

TRANSFORMATION OF INTERVIEW AS A JOURNALISTIC STYLE FORM (HISTORY OF INTERVIEW)

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Abstract

Every form of journalistic style changes according to epoch. The Interview is one of the popular style forms (genre) for Georgian media but how it is being transformed? This is the main goal of this paper. Interview, as a genre was born in the USA in XIX century and spread rapidly in Europe. According to researchers after this form appeared in media, a new stage of professionalism begun. In order to show the process of transformation of interview in space and time, the author studied the early stage of the development of this genre in Georgia and at the same time considered to show the history of this journalistic style forms.

Key words: Interview, Journalism History, Transformation, USA Media, Genre, Georgian Media, Style Form

Introduction

Every journalistic style form (genre) is being changed according to epoch. The Interview is one of the popular style forms (genre) for Georgian modern print and broadcasting media but how the process of transformation is going on? This is the main goal of this paper.

The main research questions are: When and where did the first interviews appear? When did the first Georgian Interview appear and how it is being transformed?

In the next part of this paper literature review and the main research findings will be presented. In the final part discussions and conclusions of this research will be given.

1. Interview in USA

It is true that soon the most popular and authentic journalistic style form became popular but at the same time opponents appeared. According to Haller: "Bluff, joint product of politician and newspaper writers," – so in his editorial column, January 28, 1869 the newspaper "Nation" (published in New-York) evaluated the fashion which was spread with an unusual name "Interviewing". Their irony referred especially to Josef Barbreag Mac Culleg, who was the reporter of the "New-York Associated Press". He used this English word two years ago and explained it as "intermeeting". With this he brought in a notion of a new journalistic style form (Haller 210).

According to this quotation, interview probably first appeared in 1867 but other researchers wrote other dates. "Interview – said Emil Dovifat – is an invention of American Journalism: Gordon Bennett sent the reporter of his newspaper "Herald" to interrogate the participants of the attack in Harpers Fer and this "examination" /interrogation was published in the newspaper "Herald". This took place in 1859 and soon the new form of information, gained its utter recognition (Inasaridze 767).

Of course, it's natural to pose a question – when and where was the first interview printed? The history of American Journalism could not agree on this topic for a long time. The reason was different definitions of interview. But, a bit later, they considered the opinion of Nils Guner Nilson, Swede researcher of Minnessotta State University as more reliable. According to his assertion, interview was fashionable in 30s of XIX century but it did not in political journalism. It is being used by crime reporters to show "Human interest stories".

American researcher M. Charly is also sharing Nilson's point of views. He considers that, the James Gordon's speaking with Rozina Taunsend, the participant of sensational court process, meant the 'birth' of 'journalistic interview'. This speaking which was published on April 16, 1836, was prepared also as a "style of interrogation of witness", but as N. Nilson wrote: "When Gordon Bennett was speaking with main witness of the sensational murder, he simply used the "method of interview" which is typical of courts (Haller 23).

This unusual form had a lot of followers and it was used to show so called "Human interest story". The second direction of interview appeared a bit later in free press. It was connected to the reporter of "Associated Press" Josef Barbridge MacCuleg who had close relationship with Andrew Johnson. When he was elected as a president, in April, 1864, after the death of Lincoln, the meetings of reporter and new president were often printed as an exclusive talk.

As a German professor, M. Haller mentions, "The interviews of McCulegs were not only to show his privileged role toward the triumphant. These interviews became popular because of their objective, direct form between two equal partners... The form was created in the political interview which seemed useful for both sides – interviewer and respondent. Printing interviews with prominent persons meant exclusiveness and reputation for journalists and their newspapers.

Persons, in most cases politicians, considered interview on the one hand as a means of presenting their "profiles" to public and on the other hand, making a politic indirectly. But not only this.

The interview created a new journalistic consciousness especially in German speaking environment. Because the interviewer did not want to be only in the role of the recipient of official reports or distributor of telegrams but also tried to address somebody to answer more or less important questions himself. He aspired towards what they later called carefully public opinion. (Haller, M. 25).

As researchers mentioned, the second stage of the development of interview is again related to the USA. So called "Standard form" of interview (based on traditional question-answer) appeared in the magazine "News World Report" in 1949, after 80 years of Mac Culegs interviews. It was a novelty because until this time a free form dominated which produced a talk through indirect ways.

The reader will find in every edition of the magazine the interviews with important persons from political and economical fields, said David Lowrens, as a publisher of magazine. Respondents "Personal I" should be represented in questions and answers, in dialogue.

It is true, that dialogue expressed personal views of both partners but magazine "news World Report" placed there its interviews, where the comment of publisher before was printed. Of course, the interview did not reflect the views of editorial staff but the purpose was to show multilateral views and evaluations to readers. So was born a new rubric which had Volters words as a credo: "It's right, I don't agree with you but until my death, I will defend your right to express it".

According to researchers, there are 2 main types of interviews: Classical interview, based on question-answer and paraphrased or free form of interview.

Interview based on question-answer was unknown for German language journalism too. As German researchers wrote, 2 forms were used to present the dialogue between state persons or other important politicians extended announcement of any political person (which had a brief editorial preface) or information prepared by journalists. This information about this meeting was based on quotations.

The first interview in German journalism based on dialogues form was printed in 1956 by the magazine "Spiegel". "How was Stalin murdered?" – So was named the interview with the Leader of social-democratic party of Hungary, Ann Cattl. The main topic of this interview was to raise Hungary.

2. Interview Dialogues in Georgian Media

Thus, if we meet interview dialogues in western journalism in the middle of XX century, it's interesting, that in Georgian as well as in Russian print media we meet, interview-dialogues yet in the 20's of XX century. For example, I can name the interview found by me in the newspaper "Komunisti". This interview with headline 'Comrade Stalin about Soviet Republic', was reprinted from the Russian newspaper "Pravda" (Newspaper 'Komunisti', 1922, N218).

The sequence of questions is approximately following: 'Whose initiative was to start the movement to unite independent republics?' "What caused this movement and what are its motives?", "Is the tendency of unifying a totally new event or does it have its own history?", "How long does it take to carry out the process of unifying republics and what is its international importance?", "What is the character of unifying the republics in one state? etc.

In itself, this interview is very interesting in terms of history. Other interview dialogues were printed in the newspaper "Komunisti". These interviews interpret some important topics or problems. For example, "About collective contracts" (Newspaper 'Komunisti', 1922, N155); "About recruiting or dismissing at work (Newspaper 'Komunisti', 1922, N161)"; "About working hours" (Newspaper 'Komunisti', 1922, N158) etc.

These interviews, which were printed under the rubric "The life of factory worker's" are without signature and that's why we can't see who the respondents are. The purpose of these talks is presented in the headlines of these interviews. For example, we can discuss one of the interviews: "About collective contracts" (Newspaper 'Komunisti', 1922, N155).

The questions are approximately the following: "What is a collective contract?" "If the conditions of work are considered by the laws of work, why is collective contract necessary?" "Is necessary or not to add every condition of work to collective contracts, for example issues, about vacation?"; "Who does the contract refer and is it compulsory or not to sign the agreement?"; "What should mainly be the content of collective agreement?" etc. In fact, those are explanatory talks which are similar to legal advice.

3. One of the first Georgian Interviews

But what about the early stage of the development of this journalistic style forms in Georgia? When and where were first interviews printed? Interview appeared later than other style forms of journalism. According to professor N. Tabidze, interview was hardly established in the 10's of XX century. It was shown in G. Tumanishvili's letter which was printed in magazine "Theatre and Life": "It would be better if the new magazine could establish the habit which was already familiar with western print media. It is so called "interview" i.e. talk with different well-known persons about any interesting topic. Sometimes, the assistant of the magazine speaks not only to famous persons but also to readers or viewers generally. This way will be very useful for us too because our society has not been accustomed to print their opinions themselves.

But earlier in 1904 in the newspaper 'Iveria' we discovered the elements of interviews genres. Under the rubric- "the topic of war"- are printed 2-3 question dialogues which refer to the Russian-Japanese war. Let's consider one of them as an example (Newspaper 'Iveria', 1904, N130). As a newspaper reported, the representative of 'Daily News' was spoke with famous military art doctor Miller Magger, who, by the way, said... In this interview we don't see the first question, it begins straight with answer. The questions are following:

1. So, you think, that Kuropatkin should retreat?
2. What would you advise Kuropatkin?
3. So you think that Manjuria must be handed to the enemy?

It is very interesting that, the word “talk” is used to mention dialogues in other similar articles too. For example: “Baron Suematus talk” (Newspaper ‘Iveria’, 1904, N139); General Renkamp talk (Newspaper ‘Iveria’, 1904, N180) and etc. However, these translated small interviews can’t be considered the first classical examples of this genre.

It seems, even after 1910 it was difficult for this genre to establish itself in Georgian reality. The newspaper “Sakartvelo” (“Georgia”) (1915-17) which was studied by us produced only one interview which gave the right to say so, during three years of its existence only one interview by Akhmeteli was detected.

It was a talk with Exarchos of Georgia (Newspaper ‘Sakartvelo’, 1916, N13). This interview is important with many respects:

- Firstly, its author is a famous Georgian public person Sandro Akhmeteli;
- Secondly, this story should be very important for the history of Georgian church;
- It may be considered as the first example of the genre of interviews what is very important for us. According to this example we can clearly see the process of transformation.

This interview based on question-answer includes a lot of such “verbal” elements, which do not usually appear in interview. The headline itself gives us the reason to think that this interview belongs to the early stage of development.

Today nobody mentions the name of genre straight in the headline. On the surface, it is difficult to determine the type of this interview. Maybe it is close to the interview-story because after the questions, reactions and emotions of respondents are presented; it includes the elements of reportages as well. The journalist is trying to create so called “effects of attendance”.

For example: “I am forcing myself, I am hurrying and trying to express my idea clearly...” It can be said too that the elements of another journalistic style form (genre) report dominate: “On Saturday I visited Exarchos Platon on behalf of the Editorial staff of the newspaper ‘Georgia’. The author Sandro Akhmeteli gives detailed, precise talks and isn’t afraid of the “failure” of his questions;

‘-Your Majesty, how do you think, could you name our church Georgian church, the Caucasian church or the church of the mixed nations?’

‘- Your Majesty was very surprised and in turn he asked me, -

‘-Is not it very strange for you to ask such a question? “

‘-He conveyed precisely every phrase of the respondent. For example:

‘-This question is very necessary and significant” – he mentioned approvingly.

‘-You certainly ask me essential questions. I am very glad. It is very good. Answered his Majesty“.

The atmosphere of talk is shown with thorough accuracy. “

My First question was...

I am continuing with another question... After this I asked to his Majesty“. My last question was...”.

Today we cannot find such phrases (neither in interview-dialogues nor in interview-story). In fact, in this case we come across the invasion of reportage elements using direct observational methods.

Conclusion

To sum up, these historical parallels clearly emphasize the genesis of the interview as a journalistic style form (genre) in Georgian media and obviously show the evolution of one of the most popular genres in terms of its form and structure.

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