

Infotainment: Shifting News Presentation on Social Media Platforms

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ملخص الدراسة

شهدت وسائل الإعلام في السنوات الأخيرة بعض التغيرات الجذرية في المحتوى الإعلامي بشكل عام بالإضافة إلى تطور التقنيات والأدوات المستخدمة في عرض الأخبار، خاصة على منصات التواصل الاجتماعي. وتكمن شواهد هذه التغيرات في ظهور مصطلحات جديدة تعكس التطور الذي يشهده المحتوى الإعلامي في السنين الأخيرة، مثل مصطلح "الإنفوتنمنت" الذي أصبح يستخدم بشكل واسع في دراسات الإعلام لوصف نوع معين من المحتوى الذي يمزج بين عناصر المعلومات والترفيه والذي يعتمد على جذب الجماهير من خلال تقديم المعلومات الإخبارية و السياسية بطريقة مشوقة وترفيهية، وقد أصبح هذا النوع من المحتوى الإعلامي يلعب دورًا مهمًا في تشكيل ثقافة المجتمع وتوجيه اهتماماته خاصة مع الاعتماد على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي كوسيلة إعلامية أساسية لها خواصها التي تميزها.

و من خلال هذا البحث، تم فحص المعالجة الإخبارية على صفحة الفيسبوك الرسمية لـ "The Glocal"، وهو موقع ترفيهي مصري، حيث تم تحليل إجمالي 136 منشورًا نُشرت خلال شهرين، من 18 نوفمبر 2022 حتى 18 يناير 2023. بالإضافة إلى اقتراح نموذج تحليلي لدراسة الخطاب الإخباري المطروح في شكل "الميمز" على هذا الموقع، وتم إجراء تحليل نصي لتفسير هذا الخطاب بشكل أكبر. وقد أوضحت نتائج تحليل الخطاب الإخباري الاعتماد على تقديم "الميمز" في النسبة الأكبر من عينة الدراسة كوسيلة إخبارية. وأظهرت النتائج أن الأخبار الرياضية و أخبار المنوعات خاصة الأخبار حول كأس العالم 2022، كانت تمثل النسبة الأكبر من من الأخبار التي تم تحليلها. كما كشف التحليل النصي أن معظم الميمز اعتمدت على أربعة أنواع رئيسية من الصيغ، وتتمثل في مشاهد من فيلم أو مسلسل تلفزيوني الإنترنت بالإضافة إلى فيديو أو ميم واسع الانتشار على الإنترنت. و خلصت هذه الدراسة أن التحول في الخطاب الإخباري على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي يظهر من خلال الاعتماد على وسائط و تقنيات مختلفة لعرض المحتوى الإعلامي و الإخباري في سياق ترفيهي مما يعكس أهمية مصطلح "الإنفوتنمنت" في تشكيل الثقافة الإعلامية للجماهير على الإنترنت.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإنفوتنمنت، منصات التواصل الاجتماعي، المحتوى الإعلامي.

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Abstract:

In recent years, media has witnessed some radical changes in the content of news and in the techniques and tools implemented in news presentation especially on social media platforms. In this research, I examined news presentation on the official Facebook page of “*The Glocal*,” an Egyptian entertainment website. A total of 136 posts published within two months, from 18 November 2022 till 18 January 2023, were analysed. An analysis model was proposed for examining internet memes displayed as news discourse, and a textual analysis was carried out for further interpretation of this discourse. The findings showed that sports and human-interest news stories dominated the humorous news discourse in the sample posts, especially news about the World Cup 2022.

Key words: Infotainment, Social media, Memes, Entertainment news

Introduction

In the new digital age, the internet has introduced a new field of research for communication scholars, which is studying the concept of online literacy and the skills needed to comprehend the new genres and discourse types emerging as a result of the ongoing changes in the media landscape.

Hence, it became vital to study and understand *infotainment* as a new genre in the paradigm of media literacy in the digital age (Procházka, 2014). The internet has introduced new online reading comprehension skills that redefine the traditional concept of literacy. In other words, traditional print media per se requires a fairly small set of reading knowledge strategies and skills; on the other hand, “online media requires not only the traditional skills of reading, but also new types of knowledge to effectively locate, critically evaluate, synthesize and communicate information on the Internet” (Coiro et al., 2014, p. 54).

These rapid changes accompanied the emergence of a new genre on the internet and social media platforms which is the hybrid phenomenon of infotainment, which relies on dissolving the originally recognised borders between information and entertainment by creating a new combination of both domains.

Consequently, infotainment became one of the fundamental changes in news presentation and it relies on hybridisation in the structure of news media, where a mixture of entertainment and information is now reconstructing news discourse. The emerging phenomenon of infotainment can be understood in terms of news coverage techniques that are now shifting towards humorous or entraining discourse.

Accordingly, this paper aims to examine infotainment trends in news presentation, along with the news values extracted from this genre, to completely understand the innovative news discourse presented on social media.

Objectives of the study

1. Examining different formats of news presentation on the official Facebook page of “The Glocal,” an Egyptian entertainment website.
2. Analysing internet memes displayed as news discourse through a proposed model for examining these formats.
3. Identifying the humorous discourse and news presentations on social media platforms.
4. Determining the dominant types of news stories and discourse presented on social media platforms, particularly on Facebook.
5. Interpreting the news discourse of internet memes through textual analysis.

Research questions

- 1- What are the most dominant types of news stories presented on the Facebook page of the examined platform?
- 2- What are the different types of news discourses displayed on the official Facebook page of the Glocal?
- 3- What are the differences between infotainment humorous discourse or informative news discourse apparent in the examined Facebook posts
- 4- What are the displayed visual representations of memes applied in the posts examined.
- 5- How does textual analysis of the memes in the examined Facebook posts reflects the connotations of these formats as news discourses.

Infotainment

In recent years, news media has witnessed structure hybridisation, where a hybrid between entertainment and information reconstructed the news discourse, forming what is known as infotainment; in addition, the blend of politics and entertainment discourse brought out the term “*politainment*” (Thussu, 2007). The term infotainment refers to media content that aims to inform and educate the public while providing entertainment value (Papacharissi, 2002).

Infotainment has become increasingly popular in recent years, as the proliferation of digital media has enabled people to access a wide range of information and entertainment options, which consequently led many news organisations to embrace infotainment as a way to attract and retain audiences (Papacharissi, 2002).

In addition, scholars noted that the distinction between the language and practices of news discourse, entertainment, marketing, and politics has been lost. Consequently, these blends have grown deeply inseparable, and the study of these discourse types became of an interdisciplinary nature (Baym, 2005; Brants, 1998; Thussu, 2007).

Hjarvard (2013) argued that one of the main benefits of infotainment is that it can make complex or dry topics more interesting and appealing to a wider audience; by presenting information in a more digestible and entertaining format, infotainment can help to increase public knowledge and understanding of various issues.

According to Jones (2004) and Reilly (2012), infotainment of political discourse in the United States emerged when the American television industry changed its realm of serious political news to a new form of entertainment. In this form, the widely known format of news, where serious political subjects and themes are being discussed, was replaced by entertainment programming discussing all the issues in the political arena. Likewise, Jones (2004) suggested that “this shift has been instrumental in blurring the boundaries between serious and entertaining discourses, placing politics squarely at the centre of new debates surrounding the function and value of entertainment in civic culture” (p. 18).

Accordingly, several definitions have been provided for the term *infotainment*. Brants (1998) stated that infotainment “mixes political informative elements in entertainment programmes or entertainment characteristics in traditionally informative programmes” (p. 327). Similarly, according to Carrillo and Ferré-Pavia (2013), infotainment is “mixed in nature, where genuine information combines with traditional entertainment” (p. 3).

In addition, Boukes (2019) defined infotainment as “an umbrella term that covers the fusion of entertainment and journalism within different media genres; it is a linguistic blend of information and entertainment.” (p. 2).

Nieland (2008) argued that infotainment can be considered as a subsequent development of the term multi-entertainment and defined it as “the interweaving of actors, topics and political processes with the culture of entertainment” (p. 973). This definition highlights the idea of blending politics with the entertainment industry and presenting the final product of political information in entrainment formats such as talk shows, parodies, info shows, pop concerts, and even film and television fiction.

However, other scholars argue that *infotainment* carries wider connotation than the mentioned mixture of information and entertainment; in fact, it blurs the line between what is serious and what is entertaining, and what is considered as news and what is not, through a blurred presentation of facts and opinions within the same context (Jones, 2004; Delli Carpini et al., 2001)

Nevertheless, there is ongoing debate about the role of infotainment in the media and the extent to which it serves as a valuable source of information or simply as a form of entertainment. Critics argue that infotainment can oversimplify complex topics and compromise the accuracy and depth of the presented information (Hjarvard, 2013; Gray, 2011).

Similarly, Boukes (2019) believed that infotainment as a phenomenon can be understood from two perspectives: the fact that news coverage is now entertaining, and entertainment is covering political topics.

Through the ongoing ratings battles across media platforms, the news reporting discourse has been altered towards lighter and more sensational styles. In other words, news coverage became less politically oriented and more focused on the personalisation of news, human-interest stories, and controversial topics to maintain and elevate audiences' interest in news coverage.

Similarly, Williams and Carpini (2020) argued that the basic distinction between news and entertainment is becoming obscure because the content of the news has changed. The discourse of news broadcasts or newspapers is now concerned with celebrities, fashion, lifestyles, television shows, and movies reviews, in addition to many topics that are usually categorised as entertainment or infotainment. Moreover, this shift in news discourse has led to the shift from categorising the different media content as politically relevant according to its genre, factuality, or source to categorising it by its utility in terms of what it does and its potential use. In other words, defining a statement as political information is relevant to what it says, who says it, and how it is said.

Regarding the effect of infotainment on engaging the public, Davis et al. (2020) suggested that fields of print media, broadcast television, documentaries, and user-generated content in online videos shifted to infotainment narratives because of its remarkable influence on the audience engagement and its role in enhancing their understanding of any perceived content.

This significant influence is extended in a way that even corporate organisations are now trying to imitate these narratives in their social media outlets by using infotainment as a way of promoting their brands and accentuating their genuineness (Krohn, 2019).

In a similar context, Baym (2005) mentioned that political satire shows like *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* are considered as “a hybrid blend of comedy, news, and political conversation” (p. 262), where a show uses techniques drawn from genres of news, comedy, and television talk to revive journalism of critical inquiry and advance a model of deliberative democracy. Hence, such shows can be better understood not as fake news but as “alternative journalism” (p. 263).

Although the main approach of political satire shows, when dealing with political information, is comedy, satirical shows can play an important role in redefining news and shaping public opinion (Baym, 2005; Thussu, 2007; Landreville et al., 2010).

Matsa (2010) believed that, in a world of fast occurrences and a vast amount of information offered to audience daily, infotainment plays a role in completely fulfilling the need for education, pleasure, and awareness, allowing people to access all this diverse information and comprehend it effortlessly. In addition, “the most contemporary and influential seems to be comedic satirical shows on television, and its influence appears closely related to the special characteristics of the medium” (p. 8).

Moreover, studies have defined a new role for comedy shows, as infotainment formats, which is political education. New research conducted on a sample of college students provided evidence that infotainment helped them gain and recall political knowledge and information (Xenos & Becker, 2009). Accordingly, comedy TV shows, which are supposed to be entertaining in the first place, are now playing a completely new role in shaping the political knowledge of the youth (Hollander 2005).

Historically, Greek philosopher Aristotle believed that the aim of comedy is not to deal with concrete social roles or contemporary community problems directly, but to demonstrate morals by mocking social misbehaviours and encouraging people to laugh at them, as long as this act, regardless of its correctness, brings pleasure. Now, comedy is playing a role in informing audience directly about serious matters (Hokenson, 2006, p. 28).

Understanding Memes

Ghosh et al. (2021) described sarcasm as a way of self-expression in any argumentative space. Sarcasm became more popular on social media platforms, where users tend to use it to communicate, express their feelings, and resolve their conflicts, even the political ones.

Similarly, Crittenden et al. (2011) argued that with the emergence of social media as a platform for self-expression and content creation,

humour became available to anyone. This accessibility to social media allowed for a new level of opinion leaders and content creators who use different social media platforms to discuss political and social issues through satirical discourse like memes.

With regard to the contextualisation of memes as an infotainment aspect, Echeverría Victoria and González Macías (2019) considered memes as a “format of political expression and opinion that is based on popular humour codes” (p. 134). Memes can engage the audience in current political issues through entertainment and pleasure discourse, increasing their knowledge of and participation in the political landscape.

Many Scholars agree that the term *meme* was first used by the biologist Richard Dawkins in his book *The Selfish Gene*. The word *meme* is driven from the Ancient Greek word *mīmēma* which means something imitated (Börzsei, 2013; Davison, 2012; Crovitz & Moran, 2020; Procházka, 2014; Shifman, 2013; Soh, 2020).

In his book, Dawkins (1981) argued that all living beings are bound to behave or interact in a manner which he described as “good for the species,” whereas human behaviour is driven by cultural and social interaction not by genes. He suggested that any behaviour that is nongenetic can be considered as a meme; in other words, a meme is any social or cultural behaviour that is replicated among human beings.

On the basis of this concept, Crovitz and Moran (2020) suggested that some cultural and social interactions can be considered memes because they effortlessly circulate among members of any given society. Examples include idioms, well-known sayings, common gestures in several cultures like handshakes or waving, folklore tales, and jokes.

Accordingly, when it comes to discussing memes in the digital era, many scholars attempted to formulate a definition for memes, whereas Davison (2012) defined internet memes, considering the original connotation of the term, as “a piece of culture, typically a joke, which gains influence through online transmission” (p. 122).

Similarly, Shifman (2014) suggested a definition for internet memes as “a group of digital items sharing common characteristics of content, form, and/or stance, which were created with awareness of each other, and were circulated, imitated, and/or transformed via the Internet by many users” (p. 41).

Likewise, De la Rosa-Carrillo (2015) established another definition for internet memes as “the collection of visual artifacts that are generated, exchanged, deconstructed and reconstructed by internet users on a daily basis” (p. 12).

Furthermore, Börzsei (2013) argued that internet memes are considered as a form of visual entrainment that can be displayed in several formats, among which still images or image macros (i.e., images with text on them), animated GIFs, or even videos are common.

In this regard, Soh (2020) considered photographic images the most popular format for political memes, as they are often recontextualised and posted on social media platforms as part of any online discussion. The author pointed out the importance of public recognition of a meme to actually fit in the online discussion space as a mean of communication.

Similarly, Keane (2003) established a criterion for the recognition and legitimacy of any meme; that is, “memes are neither inherently meaningful nor socially consequential on their own. Like other kinds of interactions, both online and offline, Internet memes do not exist in isolation, but achieve their effects in relation to other forms of social action” (p. 240).

In other words, for an internet meme to be successful in any context, it must be recognised within the social interaction it is used for, especially when it is intended as a joke. Accordingly, scholars have agreed that a joke or humour cannot be understood apart from its social or historical context, as the receiver needs to have background information, in this case a reference to the meme, to understand the humorous content (Caldas-Coulthard, 2003; Chilton, 2004; Maslo, 2016). Moreover, Shifman (2014) argued that intertextuality is one of

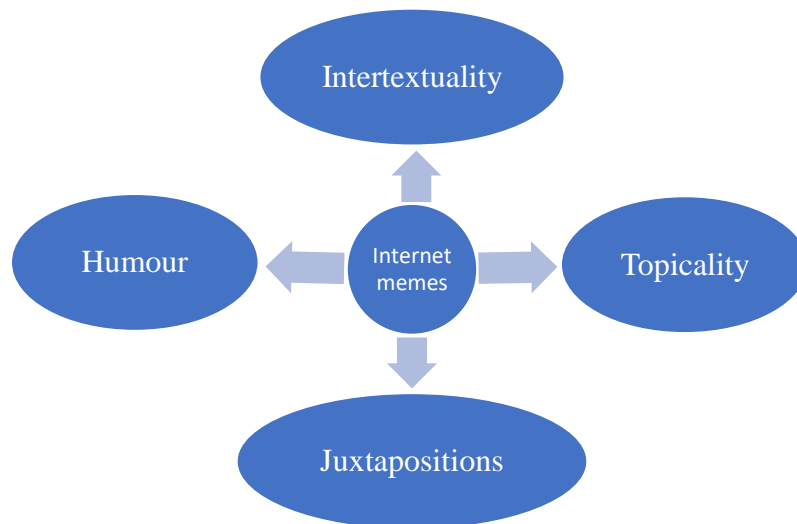
the essential qualities which help in interpreting internet memes.
Methodology

In this research, 136 posts were selected from *The Glocal* social media platform on the basis of their functionality, as they all reflect news discourse. They were published on the Facebook page of the platform within two months, from 18 November 2022 till 18 January 2023. The discourse of these news posts, presented in the form of memes, was both factual and humorous. These posts were thoroughly examined across several levels of analysis and categorisation.

With regard to analysing and understanding memes, Soh (2020) suggested that for internet users to be able to interpret any meme, three interconnecting variables are required: first, recognition of the image; second, comprehension of the image's aesthetics; third, familiarity with the event that the meme is referencing either implicitly or explicitly.

Procházka (2014) also considered memes as a form of visual entertainment combining humour, intertextuality, and topicality in addition to apparent juxtapositions of text and visuals (p. 56). Each of these interrelating elements is reflected in internet memes and enables audience to interpret them.

Figure 1: Elements of meme analysis



Note: All diagrams in the research were drawn by the author (2023).

Accordingly, the model adopted by the researcher for analysing the posts under investigation is described as follows. The first level of analysis relies on three elements of interpretation: first, recognising the source and nature of the meme (i.e., a still image, a scene from a movie, a video); second, comprehending the aesthetics of the meme (whether it has text or still image only, whether there is any graphic alteration in the original image); third, familiarity with the related event or news story.

The second level of analysis targets the four elements of internet memes: topicality ,intertextuality, humour, , and juxtapositions (Figure 1). The First element, topicality, reflects familiarity with the topic of the news story in a post. Finally, the fourth element of analysis is juxtaposition of text and images in the examined posts, as most internet memes deliberately juxtapose inconsistent images and text to highlight the absurdity of an event, which significantly contributes to their success (Shifman, 2014).

According to Birkenstein and Graff (2018), intertextuality is a metacommunicative device in the form of embedded texts proposed to elaborate the intended meaning of a meme. According to Procházka (2014), humour is usually based on cross-referencing several forms of popular culture (movies, music, plays, literature, or even cartoon characters) and/or other memes on a textual as well as visual basis; that is why the researcher analysed the element of humour in a meme in terms of that meme’s relativity to the popular culture aspects or other prominent memes.

In addition to applying the mentioned model, a textual analysis was conducted to further interpret the cultural notions and embedded meanings of the topicality and humour elements in the posts under investigation. Textual analysis is defined as “seeing texts in terms of the different discourses, genres and styles they draw upon and articulate together” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 3).

Furthermore, Anagondahalli and Khamis (2014) argued that “the object of a textual analysis is not the meanings of the texts, but rather

the construction of those meanings through the text” (p. 5). Additionally, Fairclough (2003) illustrated that textual analysis requires the interpretation of both implicit and explicit meanings constructed within the text, adding that interpretation of any text is a judgemental process that relies on understanding what the speaker/writer intentionally means with his/her text (p. 11).

Similarly, McKee (2006) discussed the elements associated with textual analysis, indicating that cultural context is a basic element in understanding the intended meaning of any given text (p. 52). That is to say, this cultural relativity explains why the same humorous content can be funny for different reasons according to the different cultural contexts of both the speaker and listener. In other words, textual analysis allows us to understand the reasons why a meme is funny although presented in a news discourse and context.

Data Analysis and Findings

In the first step of data examination, the sample news posts were divided into two categories: factual posts (factual discourse) and meme posts (humorous discourse) that were further investigated and classified according to their topicality. This step of analysis was essential to examine the newsworthiness of topics from both categories. Topics were classified into sports, economics, politics, and human-interest stories.

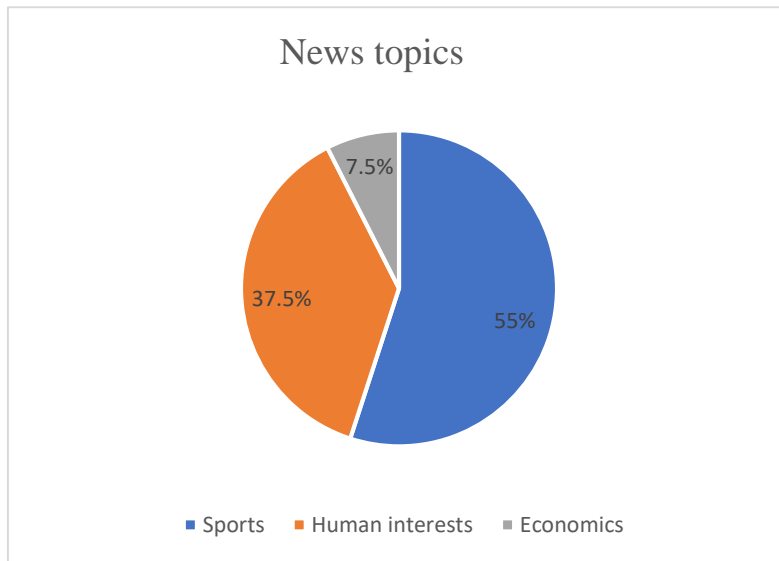
In the second step of data examination, posts were divided into two main categories according to the visual representation of their news discourse. The first category was the posts that displayed factual news relying on memes (images, GIFs, videos, etc.); this category included 60 posts accounting for 44% of the total number of posts under examination. The second category included posts that displayed factual news with images relevant to the news story; this category included 76 posts accounting for 56% of the sample posts examined.

The third step of analysis focused on the posts that displayed memes as news discourse. These posts were categorised according to their topicality into picture collages and examined using the proposed

analysis model mentioned earlier. Then, a textual analysis was carried out to further interpret this discourse.

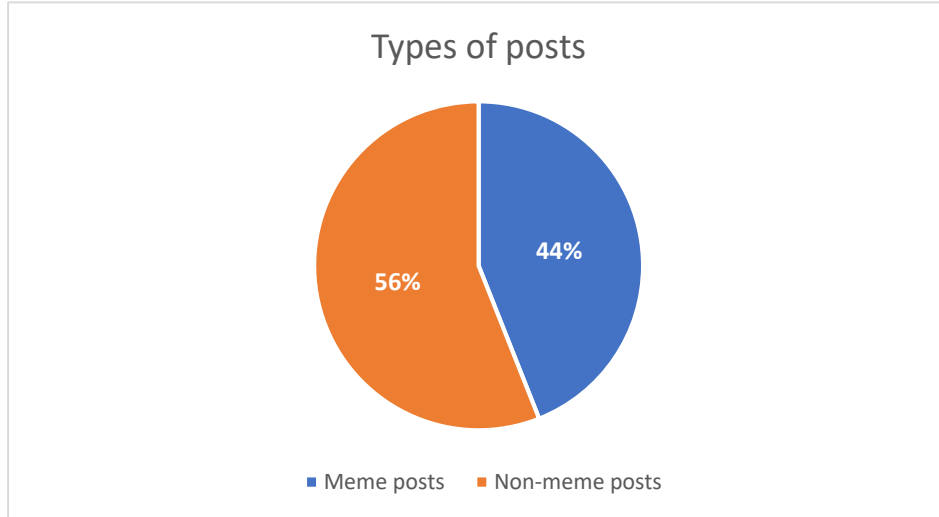
First: Quantitative analysis

Figure 2: News topics of the posts



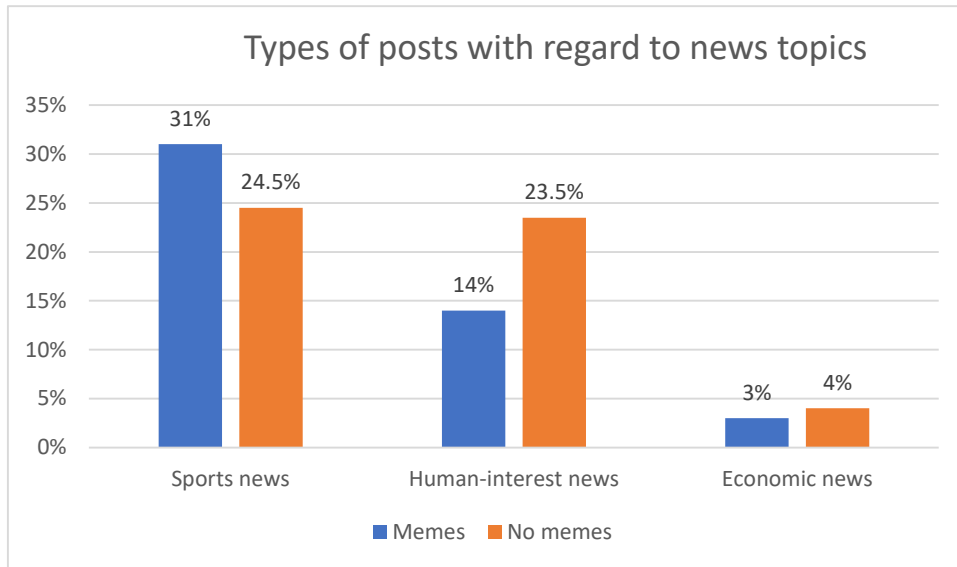
The examination of the news stories posted on *The Glocal* Facebook page showed that sports topics dominated the sample with 55% (Figure 2; $n = 75$). Moreover, the human-interest stories had a great share of the news stories representing 37.5% of the total sample ($n = 51$). However, the category of economic news stories scored only 7.5% ($n = 10$). These results reveal that examined posts mainly fall into the category of soft news: most of the sample posts covered sports and human-interest news stories, only a few contained economic stories, and none mentioned any political news. This provides us with an important indication about using infotainment in news dissemination. Although it is very common for infotainment to be used in political news as in political satire programmes, in our case infotainment was actually used within specific news categories, that is, soft news, avoiding hard-core political news stories.

Figure 3: Types of the examined posts



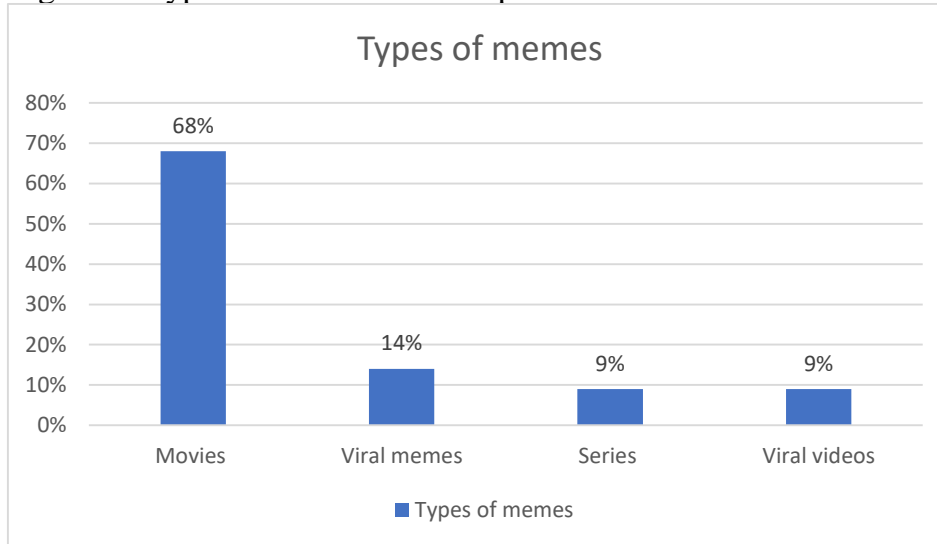
The analysis of the sample posts mainly aimed to categorise them into two types with regard to their nature: those that reflect news stories in the form of memes and those that present a news story using only a small caption and a relevant photo. As shown in Figure 3, posts not using memes to deliver news stories were slightly more than (56%, $n = 76$) those presenting news in a humorous discourse using memes (44%, $n = 60$). These results show statistically significant reliance on humorous discourse and infotainment in news dissemination on *The Glocal* platform. Although the informative discourse scored higher, the numbers were actually close, which reflects the dominance of infotainment discourse on that platform. The reason may be that the platform under investigation considers itself an entertainment website in the first place, as mentioned on their Facebook home page, so when it comes to news distribution, the choice of the humorous discourse is rather reasonable.

Figure 4: Types of posts with regard to news topics



Another level of analysis was concerned with determining the topics of news stories, that is, whether they belong to infotainment humorous discourse or informative news discourse (Figure 4). As for the first type, sports stories presented with memes scored the highest (31%, $n = 42$), followed by human-interest news stories (14%, $n = 19$) and then economic posts (3%, $n = 4$). Regarding the other type, sports posts presented without memes also scored the highest (24.5%, $n = 33$). In addition, human-interest stories presented as news discourse scored much higher than those presented with memes (23.5%, $n = 32$). Finally, economic news stories in this category scored higher (4%, $n = 6$) than those presented with memes. The results showed that sports stories scored the highest among all examined posts. Moreover, they scored the highest statistically when it comes to presenting the news in a humorous discourse. On the other hand, human-interest stories, although considered of soft news type, were presented more in an informative news discourse.

Figure 5: Types of memes in news posts



As shown in Figure 5, the researcher analysed the posts that used memes to present news stories and was able to classify them into four main categories. The largest category of memes was that including movie scenes, scoring 68% ($n = 38$). This category relied on still shots from famous movies that can be used to reflect different situations of news stories. The second category, scoring 14% ($n = 8$), was that using viral memes as news discourse. In this category, the platform relied on famous internet memes to be used as a reflection of the meaning of the news story presented. The third category, scoring 9% ($n = 5$), included news stories using still shots from TV series as memes, similar to those of the first category. Finally, memes using viral videos or still shots from them scored the same as those from series (9%, $n = 5$).

To better understand the connotation and usage of these four types of memes in news discourse, the researcher used the internet meme analysis model shown in Figure 1 to examine four memes from the sample, each reflecting one of the four types indicated in Figure 5. Which will be discussed thoroughly in the following textual analysis.

Second: Textual analysis

Figure 6: Examples of different types of memes in news posts: (A) a meme from a movie; (B) a viral meme; (C) a meme from a series; (D) A meme from a viral video



(A)



(B)



(C)



(D)

The meme shown in Figure 6A is a still photo from a scene in the movie “No Retreat, No Surrender” (production year: 2010). In the original scene, the actor Ahmed Mekky was threatening his costar using a throat-slitting gesture meaning he was going to kill her. *The Glocal* platform used this meme in a sports news story about the upcoming match between Morocco and Croatia in the World Cup 2022.

The model of internet meme analysis was used to examine the discourse of this meme, and the results showed the following. With regard to the first element of the model, which is the topicality of the event, the news story presented here is about the furious match between Morocco and Croatia in the semifinal to win the third-place title in the World Cup 2022. Furthermore, the intertextuality element was not apparent in this meme as it only relied on the text in the foreground describing the factual news story. Another element of the model is the juxtaposition of the Moroccan flag on the head of Mekky and the Croatian flag on the head of his costar. The humour element in this meme relies on audience familiarity with the movie and the hand gesture. Moreover, for the whole Arab world, including Egypt, the match featuring an Arab country was very important after Morocco reached the semifinal, so its performance in that match was highly anticipated. Accordingly, the meme is reflecting how the Moroccan team is threatening to win its rival in their upcoming confrontation.

Figure 6B is a meme, known as the “disaster girl” or the “Firestarter,” depicting a girl watching a fire department drill. Her father took the picture and posted it online. Since then, it has gone viral and is usually used to express the idea of someone who is responsible for a disaster and is laughing mysteriously after causing it (source: Know Your Meme database, 2023). *The Glocal* platform used this meme in a news story about the Federal Reserve raising its minimum interest rate by 50 basis points to a range of 4.25%–4.5%.

The analysis indicated that the first element of topicality is the familiarity with the event which is the news story about increasing the interest rate on the loan that Egypt is receiving. Furthermore, the use of several text layers reflects the intertextuality element in this meme: first, the text in the foreground describes the factual news story;

second, another type of text is juxtaposed on the face of the girl to refer to her as the Federal Reserve and in the background of the image saying that people are focusing on the world cup matches. The element of humour in this meme is reflected by the topicality: the Federal Reserve, represented here by the disaster girl, increased the interest rate, which would negatively affect people in Egypt, while they were occupied following the world cup matches not knowing that this happened.

The meme in Figure 6C depicts a scene from an Egyptian TV drama series, showing the character going round thinking and wondering about something. The four elements of the internet meme analysis are expressed in this news discourse as follows. Topicality is reflected by the news story about an Indian firm that will fine employees bothering their coworkers in their days off. The second element of analysis is shown in the juxtaposition of the scene shots into one frame to reflect the confusion and overthinking of the character. Intertextuality is reflected in the caption of the meme using a different colour for the words mentioning the idea of disturbing coworkers to highlight this notion. Finally, the humour element in this meme relies on audience familiarity with the famous TV drama, especially that juxtaposed scene that is often used as a meme representing confusion and the dilemma of choosing between two or more options. Here, the humour element is apparent in the idea of the meme which reflects the confusion people can feel as to whether they contact coworkers about work-related topics on their vacations and the fear of getting fined if they did.

The meme in Figure 6D is a still shot from a video that went viral in Egypt during Tokyo Summer Olympics that was held in august 2021 in Tokyo, Japan. The still photo is from the video showing the head coach of the Egyptian taekwondo team cheering and shouting at one of the players that he has only 50 seconds to become an Olympic champion. The meme illustrates a sports news story about Argentina reaching the semifinal and facing Croatia in the world cup. The examination of the news discourse of this meme shows the following. The first element is topicality, that is, how close Argentina is getting to winning the world cup by reaching the semifinal of the tournament.

Intertextuality is visible in the caption written on the image highlighting the word Argentina in a different colour, expressing cheers for Argentina, even though Croatia also reached the semifinal and is a great candidate to win the world cup as well. In addition, the examination showed that this meme did not use any juxtaposition to convey the news story. The humour element in this case relies, as mentioned earlier, on how this video went viral in Egypt. So the platform under examination, *The Glocal*, used this still shot from the video to cheer for Argentina, which was about to complete its journey, reaching the final and winning the world cup.

Figure 7: World cup memes, part 1





Figure 7 is a collage of several memes that all cover the same news topic, that is, the world cup, which provides us with the first element of the meme analysis model, topicality. As mentioned earlier, the content creators of the platform rely on audience familiarity with the topic presented as a meme, that is, the matches of the World Cup 2022. The second element is the juxtaposition of visuals in the memes. All the memes have a common juxtaposition element which is the flag of the country which the news story refers to. The third element of analysis is the intertextuality visible in several memes, where the focus of the news story is presented in a different colour in the meme caption. Finally, the element of humour basically depends on audience familiarity with the story lines of the movie shots selected as memes.

Figure 8: World cup memes, part 2



Likewise, Figure 8 is a collage of several memes about the same news topic of the world cup, which represents the first element in the proposed analysis model, topicality. Furthermore, the second analysis element is illustrated by the juxtaposition of visuals in the memes; in

this collage, all the memes also contain a cultural reference to the country mentioned in the news story, for example, the green hulk wearing a head cover that represents Saudi Arabia. In addition, the intertextuality element is indicated by the use of a different colour to highlight the news story in the meme caption. The humour element in these memes is twofold. The first source of humour is the knowledge and understanding of cultural symbols, for example, the crown referring to England and the green colour along with the famous Saudi head cover as a reference to Saudi Arabia. The second source of humour is audience familiarity with the movies, viral videos, or TV series depicted in the memes. This collection of two familiar elements is what makes any discourse humorous, simply because if the audience do not know the reference of the joke, they will not laugh at it. Accordingly, the content creators of the platform under examination generate such news posts with the aim of combining information and entertainment.

Figure 9: World cup memes, part 3



Similarly, Figure 9 shows the third part of a series of visual collages for memes about the same news topic of the world cup. With regard to the first element of the analysis model, topicality, the memes cover the world cup topic as mentioned earlier. Concerning the second element of analysis, juxtaposition, the memes are designed with some changes in the original shots from the movies or TV series by adding layers of visuals. For example, the original character was substituted with Messi's head in a meme about him reaching the world cup final for the last time in his career. Moreover, another juxtaposition of visuals is observed in other memes by placing some still shots of football matches in shots from movie scenes. As for the third element of analysis in this collage, intertextuality, we can observe that different layers of text were added to the memes and key words were marked with a different colour in the meme captions. Finally, the humour element is based on audience familiarity with the meme context, including the topic of the news story and the movies, viral videos, or TV series used to demonstrate this story.

Figure 10: Economic news memes



Figure 10 shows a collage of memes sharing the same topicality element, which is economic news. Even though economic news discourse in the sample did not rely on memes, few meme posts reflected topics related to the economic climate in Egypt. The second element, juxtaposition, is indicated by adding different layers of text to the meme images. The intertextuality element is also visible in

these memes through the several layers of texts in captions as well as text on the memes themselves. Regarding the last element, as mentioned earlier, humour is derived from audience familiarity with the meme shots and the topic itself.

Figure 11: Memes of local news sports from Egypt



Furthermore, as an Egyptian platform, *The Glocal* posts not only international sports news but also local sports news from Egypt, which reflects the topicality element. The juxtaposition element is noticeable in the use of different layers of visuals on the same meme, such as the common visual variable of placing football club logos on the meme characters to reflect the topic of the news story (Figure 11). With regard to the intertextuality element, a different colour is used in captions to bring the news story subjects into focus. Finally, as mentioned above, the humour element basically depends on audience familiarity with the topic of the memes and the scenes depicted in these memes.

Figure 12: Weather news memes



Figure 12 shows a collage of memes reflecting the element of topicality, which is weather forecast news. In this humorous news discourse, the juxtaposition element can be observed in the different layers of visuals and texts in the memes. The intertextuality element is also evident in the colour difference used for focusing on news stories in captions. Finally, the humour element depends on audience familiarity with the meme shots and topic.

Figure 13: Miscellaneous news memes



As shown in Figure 13, the topicality element in this collage is represented by miscellaneous topics, where several memes are used to present news about human-interest stories in humorous discourse.

Moreover, the juxtaposition element is indicated by several layers of visuals on the same meme. With regard to the intertextuality element, it is apparent in the change in text colour to focus on the news story in the caption. Finally, as observed throughout the sample analysis, the humour element is induced by audience familiarity with the topics and scenes of these memes.

Discussion

The findings of this research provide us with a thorough understanding of the new phenomenon of infotainment in news discourse that has emerged with social media platforms in recent years. The results point out that although previous studies discussed the notion that infotainment is frequently used in political news discourse (Baym, 2005; Brants, 1998; Thussu, 2007), the sample under investigation showed zero political news stories in the form of either memes or factual discourse on the investigated platform, where sports and human-interest news stories dominated the sample posts.

Furthermore, the results show that the proportion of sample posts relying on humorous discourse and infotainment in news dissemination was statistically significant. Although the factual news posts scored statistically high, the numbers were relatively close. This reflects the news content policy on *The Glocal* platform where infotainment discourse is a dominant feature in news dissemination.

Additionally, previous studies classified the types of memes into four main categories (Börzsei, 2013; Soh, 2020), which is consistent with the results obtained herein. Analysing meme types in the sample posts under examination, the researcher showed that memes reflected either scenes from famous movies, mostly comedy ones, which represented the most common type of memes used in the sample; viral memes; still shots from videos that went viral on the internet and used later as memes; or still shots from well-known TV series.

Finally, for the four meme types, the textual analysis of the sample revealed that most memes using the humorous discourse rely on audience knowledge of the meme references. Familiarity was a crucial aspect in the humour element of any meme. As previously stated, if the audience are not familiar with the context of the meme, the implied joke will not be funny (Caldas-Coulthard, 2003; Chilton, 2004; Maslo, 2016).

Moreover, the results exhibited that the intertextuality and juxtaposition elements were significantly used in the memes under investigation to further highlight the focus and topicality of news stories in humorous discourse.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of the study at hand succeeded in bridging the gap in the literature review, by defining the term of infotainment as a news format in news discourses. Moreover, the research proposed a new theoretical perspective through using a multilevel analysis of the data by through applying the proposed model for examining memes, which has been used to study them as a communication tool in the digital age, but for this research it was applied to examine internet memes as news discourses on social media. The results showed that sports and human-interest news stories dominated the humorous news discourse in the sample posts, especially news about the World Cup 2022. In addition, the textual analysis revealed that most of the memes relied on four main types of formats, scene from a movie, scene from a TV series, scene from a viral video and a viral meme on the internet. These results exhibited the shifts in communication approaches applied in news discourses on social media and revealing that the term of infotainment is playing a vital role in the news literacy on the internet.

Recommendation for Future Research

This section provides recommendations for future research that will contribute to the development of infotainment in news discourse and social media.

More studies should be carried out to further investigate audience perception of infotainment content with regard to information recognition and recalling and to examine the effect of such news discourse on the Egyptian youth's interpretation of different news stories.

A comparative study would also help to assess the different contexts within which the same news story can be presented, either in factual discourse on recognised news websites or in humorous discourse on social media.

Moreover, the researcher suggests conducting an analysis with larger sample size and time scale to examine the different news topics that could be presented in different time frames.

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