Bulletin of the *Transilvania* University of Braşov
Series IV: Philology and Cultural Studies • Vol. 13(62) Special Issue
https://doi.org/10.31926/but.pcs.2020.62.13.3.10

How the imagined audience is involved and represented in TV news broadcasts

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This study uses data collected from prime-time TV news broadcasts on three most popular Czech TV channels. The aim is to analyse how the imagined audience is addressed and how it is represented. Closer attention is paid to the format of "vox pops" and the tendency to categorise the speakers involved in news broadcasts. The findings show that the imagined audience is involved in the news discourse in conformity with the tendency towards conversationalization and consumerization. The boundaries between the format of vox pops and other interviews and sound-bites are blurred. The speakers are often classified into categories and also represent various categories of the imagined audience. There is a tendency not to present the speakers as completely anonymous and emphasis is put on their experience with the events which they comment on.

Key-words: *TV news, vox pops, audience, categorization, conversationalization*

1. Introduction

TV news broadcasting, although traditionally perceived as an instance of institutional scripted talk intended for undifferentiated mass audience, has been adopting more and more strategies aimed at attracting its viewers and gaining their favour. As all interactions performed in the media are presented for the benefit of the overhearing audience and motivated by its type (cf. Heritage 1985; Scannel 1991; Tolson 2006) and in conformity with Bell's theory of audience design (Bell 1984, 2001), there has been a tendency of the news broadcasting discourse to get closer to the target viewer by adopting features simulating intimacy, which corresponds to the tendency of consumerization and conversationalization, as described by Fairclough (1994).

This includes also growing use of interviews and two-way exchanges in TV news broadcasts and dialogic features appearing even in the scripted monologues

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of newsreaders (cf. Tolson 2006). The imagined audience is often addressed directly as if a dialogue with them was simulated. Their response is naturally missing, but still, the audience is given room to react within the broadcast: the feeling that the viewers are given the chance to respond and have their say and participate in the discourse (even if in a very restricted way) is simulated by the involvement of the voices of people that serve to represent the mass audience.

The aim of this study was to track how the imagined audience is addressed in Czech TV news broadcasts and how it is represented, with special attention devoted to one of the most frequently used formats to serve the purpose of representing the opinions of the "ordinary people", which are "vox pops". However, the study showed that boundaries between the format of "vox pops" and other interviews and sound-bites presented in the news broadcasts are not very clear-cut.

2. (Problems with) defining vox pops

"Vox pops" are usually defined as brief edited reactions of ordinary, usually not introduced people interviewed on the street, to unheard questions, in which they express their opinions and attitudes (Montgomery 2007; Myers 2004). Their function is not only to "illustrate news report" (Montgomery 2007) but also, in correspondence to the tendency of consumerization and conversationalization, "to liven up stories, augment their authenticity and make them more understandable" (Hopmann and Shehata 2011, 665). Lefevere et al. (2012) confirm that because of their 'vividness, realism and distinctiveness' the voices of 'common people' can be taken as illustrative and thus 'representative of public opinion' (Lefevere et al. 2012, 105, 115). However, the restricted space devoted to them and the way they are cut and edited prevents them from being taken as serious "representative" samples of public opinion. Still, the opinions of selected people are represented at least in a fragmentary and limited way, so the vox pops can be perceived as a substitution for the viewers' direct involvement in the news broadcast. I would therefore not assert that what they represent is the "public opinion" in general but just the voices of the potential viewers.

Concerning the relation of vox pops to "public opinion", it is also quite problematic to define what "public" stands for. Myers (2004) asserts that "'the public' is the category of participants not assigned to other categories, the category assignable when other attempts at categorization have been for practical purposes exhausted" and that it "is constructed by the negation of other possible categorization devices, so that what is left is a category that is taken to be no

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particular category" (Myers 2004, 208). He draws on the "membership categorization analysis" first outlined by Harvey Sacks (1992) and his findings concerning vox pops show that participants use the categories in their talk themselves and even make their answers relevant by constructing their identity using some of the categories. Thus, it seems that there are many categories even within the umbrella term "public" and the imagined mass audience is in most cases categorised and stratified, and thus also the representing voices speak on behalf of certain groups.

This categorisation of the speakers, in its consequence, problematizes the differentiation between "vox pops" and other types of interviews involved in the TV news coverages. This is admitted also, for example, by Tolson and Ekström (2017, 2019), who conducted research into the use of vox pops e.g. in UK, France, Sweden, Greece, Italy etc. (Tolson 2019; Ekström and Tolson 2017) and noticed that "the distinction between the vox pop and other forms of edited and decontextualized interviews with ordinary people is […] not clear-cut." What they often overlap with also in the Czech analysed news coverages are the so called "experiential interviews" (Montgomery 2008, 267). In these, people are encouraged to share their experience with witnessing the event covered in the news. Tolson and Ekström emphasize that in experiential interviews, people refer to their "first-hand knowledge" […], which is indicated in the framing, preamble and social setting of the interviews, as well as the questions and answers." (Ekström and Tolson 2017, 220)

This study showed that it is precisely the framing, setting in which the interviewee is filmed, written "label" introducing the speaker by their name, their affiliation with a certain place, social group or interest group and the voice-over's introduction that constitute the speakers' knowledge, experience and thus competence to speak on the topic together with the speakers' status and belonging to a certain category. Not all sound-bites found in the sample of the Czech data involved speakers who were left completely anonymous, and it definitely cannot be said that the voices could always speak on behalf of any member of the mass audience. There is often at least one of the above-mentioned or other aspects or even their combination that classifies the speakers and determines their affiliation to a certain group.

The speaker's status is even often constructed as "competent to the topic" to such an extent that the notion of the speaker as "a representative of lay audience (or some of its groups)" may get blurred with the notion of them as an "expert". This study did not manage to take a deeper look at this phenomenon but I believe that further research into the construction of the speakers' expertise and

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the differentiation between experts and lay people represented in TV news broadcast would be worth conducting.

3. Methods of this study

The aim of this study was to verify the tendency of TV news broadcasting to involve its imagined audience in its discourse and include voices representing the audience in the news coverages on a sample of Czech data. 60 prime-time TV news broadcasts on three Czech most popular TV channels, ČT 1 (30), TV Nova (30), and Prima (30) in the period from 17 August to 10 September 2020 were recorded and tracked for the use of address to the imagined audience and the involvement of voices representing the audience. The found instances were then transcribed and further analysed in order to answer the following questions:

RQ1: How is the imagined audience addressed in the Czech TV news broadcasts?
RQ2: How is the audience represented by voices speaking on their behalf in the Czech TV news broadcasts?

This RQ2 was broken down into contributory research questions focusing on the categorization of the involved speakers:

CRQ2.1 What categories do the speakers represent?
CRQ2.2 How are these categories constructed?

The analysis also allowed to assess the sound-bites content-wise and answer the questions:

RQ3: On what topics are the involved speakers invited to speak?
and
RQ4: What do the voices in the sound-bites express (opinion, evidence, advice…)?

The character of the channels where the TV news broadcasts for the analysis were taken from should also be taken into account. ČT1 is a public service broadcaster established in 1992 as opposed to TV Nova, which is a commercial broadcaster (first broadcasting in 1994) as well as Prima (first broadcasting in 1993). The survey of viewer ratings in 2019 showed that these were the most popular TV channels in that year. The public service ČT 1 was the overall winner with the highest all-day viewer ratings, however, in the prime time (defined as 7 p.m. till 11 p.m. in the

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survey, which included also the time of the TV news broadcasts which were the subject of this analysis), it was surpassed by the commercial TV Nova. TV Prima was rated the third in the survey. (Aust) Concerning broadcasting TV news, it however changed the format based on a partnership with CNN International Commercial announced on 2 April 2019 (MediaGuru) and since May 2019, the prime-time news have been broadcast in the format of "CNN Prima News". This study thus analysed the public service "Události" (ČT1) and the commercial "Televizní noviny" (TV Nova) and "CNN Prima News". Due to their different character concerning commerciality and the expected attitude to the audience linked to it, the analysis could offer answer to the following question:

RQ5: Are there any differences between the individual channels concerning the addressing and representation of the imagined audience?

For the transcription, transcription conventions adopted from Tolson (2006) were used (see the Annex 1) and the analysis was performed making use of the conversation analysis strategies and special attention was paid to the categorization of the speakers. As the analysed data are multimodal, also the visual aspects needed to be taken into account; however, it is one of the limitations of this study that due to its scope, not all visual meaning resources could be taken into consideration during the analysis. Attention was paid especially to the overall setting of the speakers' contributions and the environment they were in, as well as to written components appearing on the screen, but e.g. camera movement, distance of the speakers and other aspects were left out. The selected examples included in the following section consist of the transcription of the spoken word and written word; the visual setting and action/movement/gestures of the speakers are only described verbally.

4. Findings

This section summarizes the findings, answering the set research questions and providing selected relevant examples. The examples are translated from Czech into English to enable the reader to follow the findings. Hopefully, this should not hinder the authenticity of the findings as for each of the selected examples, best effort is made to render those original qualities of the Czech sentences that are relevant for the set research aims. Examples which are only illustrative of a phenomenon observed more times in the data and in which turn-taking or interplay of more factors, such as visual and verbal ones etc., does not play an

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important role as regards the illustration of the phenomenon, are not numbered and are included only in brackets. More complex examples or those that need further commenting are then transcribed according to the transcription conventions attached and numbered. This section also includes some representations of the identified categories in numbers, however, these should be taken only as informative and illustrative of the distribution of the categories in the data, so that it can be seen which was the most frequent category, which was not represented at all in the data etc.; these numerical representations definitely cannot aim at offering any thorough statistic account.

4.1 RQ1: Address to the audience

The most frequent tool for addressing the imagined audience used by all three analysed channels was the personal pronoun "you" ("vy" in Czech) and, as the Czech is an inflected language, also associated forms of verbs. As opposed to English, Czech differentiates between an informal and formal form of "you"; however, if it is used in plural, the difference is eliminated. The frequency of including this pronoun and associated verb forms was slightly lower in the case of ČT1, which might point to its lower tendency to appeal to the viewer; however, more significant differences between the channels were identified in using the second person forms together with interrogative and imperative forms. Imperative forms appeared in the TV Nova and Prima broadcasts in order to encourage the viewers to some further action especially in connection with their presence near their TV screens (such as Nova's "Stay with us" – "Zůstaňte s námi" in Czech, which has become quite iconic in the Czech Republic as it is repeated several times during every broadcast before every commercial or another interruption of the broadcast) or in connection with other platforms and services that the channel offers (e.g. TV Nova's information server with additional news and information which the viewers are asked to visit several times during each broadcast). This trend confirms the tendency towards consumerization of the discourse because the audience is explicitly invited to "consume" more of the broadcaster's products.

Other frequent situations in which commands were used included advising the viewers (e.g. Prima's "Before you get into your car and start driving, look at your driving licence, you can be among the more than a half million of Czech drivers whose driving license will expire this year."). These instances emphasized the relevance of the report for the overhearing audience and served the function of pointing to the fact that the reports are broadcast for the benefit of the audience.

The use of interrogative forms was not as frequent as the use of commands but in most cases, they were used when introducing a report on, for instance, new

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regulations that would affect a lot of citizens of the republic (e.g. Prima's "Do you know where to wear masks?"). Interestingly, there were cases when direct questions were supplemented with answers of the voices in brief sound-bites that followed the question (asked by the newsreader or introduced in writing on the screen at the beginning of the report) so quickly that they could be considered the following turn in the conversation and thus, the feeling of the voice in the sound-bite substituting the missing answer of the imagined viewers was even strengthened.

A similar case was identified in a broadcast of CNN Prima News on using inhalers as of 8 September 2020 (example 1). The question "Do you use inhaler correctly? ("Používáte správně inhalátor?" in Czech) was present on the screen during the whole report – during the newsreader's speech in the studio, as well as during the reporter's interviewing a doctor and two ladies in a park who were left anonymous:

(1)

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8)	newsreader	as many as the <u>half</u> of the asthmatics in the Czech Republic use the inhaler incorrectly. this is at least what a (.) new study focusing on this problem says. .hh according to the doctors, it is precisely <u>this group</u> of people that is <u>more</u> threatened by covid. .hh we will show you now how to inhale correctly and prevent complications.	newsreader in the studio
(9)	reporter	(describes the correct use of inhaler, omitted)	a reporter is showing how to use an inhaler
(10) (11)	Václava Bártů, lung doctor	the diseased person inserts the inhaler in their mouth .hh the next step is… (omitted)	the doctor in the street, written label "Václava Bártů, lung doctor" on the screen
(12)	reporter	how would <u>you</u> correctly use the inhaler?	reporter approaching with the microphone a lady in a park

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(13) (14) (15)	lady 1	well, it gets pushed[2], some (1,5) some dust or just (1,5) the aerosol gets created there and then the (1,5) the given liquid in it gets breathed in	a younger lady in a park (no label)
(16) (17) (18)	lady 2	I breathe out[3], I circle the (1,5) the something and blow, breathe in, (.) hold my breath, (.) take it out and (1,5) blow out.	an elderly lady in a park (no label)
(19)	reporter	how long do you hold your breath?	the reporter's movement with the mike from the lady's mouth to his mouth and back
(20)	lady 2	I don't know, I don't count it	
(21) (22)	the voice of the lung doctor	then they hold their breath for 5 or better 10 seconds and breathe out.	the reporter is holding an inhaler and counts on his fingers, in the background
(23) (24) (25)	reporter's voice	it must be added that if we don't breathe in the substance, it has, according to the doctor Václava Bártů (.) zero effectivenes.	still the reporter using the inhaler

In example (1), it is interesting to observe who exactly is addressed by the second person plural form included in the question. Unlike other questions with this grammatical form found in the data (such as "Do you know where to wear masks?", as mentioned above), it cannot be concluded that the addressee could be any member of the mass audience, as inhalers are used only by a specific category of people. They are referred to as "asthmatics" (line 1), "this group of people" (line 5) and "diseased person (people)" (line 10). The two persons who are then asked a similar question just formulated in other words, this time including second person singular form of "you" in Czech, provide a description of the process of using an inhaler, showing their experience with this process. None of them denies their belonging to the group of asthmatics, indicating that they have been preselected for the sound-bites. Their answers suggest that they are competent to speak on the topic as they have personal experience with using inhalers. The overall format of

[2] in Czech, the sentences are in the passive voice
[3] in Czech, the sentences are in first person singular form

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this news report suggests that it is intended for a specific group of the mass audience – the asthmatics. This complies with the assertion that the speakers in the sound-bites as well as the audience who is addressed/represented are classified into categories. With this in mind, it is, however, remarkable that the reporter uses the inclusive form of first person plural in his closing sentence (line 23 – "pokud nevdechneme" in Czech manifested by the verb form, translated as "if we don't breathe" into English). Does this indicate that the reporter belongs to the category of asthmatics himself? Or is he using this form only to establish closeness to the addressed viewers?

The latter is quite likely to be the case, as using the inclusive first personal plural forms in order to imitate intimacy with the viewers occurred many times in the analysed data. The example (2) shows a TV Nova reporter commenting on the possibility of having electronic toll "stickers" in the Czech Republic on 4 September 2020:

(2)

(1) (2) (3)	reporter	we all somehow know another disadvantage of paper toll stickers. did you scrub it from the window?	on the road, moves with the microphone to a driver standing next to his car
(4)	driver	I scrubbed, I scrubbed.	a man next to his car, label "driver"

In example (2), the reporter's "we all somehow know" (line 1, "tak nějak všichni známe" in Czech) classifies the reporter, the audience, as well as the interviewed driver into one group, as the reporter's question and driver's turn providing a response come immediately after the reporter's statement about the shared knowledge of the disadvantages of paper toll stickers. The driver's response confirms the statement and as the statement in general concerns a state of things that most people, as is assumed, are dissatisfied or bothered with, the viewers may gain a feeling that they are not alone in the bothering situation. By this means the intimacy with and appeal to the audience is strengthened.

Answering the RQ1 showed that the audience is addressed most often by using second person plural forms, often in combination with interrogative and imperative forms, and inclusive use of first person plural forms. Typically, these tools serve to create intimacy with the viewers, reduce the boundaries between them and the members of the broadcasting institution by showing that the reporter is "one of them", and appeal to them directly in order to provoke further action, often connected to their quality of consumers.

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4.2. CRQ2.2 Construction of categories

The analysis of the collected data confirmed the tendency towards categorisation of speakers included in the news broadcasts in most cases. Most frequently, the categorisation was performed directly by naming or "labelling" the speaker, either in the form of a written text appearing on the screen while the person was speaking or by mentioning such a label in a reporter's introductory speech.

Very often, the speakers even performed "self-categorization", confirming the trend observed by Myers (2004) when the interviewed speakers feel the need to justify their competence or right to speak on the topic by explicitly stating who they are and how that relates to the question they are answering (e.g. a man saying "I am a young driver but I don't see a reason why I should be disadvantaged" when talking after the reporter commented on the possibility that drivers, after getting their driver's licence, could be given stricter requirements concerning driving offences than more experienced drivers).

What plays an important role in the categorization of the speakers is also the environment in which they are shot, because it is not so often that they are interviewed literally on the street, in a place which has no relevance to the discussed topic. If they are interviewed on the street, there is still, in most cases, a mention of the city where they live and if the topic of the interview concerns events in that city, they act as representatives of the local citizens rather than representatives of any member of the mass audience. Similarly, if people are shown sitting in a canoe, even without any further label they can be perceived as representatives of the interest group of paddlers.

Only sometimes were there instances in the data when the speaker was shot in the street of a city, the name of which was not mentioned or not relevant for the discussed news event. An example (see example (3)) illustrating this situation could be an anonymous man's contribution in a news report on cheating in selling honey, broadcast on TV Nova on 29 August 2020:

(3)

(1) (2)	reporter	the cheaters rely on the fact that a common consumer cannot recognize a difference	reporter on the street moving with his microphone towards a man
(3) (4)	man	It can't be recognised (1.5) maybe just by the smell.	a man on the street, no label

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The man in the example (3) is not labelled by any name or group affiliation and the setting, the street where he is interviewed is also left anonymous and neither has any connection to the discussed topic. What is more, the man's turn comes after the reporter's reference to a "common consumer" (line 1–2). By confirming the reporter's statement, the speaker can be classified just as this "common consumer" which could be equated to "any member of the mass audience".

Interestingly, there could not be traced any significant patterns concerning, for instance, when the speakers were labelled with their names and when they were left anonymous. Even the same channel sometimes used full names of people answering questions of a general character affecting every citizen of the republic (such as about wearing masks, travelling restrictions, driving police checks etc.) and sometimes not for questions of the same character. Therefore, there does not seem to be any specific strategy on the part of the broadcasters; the only traceable pattern concerned TV Nova's treatment of several voices ordered in a sequence without any interruption – in such sequences, the people were usually not labelled in any way and the screen showed a writing "survey" ("anketa" in Czech) and sometimes the name of the town where the survey took place. However, that still did not mean that people in such sound-bites would fall into the group of non-categorized speakers capable of representing any member of the audience – often the locality played a role, as they were questioned about events related to the specific town. Generally, there was a larger number of cases when the name of the speaker was included even if they were talking on a general topic as opposed to fewer cases when they were left anonymous. That could also be indicative of the broadcaster's tendency to include the names and introduce the speakers if possible. The cases with not mentioned names could indicate situations when the speakers did not agree with the public showing of their names. However, this is just an assumption that cannot be confirmed without knowing the exact motivation or constraints on the part of the broadcasting institution.

4.3. CRQ2.1 + CRQ2: Constructed categories

Besides the fewer cases when the speakers could represent any member of an undifferentiated audience (see the example (3) above), the speakers' identity was presented in a manner establishing their affiliation to a certain category. The data showed that these categories could be labelled as: experience/job/family role, local people, and a special category which I called a "model case", as this appeared in my data repeatedly and in a distinctive form, and which could be regarded the closest to the "experiential interview" (Montgomery 2008).

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4.3.1 Experience/job/family role

This category of speakers was usually labelled by means of writing the name of their job position (e.g. a post officer talking about their everyday routine) or interest/experience group, such as "driver", "tourist", "Covid tested", "traveller" etc. or their family role, e.g. "mother". These various labels are treated as one general category here because they showed some common aspects, especially the fact that speakers with such labels usually gave account of their experience gained due to their having these roles. Typically, tourists describe the qualities of a place they visited, travellers describe the process they had to go through when crossing the borders or booking tickets, Covid tested people talk about what it feels like when a smear is taken etc. Sound-bites with speakers belonging to this category did not show any significant irregularities and could be interpreted as serving the illustrative function and adding a sense of more trustworthiness for the viewers if a person with first-hand experience confirms what is stated in the news report, as proposed, for instance, by Lefevere et al. (2012, 115) who argue that "the opinions expressed in vox pops have credibility because ordinary people are more likely to be trusted than experts and particularly politicians."

4.3.2 Local people

This category is nominated as an independent one due to the high number of cases when the speakers were labelled by their place or residence (or place where they were interviewed, which is often hard to assess because not always were they explicitly referred to as "citizens of…"; however, in most cases they spoke on matters related to the town they were in). Typical examples falling under this category included commenting on new projects being implemented or planned in the given town, assumptions about how great the danger of an infection is in the town with the highest number of people infected with Covid at the given moment etc.

4.3.3 Model case

This category bears certain overlaps with the first two ones identified, or rather encompasses them both and represents instances of sound-bites that differ from the traditional formal perception of "vox pops" the most and could be treated rather as experiential interviews, according to Montgomery (2008). They include a speaker who could represent many members of the audience, but who is introduced quite thoroughly by the reporter or voice-over with their full name, experience/job/family role and/or a locality, who is usually shot in the place where

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they live, who is given more space in the broadcast than the elsewhere observed few seconds, and who often contributes to the news report with more turns. I have called this category a "model case" because the speaker appears as a nominated representative of an audience group and the viewers can follow their story, which could be, and definitely already is, happening not only to this one speaker. The following example (example 4) from TV Nova's report on mosquito infestation as from 23 August illustrates this format:

4)

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)	voice-over	ms. Janinka has lived in Litovel for more than 60 years. because of the mosquitos, she goes out only during the day now. .hh despite that, she cannot avoid the bloodthirsty vermin	an elderly lady moving in her garden
(6)	lady	there are clouds (1.5) swarms.	
(7) (8) (9) (10	voice-over	in the evening and at night, it is not even possible to go out here because of the mosquitoes, (.) not even mentioning the ventilation of flats.	Janinka going down the stairs of her house
(11) (12) (13)	lady	I did not sleep until the morning, I was so:: bitten, legs and everything, (1.5) but they bite through everything	Janinka in her garden

"Ms. Janinka" is introduced in example (4) using all the above-mentioned tools. Basically, her story is presented as a narrative with the opening introducing part followed by a formulation of a problem. She is competent to speak on the topic because of her first-hand experience. Her contributions are repeated; she does not speak just once. In some aspects, especially the form, the amount of information that is given about her, and the devoted time in the broadcast, her speech (and other speeches falling into this category of a "model case") immensely differs from the sound-bites listed here in other categories, and yet there could be many other people in her place speaking on the same matter. This category is therefore a specific instance that represents the voices of many potential viewers, but at the same time nominates the speaker as a unique one by which it draws them nearer to how "experts", politicians, and other public figures are represented in the news broadcasts.

The individual constructed categories of speakers and the numbers of found instances in the individual channels are summarised in the following table:

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Table 1. Categories of speakers

	Number of found instances	% from the total
ČT		
experience/job/family role	25	33 % from 75
local people	13	17 % from 75
model case	37	50 % from 75
no category		
TV NOVA		
experience/job/family role	55	34 % from 160
local people	62	39 % from 160
model case	13	8 % from 160
no category	30	19 % from 160
CNN Prima News		
experience/job/family role	43	35 % from 124
local people	40	32 % from 124
model case	9	7 % from 124
no category	32	26 % from 124

4.4. RQ3: Topics

The topics that the speakers' contributions concerned are summarised in the following table:

Table 2. Topics of speakers' comments

	ČT 1number/ % from total	TV Nova number/ % from total	CNN Prima News/ % from total cases
government regulations, political events	34/ 45 %	59 / 37 %	54 / 44 %
problems in the area (not functioning infrastructure…)	14/ 19 %	15 / 9 %	9 / 7 %
tourist attractions, interesting places, free time activities	12/ 16 %	51 / 32 %	34 / 27 %
crimes, floods, fire…	3/ 4 %	7 / 4 %	4 / 3 %
illnesses, health issues (COVID or others)	8 / 11 %	8 / 5 %	8 / 6 %
police checks of drivers	1 / 1 %	6 / 4 %	5 / 4 %
prices of products		6 / 4 %	3 / 3 %
weather		5 / 3 %	5 / 4 %
gardening, crops	3 / 4 %	3 / 2 %	2 / 2 %

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The list of topics shows that when the speakers have their say, it is always on something that has already concerned them personally or can do so in the future (such as planned government regulations etc.)

4.5. RQ4: Expression of opinion, evidence, advice, knowledge, and explanation

In most cases, the speakers refer to their experience and simply provide evidence for what is being reported on (e.g. speakers classified as parents describe that it is difficult for them when children are at home learning distantly) or express their opinion on the issue (e.g. a man classified by a locality saying that wearing masks at his workplace is uncomfortable for him but he understands it is necessary).
Opinion and evaluation are also often expressed by people who might not have direct experience with the reported event (e.g. evaluation of a crime in their town). Sometimes, speakers are shown providing explanation for something (e.g. a man in the street, classified by a locality, providing his assumptions about why a flat was burnt in his town) and occasionally giving advice (e.g. a man classified by a locality saying that spreading mosquito bites with ammonia should help).

Interesting are also instances when speakers are asked to show their knowledge about something. Typically, they are asked a question formulated similarly as "Do you know …?", and what is shown are only their answers. Such sound bites are sometimes even accompanied by visual ticks or crosses appearing on the screen after the speakers provide their answers, indicating whether they were right or wrong. It can be observed in this type of sound-bites that they most often show the lack of knowledge of the speakers, which might shed an unfavourable light on the speakers. The function of such quiz-question (cf. Clayman and Romaniuk, 2011) sound-bites is, however, presumably to provide support for the presented statements, pointing to lack of clarity of government regulations, rather than just to expose the speakers' ignorance (cf. Ekstrom and Tolson 2017, 213).

What the speakers expressed in their contributions in the collected data is summarised in the following table:

Table 3. Expression in speaker's comments

	ČT 1 number/ % from total	TV Nova number/ % from total	CNN Prima News number/ % from total
evidence, opinion based on experience	68 / 91 %	117 / 73 %	98 / 79 %
opinion not directly connected to experience	7 / 9 %	27 / 17 %	15 / 12 %
advice		5 / 3 %	4 / 3 %
knowledge		8 / 5 %	5 / 4 %
explanation		3 / 2 %	2 / 2 %

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4.6. RQ5: Differences between the channels

Whereas samples of sound-bites from the TV Nova and CNN Prima News channels were comparable, significant differences were identified between these two commercial channels and the public service ČT1. The total number of found samples in ČT 1 itself was lower and most of them could be classified as the category of "model case". There was no instance found where the speakers involved could be considered as speaking on behalf of any member of an undifferentiated audience. In three cases, the speakers were left anonymous and not labelled with their name, but they talked about their experience with bad railway infrastructure in their town and were shot in the location of the town's railway station, so they could be classified as local people. The speakers involved in ČT1 broadcast were otherwise always introduced with their full names and often even their job was stated, even if it had no connection to the topic they commented. This tendency strengthened the impression of the selected speakers being unique. There were no instances when the knowledge of the speakers would be tested and overall, their contributions included in the broadcasts were made to look dignified.

In contrast to this, Nova and Prima channels included quite a considerable number of sound-bites in which the speakers were not categorized by any means and commented on issues concerning the general public, thus presenting them in the traditional vox pops format and allowing them to represent basically anybody. Sometimes even quiz-questions were included, which put the interviewees in a kind of a subordinated positions at the first sight (as in the examiner-examinee role division), but as the topic of such questions concerned the government regulations (such as wearing masks in some selected public places) which are generally perceived as very confusing in the Czech environment and widely criticised, it can be assumed that showing the speakers' lack of knowledge rather served the function of giving evidence for the statement that such regulations are confusing, as the statement also often explicitly appeared in the news coverages.

ČT1 also turned out to be more moderate in direct addresses aimed at the potential viewers.

In general, the approach of ČT1 to involving the imagined audience in its news discourse causes that the selected speakers are less differentiated from, for instance, politicians or experts, also present in the broadcast, whereas Nova and Prima more often adopt strategies for treating the viewers as consumers, which is understandable due to their commercial character.

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5. Conclusions

The analysis of 20 prime-time news reports on the public service ČT1 channel, 20 news reports on the commercial TV Nova channel and 20 news reports on the commercial CNN Prima News channel in the period from 17 August to 10 September 2020 showed the tendency to involve the imagined audience in the scripted talk of the newsreaders and reporters by adopting dialogic features such as interrogative and imperative forms, the second person plural pronouns and verb forms and the inclusive forms of first person plural pronouns and verbs, especially by Nova and Prima news broadcasts. This tendency could be explained as an attempt to get closer to the imagined audience, simulate intimacy with them or provoke them to "consume" more of the services offered by the broadcaster, which is in conformity with Fairclough's concept of consumerization and conversationalization of public discourse.

Although the audience is often addressed, its every individual member cannot react and be actually present in the news discourse; however, they can be represented and spoken on behalf of. This is achieved through giving space to speakers who are nominated to comment on the issues in question and illustrate the opinion of "someone like them", as Myers proposes (Myers 2004: 209).

The found samples in the data showed that it is very problematic to differentiate between what should be called "vox pops", what "experiential interviews" or what would be a completely different format, because there seems to be a general tendency not to leave the voices anonymous and, especially on the public service channel, even to give the speakers, if they are presented, more space almost comparable to the space devoted to some public figures, such as experts, politicians etc. The data also confirmed the tendency towards categorization observed e.g. by Myers (2004), when there were many cases when the speakers represented categories of job groups, interest groups or categories defined by their family roles, when they were defined by their affiliation to a certain locality or when more of these aspects were included in their presentation and together with more space offered and more turns in the conversation allowed, they and their stories presented acted as model cases of what did or could happen to many other people belonging to their category.

With regard to the tendency to give more space to the presentation of such speakers as unique individuals, Myers's statement that what is of interest in these formats is "not what you say but what somebody like you says" (Myers 2004: 209) could be revisited and reformulated in the way that "what you say is of interest because it may be said by anybody like you", with greater emphasis put on the

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defined identity of the speaker and its uniqueness, but at the same time its relevance for the other members of the same category.

Furthermore, the major part of the identified samples showed focus on the speaker's experience, which also established their competence. In some cases, the stressed speakers' experience was almost capable of classifying them as "experts" on the topic, at least at the first sight, therefore further research could be conducted into how expertise of such speakers is constructed and what differentiates experts from laymen in TV news broadcasts.

Deeper look could also be taken at any of the aspects identified in the data and addressed in this study as it offers an overview of the trends occurring in the Czech data in a synoptic way and could be used as a starting point for further analysis of the mentioned areas, such as the differentiation between the public opinion and an individual opinion, the "ordinary person" and other persons involved in the news broadcasts or the possible connections between the topics the speakers comment on and the character of their contributions.

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ANNEX 1

Transcription conventions based on Tolson (2006):
( ) If empty, indicates unclear portions of text.
(1.5) Length of pause in seconds.
(.) Pause of less than .5 seconds.
= Indicates that utterance follows immediately on previous utterance, or is latched to separate parts of a continuous utterance by the same speaker.
[Indicates the point at which overlap with another speaker begins.
>….< 'More than' and 'less than' signs indicate that the talk they encompass was spoken noticeably quicker than the surrounding talk.
word- Hyphen indicates word has been cut off sharply.
word Underlining indicates stress given to word or syllable.
WORD Uppercase letters indicate increased volume.
sho::w Colons indicate lengthening of vowel sound.
. Terminal falling intonation.
, Brief pause ('list' intonation).
? Rising intonation.
! Excited intonation.
.hh Audible intake of breath.
hh Audible exhalation.
heh Laugh token.
hhhhh Extended laughter. Where appropriate for the analysis, the length of the laughter response in seconds is indicated in parentheses.
xxxxx Applause. Where appropriate for the analysis, the length of the applause in seconds is indicated in parentheses.

Brief description of visual information provided in the right sections of the transcription tables.

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