, etc. We interpret the sub-classes of the Insights

genre as *hypogenres*, based on the meaning of the prefix *hypo* as "less than" (Collins Dictionary). One of the most common hypogenres is briefings, which offer a succinct presentation and explanation of news reports from other media outlets concerning one or more events (BBC Monitoring. Specialisms).

Theoretical Background.

Analysis of theoretical and practical research shows that various definitions of genre generally rely on shared keywords that point to its main characteristics and allow for its general interpretation. The understanding of genres as relatively stable types of utterances in terms of thematic content, style, and compositional structure (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 60) is based on the keyword *structure*. At the same time, in their definition as types of text or communicative events that embody certain interactions between participants (Leeuwen, 2008, p. 345), the key terms are *types of text*, *communicative events*, and *interaction between participants*. The view of genres as extended constructs consisting of a certain number of speech acts, in which each speaker's communicative intent is subordinate to their strategy and tactics (Бацевич, 2006, p. 9), is based on two keywords: *construct* and *communicative intent*. In the interpretation of genres as *formal schemata* or *familiar patterns of arrangement* that facilitate understanding and assimilation of new content (Enos & Fahnestock, 2006, p. 57), the keywords in line with the interpretations discussed above are *schemata* and *patterns*. The identified keywords characterising the genre form two distinct groups. The units in the first group – *structure, type, construct, formal schemata,* and *pattern* – point to the organisation of texts. The second group includes terms referring to the interaction between senders and receivers: *communicative event, communicative intent,* and *interaction between participants*. Based on the keywords of the two identified groups, the genre can be defined as *a schema for constructing texts, arising from the interaction between communication participants*. The concept of a schema, embodied in individual texts, serves as the basis for genre differentiation (Enos & Fahnestock, 2006, p. 57) and correlates with mental cognitive schemata or schemas – mental frameworks that help us organise and interpret information (Cherry, 2024).

To define media genre, we primarily turn to the interpretation of media and mass media – terms often used interchangeably in academic works. Mass media is seen as the technological instruments or vehicles (print, the Internet, TV, radio, etc.) enabling mass communication (Turow, 2020, p. 11), or a diverse range of communication channels that transmit different kinds of information to a large audience (SCE). Additionally, media genres are viewed as types of texts equally

important for both the senders and consumers (BBC Media Studies) of the media content. The keywords in the definitions under discussion form three groups. The first includes terms designating the technical foundation of mass media: *technological instruments* or *vehicles* and *channels*. The second one includes units denoting communication participants: *producers* and *consumers* or *recipients*. The third group includes the units *mass communication* and *large audience,* which characterise the recipients in terms of size, enabled by the technological component. In the definitions of mass media, we single out the key phrase *technological instruments*, which refers both to vehicles and channels, and combine the adjective *mass*, which reflects the volume of the recipients reached, with the noun *audience*, getting the term *mass audience*, which is widespread in modern media theory (McQuail & Deuze, 2020; Dunaway & Graber, 2023). By adding the keywords *technological instruments*, *mass audience*, and *producers* to the general definition of the genre, we get the interpretation of its media variety as a *verbalised techno-textual schema of interaction between senders and mass audience*. The term "techno-textual schema" used in this definition emphasises that media genres are a result of the interaction between conventional patterns of text construction and new technologies.

Based on the proposed definition of media genre, BBC Monitoring is understood as a techno-textual schema of interaction between senders and mass audience, intended for reviewing news reports from various publications across the globe.

One of the most common BBC Monitoring hypogenres is briefings, or concise explanations, which offer a succinct presentation and clarification of news reports from other media outlets concerning one or more events (BBC Monitoring. Specialisms).

Drawing on the provided definitions of genre and its media variety, the briefing hypogenre can be considered a verbalised techno-textual scheme of interaction between senders and mass audience, intended for succinct explanation of news reports about one or more events from other media outlets. The purpose of this research is to identify the characteristics of the BBC Monitoring briefing hypogenre.

Methodological notes.

The study of the texts of the BBC Monitoring briefing hypogenre is carried out with the help of rhetorical analysis. Accordingly, we rely on the rhetorical

canons, which include selection of arguments (*invention*), their arrangement (*disposition*), word choice, composition of sentences, tropes and figures (*elocution*), memory, and delivery (Sloane, 2006, p. 111). We take into account that due to the development of modern technologies, the last two canons have merged into a single stage of *performance*, which in our case involves publishing materials on a website (Potapenko, 2021, p. 23).

The texts of the analysed media hypogenre, as techno-textual schemas of interaction between senders and mass audience, result from the interaction of all canons. When creating messages, the sender goes through the stages of invention, disposition, and elocution, with the final one being performance, when a media text is placed on a webpage, acquiring additional characteristics, both *multimedia* (Canavilhas, 2018, p. 2-3) and *hypertextual* (Stroobant, 2018, p. 2139-2140).

The recipient perceives a text in the order opposite to its production outlined above. The first stage is *performative*, or *visual-orientational*, at which the receipent familiarises with the publication and navigates about the webpage. In this case, multimedia organisation, understood as simultaneous interaction with several types of media, each logically continuing and complementing the others (Zhenchenko, 2013, p. 73), includes texts, audio, video, photos, and graphic images (Churkina, V., & Fedorenko, 2020, p. 34). Hypertextuality is viewed as the reader's interaction with non-linear arrangement of materials on a webpage (Deikun, 2025, p. 32).

The second stage of analysis – *dispositional-elocutionary* – combines text composition with its verbalisation. It involves the reader's perception of the headline which attracts and keeps the reader's attention (Potapenko, 2021, p. 3) as well as the overall textual structure. This stage of analysis takes into account three structural positions of headlines: attracting attention, which involves fronting linguistic units; attention keeping, designed to characterise the referent named at the beginning; and nudging, placed at the end of the headline and compelling the recipient to turn to the text body (Potapenko, 2021, p. 1-3). The units at the beginning of the headline can occupy the primary attraction position, i.e., open the headline, or the secondary one, i.e., after a colon (Deikun, 2025, p. 159), e.g., *Briefing: Russian bloggers say water crisis in occupied Donbas 'catastrophe'* (Briefing: Russian bloggers say…). The primary attraction position of this headline is filled in by the hypogenre name *Briefing*, while the secondary position after the colon is occupied by the construction *Russian bloggers* to denote the sources of information. The attention-keeping position of the analysed headline uses the

predicate *say* to denote the action of the Russian bloggers, named at the beginning. The nudging position of the headline is filled by the clause *ater crisis in occupied Donbas 'catastrophe'*, denoting the event reported in the news text.

In our view, the performative and dispositional-elocutionary stages are simultaneous in a sense, as the recipient becomes familiar with the multimedia and hypertextual components of the text on the webpage more or less at the same time.

The third – *elocutionary-inventive* – stage of analysis involves identifying the textual topic drawing on the nominative units. This stage begins with singling out morphosyntactic constructions (hereinafter simply constructions), i.e., arbitrary pairings of form and meaning stored in one's mental lexicon (Hoffmann, 2022, p. 4). They are formed in the memory of communicants through constant repetition and can be divided in the analysed material into *attributive*, e.g., *racist abuse* (Briefing: Racist abuse…), *prepositional*, e.g., *on 2008 war anniversary* (Briefing: Moscow wants…), and *predicative*, e.g., *bloggers claim* (Briefing: Russian bloggers claim…).

Distinguishing the news texts content related to invention, we rely on the semantics of the constructions. Thus, in the text entitled *Briefing: Pro-Kremlin Baltic media decry Nato's defence spending deal* (Briefing: Pro-Kremlin Baltic media decry…), the constructions *Pro-Kremlin Baltic media decry* and *Nato's defence spending deal* indicate that the article is about pro-Kremlin Baltic media's condemnation of the Nato defence spending agreement. The use of nouns with specific meaning in other headlines gives reasons to conclude that the corresponding texts deal with racism, anniversaries, economics, war, etc.

Results and Discussion.

The proposed rhetorical methodology is applied to the analysis of forty texts of the *briefing* hypogenre in the *Russia's influence* section of the BBC Monitoring website (BBC Monitoring. Our Specialisms).

In terms of *performance*, the briefing hypogenre exhibits a number of multimedia and hypertextual features. Its texts are placed in the centre of a webpage, accompanied by photographs of the event participants or infographics in the form of maps or diagrammes usually positioned between the headline and the text body. On the left of the text one can see the name of the media genre: *Insight* (Briefing: Poll says…).

From the *dispositional-elocutionary* perspective, texts of the briefing hypogenre are created according to an established schema that includes three mandatory parts, highlighted in the example below: the headline (1); the

introduction entitled *At a glance* (2), which lists the events covered in the report; and the *Full Story* section (6), which details the content of the headline and the introduction. Additionally, there may be one or more optional sections discussing additional aspects of an event. However, they are not genre-forming and are not examined in this paper.

(1)   *Briefing: Russian official says US 'caricature' of democracy after Biden pardon*

(2) *At a glance*

(3) *- Russian officials and media on 2 December described US President Joe Biden's decision to pardon his son Hunter as undemocratic and hypocritical*

(4) *- Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said he would not comment on America's "internal affairs", but Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said America was "a caricature" of democracy*

(5) *- Communist MP Yuri Afonin said on Rossiya 1 TV that the pardon reflected "the complete hypocrisy" in American politics*

(6) ***Full story***

(7) *Russian officials and media on 2 December described US President Joe Biden's decision to pardon his son Hunter Biden as undemocratic and hypocritical.*

(8) *"It's a caricature on the subject of democracy," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told Izvestia newspaper.*

(9) *Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told TASS news agency that the Kremlin "has nothing to say" on what he described as "America's internal affairs".*

(10) *On Rossiya 1 TV's daily current affairs show 60 Minut (60 Minutes), Communist MP Yuri Afonin described the pardon as an act of "complete hypocrisy".*

(11) *He said that Donald Trump pardoned dozens of people at the end of his first presidential term, but "Biden has shown the true colours of the so-called American democracy. No laws, no rules".*

(12) *Speaking via video link, Ekaterina Moore, captioned as a Kommersant newspaper correspondent in the United States, told 60 Minut that Joe Biden's decision was to be expected.*

(13) *"Joe Biden took his word back. He gave a word, he took it back. This situation is quite normal in American politics. This happens all the time," she said (Briefing: Russian official says US 'caricature' of democracy after Biden pardon).*

The primary attention-attraction position of the headline, i.e., its beginning, contains the name of the hypogenre*, Briefing* (1). The secondary attention-

attraction position of the headline, which follows the colon, is usually filled in by the units denoting sources of information or event participants. In the text under analysis one of them is named by the construction *Russian official* (1). The attention-keeping position of the headline includes the predicates denoting an action characterising the referents identified at the beginning. In the analysed headline (1), the predicate is expressed by the verb *say*, denoting speech. The nudging position of the headlines of this hypogenre is filled by subordinate clauses or constructions denoting the event itself to encourage the reader to turn to the article. In the text under analysis, the subordinate clause *US 'caricature' of democracy after Biden pardon* fills in the nudging position of the headline (1).

In the articles of the briefing hypogenre, paragraphs usually coincide with individual sentences for the sake of their readability, e.g., *Russian officials and media on 2 December described US President Joe Biden's decision to pardon his son Hunter as undemocratic and hypocritical* (3).

The texts of the analysed hypogenre receal a relative symmetry between the distribution of linguistic units in the headlines and individual paragraphs, which is proved by the comparison of the introductory *At a glance* section with the headline. For instance, the construction *Russian official* (1), used in the secondary attention-attraction position of the headline, corresponds to synonymous units in the initial positions of the introduction paragraphs that name event participants: *Russian officials and media* (3), *Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov* (4), *Communist MP Yuri Afonin* (5). The construction *US 'caricature' of democracy*, used in the nudging position of the headline (1), correlates with synonymous units that conclude the paragraphs of the *At a glance* section and criticise American democracy in various ways at the elocutionary stage of text perception: *undemocratic and hypocritical* (3), *"a caricature" of democracy* (4), and *"the complete hypocrisy" in American politics* (5).

The *Full Story* section, which elaborates on the content of the headline and the *At a glance* section, usually maintains a relative symmetry with their structure.

Firstly, the initial positions of the paragraphs in the *Full Story* section (6) of the text under analysis again enumerate the event participants identified in the secondary attention-attraction position of the headline and the initial positions of the paragraphs in the *At a glance* section (2).The identical constructions are *Russian officials and media* (7), *Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova* (8), *Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov* (9), *Communist MP Yuri Afonin* (10). Furthermore, the section details the information on the participants. The

construction *Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that* (4) from the *At a glance* section (2) correlates with the sentence *Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told TASS news agency that* (9), which clarifies the source of the statement. The *Full Story* section (6) adds the constructions referring to one more person not mentioned in the *At a glance* section (2): they are *Ekaterina Moore* […] *a Kommersant newspaper correspondent* (12) and the pronoun *she* (13).

Secondly, units placed in the nudging position of the headline are repeated at the end of the *Full Story* section's paragraphs. The final positions of the *Full Story* section's paragraphs contains the constructions correlating with the unit *US 'caricature' of democracy after Biden pardon* that ends the headline. They are *undemocratic and hypocritical* (7), *"complete hypocrisy"* (10), *the true colours of the so-called American democracy* and *"No laws, no rules"* (11), *Joe Biden's decision was to be expected* (12), as well as *"This situation is quite normal in American politics"* (13). In some cases, there are certain discrepancies in the sequence of units in the headline and the paragraphs of the *At a glance* and *Full Story* sections. For instance, the construction *"a caricature on the subject of democracy"* (8) is fronted to the initial position in the Full Story section (6) to emphasise the denoted idea, though it occupies the nudging position in the headline (1).

From the elocutionary-inventive perspective, the nominative units refer to the themes of texts. The analysis of the nominative units from forty headlines taken from *Russia's influence* section shows that the selected texts cover five topics: the war in Ukraine (14 reports), former Soviet republics (8), new allies (8), rivals (5), and activities of state institutions (5).

With respect to elocution, the war in Ukraine is denoted by attributive constructions such as *Ukraine war* (Briefing: Poll says…), *Ukraine peace plan* (Briefing: Russian media…), and *Ukrainian navy ship* (Briefing: Russia claims…). These are followed by the attributive constructions denoting regions of Ukraine, e.g., *Chasiv Yar capture* (Briefing: Russia says…), and Russia, e.g., *'brilliant' Kursk op* (Briefing: Telegram channel…). Besides common are prepositional constructions naming Ukrainian cities, e.g., *in Ukraine's Kupyansk* (Briefing: Russian military…), *near Dobropillya* (Briefing: Russian pundits…), territories, e.g., *in occupied Donbas* (Briefing: Russian bloggers say…), as well as Russian regions, e.g., *retreat in Kursk Region* (Briefing: Russian bloggers claim…). Separate headlines denote international activities concerning the war in Ukraine, e.g., *Briefing: Russian media sceptical of Trump's new deadline on Ukraine* (Briefing: Russian media…).

The headlines about the former Soviet republics employ constructions of similar structure but of different semantics. Prepositional constructions denote countries, e.g., *from Georgia* (Briefing: Moscow wants…), *on Estonia* (Briefing: Russia steps…). Attributive constructions indicate events, e.g., *Georgian parliamentary election* (Briefing: Russian voices…), or organisations, e.g., *Kazakhstan's nuclear consortium* (Briefing: Pro-Russian media…). Some headlines denote the former Soviet republics by proper nouns in the subject position, e.g., *Russia concerned as Kazakhstan 'exports' sanctioned products* (Briefing: Russia concerned…).

Attributive constructions in the initial positions of headlines about the new Russian allies highlight some aspects of activity, e.g., *Afghan Taliban* (Briefing: Commentators question…), *North Korean weapons* (Briefing: Russian bloggers share…), *Indian workers* (Briefing: Russia denies…), *Russia's India-focused X accounts* (Briefing: Russia's India-focused…). The place names *China* (Briefing: India-facing…) and *Taliban* (Briefing: Russia spins…) are used in the nudging positions of the headlines prompting the recipient to turn to the text body.

Russia's rivals are denoted in the headlines by proper nouns, e.g., *Macron* (Briefing: Russian bloggers brand…), or by attributive constructions referring to specific events related to those rivals, e.g., *EU-US trade deal* (Briefing: Pro-Kremlin Baltic media lambast…), *Nato's defence spending deal* (Briefing: Pro-Kremlin Baltic media decry…), *Turkey's Central Asia name move* (Briefing: Turkey's Central…).

Institutions and officials are denoted in the headlines by attributive constructions, e.g., *Russian Baltic Fleet* (Briefing: Russian Baltic), *Russia's Africa Corps* (Briefing: Russia's Africa Corps).

It is evident that in all headlines, regardless of the theme, attributive constructions characterising events in various countries are the most widespread.

Conclusions.

The briefing hypogenre is represented by techno-textual schemata of interaction between senders and mass audience, intended for succinct explanation of news reports about one or more events from other media. From the performative perspective, related to the recipient's orientation within a publication, the texts of this hypogenre are placed in the centre of a webpage, accompanied by photos or infographics. From the dispositional-elocutionary perspective, which combines the sequence of message content's arrangement with its verbalisation, the texts consist

of the headline; the introductory *At a glance* section, which outlines the events discussed; and the *Full Story* section, which details the content of the headline and introduction. Both sections are structured symmetrically to the headline using the nominative units denoting sources of information or persons followed by predicates characterising the referents identified in the initial positions. From the elocutionary-inventive perspective, related to understanding the content of a text, it is found that the *Russia's influence* section involves four main themes: the war in Ukraine, former Soviet republics, new allies and rivals, and activities of state institutions. These themes are denoted by prepositional and attributive constructions, as well as by the names of countries and political figures in the subject positions.

The prospects for further research consist in identifying the features of other varieties of the monitoring genre from the rhetorical perspective.

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