



Strategies of Interviewing in Cultural Press: Sample of Romania

Prof. Ph.D. Habil. Carmen Neamtu

“Aurel Vlaicu” State University from Arad. Romania

carmenneamtu2000@gmail.com

carmen.neamtu@uav.ro

ORCID: 0000-0002-9951-9376

The economic and financial crisis has produced a fundamental change in the strategies by which the media relates to both information and the reader. Survival has brought a chain of compromises to the level of content in the press. The cultural press remains an oasis of consistency in a landscape of the press that cultivates more and more sensational (that sells and brings clicks online, so all this brings the much-desired advertising) and short articles.

The press gradually goes out, the circulations being dusted off¹. Newspapers that remain printed on paper also pass their content online and gradually give up complex articles, reports, interviews, investigations, preferring to be news collections. Thus, there is no difference between them and online publications, from which the reader can find out his information in real time and at no cost, other than that of the paid internet connection. Romanian online publications fail to convince readers to pay for the content offered. In these harsh conditions, in my city, Arad, only three newspapers still appear in the classical, printed formula, one being in Hungarian language: *Jurnal arădean*, *Glasul Aradului* and *Nyugati Jelen*. They all also have online content. On July 24, 2022, the *Glasul Aradului* newspaper closed the printed edition of the newspaper.

My work is based on a comparative investigation/analysis of the regional press in Arad, Ro-

¹ Jacques Attali, in *Istoriile mass-mediei. De la semnele cu fum la rețelele de socializare și dincolo de ele*, Ed.Polirom, Iași, 2022, pertinently indicates that when the twenty-first century begins, most newspapers show a „predilection for spectacle, to the detriment of information and indignation at the expense of argumentation. Totally concerned about the competition between them, they do not notice that they are all about to be swept away by digital platforms and social networks.” (p.204) „The economic model of the press on paper will be impossible to maintain”. (p.244) The French professor is more optimistic in his predictions about the survival of sports and local newspapers, but also of magazines that will include in them more complex articles, exactly what is now missing from the online press. (see chapter: „Some newspapers on paper will survive for a while”, p.243).

mania, but the situation here can be applied to the entire Romanian local press: the written press has become an exclusive supplier of news, some taken over exactly in the formula received from the press offices of the institutions. So we can call them *news via PR*. Thus, the journalist turned into a scribe, a fact noted by Romanian journalist Florin Negruțiu:

“To justify his salary, the journalist is forced to produce more and faster, to a line of assembling texts that excludes any initiative and creativity. Online newsrooms have thus turned in recent years into Chinese factories, where investigations and reports are no longer written, but items are produced through the process: copy-paste (...) the journalist does not need «professional training» or «editorial orientation», as long as he is able to operate with the two basic functions of the profession: CTRL-C/CTRL-V. The deprofessionalization of the press is a harsh reality (...).²”

We are witnessing, therefore, a deterioration of the journalistic language (Neamțu 2022: 67-78) and a preference of the press for the cultivation of pseudo-events, of some topics related more to the private life of individuals. The survival of complex genres, such as the interview, depends on the ability of journalists to master this genre and practice it in the press. That is precisely why a reminder of the main techniques seems to me to be essential in this context. Journalism and literature are intertwined in this complex genre that is the interview and that allows the journalist to practice his talent, his culture, his willingness to reveal an interesting person from whom readers have to learn.

My paper treats the interview as a main genre of the written press. The interview can be used by the researchers as a tool of direct documentation on the writer, painter, actor or director interviewed. The study focuses on several interviewing strategies, providing examples from my own experience. I tried to highlight some important steps in interviewing, based on my 26 years of experience in mass-media: fixing the interview with the person we want to talk to, establishing the rules of the interview, meeting (s) with the person concerned in order to obtain the interview, preparation of the interview: topics to be discussed, setting the questions for the interviewee, preparing the recording equipment or clarifying the way of answering (in writing, by e-mail, telephone, etc.).

Key words: Interviewing, rules and possible situations in written/online press, particularities of the genre

The place of interview in the genres of the written press

What is interview? For didactic reasons, below, I will offer some definitions of the interview. The term interview is presented in the French dictionaries as being of English origin, without any other etymological specifications. Thus, in Nouveau Petit Larousse (1972: 553) we read: „Interview - Entretien avec une personne pour l'interroger sur ses actes, ses idées, ses projets, afin d'en publier ou diffuser le contenu, soit de l'utiliser aux fins d'analyse (enquête d'opinion)”. British and American works on this subject do not forget to mention that at the origin of the word is the French verb *entrevoir*, translated *see each other* (The Oxford Dictionary), so to meet each other, to see yourself face to face. To the European definition, related exclusively to the media, other meanings are added to the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary,

² Florin Negruțiu, „Cine dă mai mult de 20 de bani pe presă va câștiga însuțit”, <https://republica.ro/cine-da-mai-mult-de-20-de-bani-pe-presa-va-cac-tiga-insutit>, accessed: 30.05.2022.

in particular of consultation requested or discussion for employment (Yate 1996: 501).

In the field of publishing, interview can be approached from two points of view: as a method of obtaining information and as a particular publishing genre. According to the Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language (1996: 501), the interview's meaning is restricted to „a conversation between a political, cultural personality etc. and a journalist during which he asks questions to find out the opinions of the personality in various issues in order to publish them in the press or to broadcast them on radio and television”. According to analyst Marc Capelle (1994: 55): „the interview is an investigation aimed for gathering information or unpublished opinions directly from a representative person who accepts that his statements are made public”.

The interview could be a planned and controlled conversation between two or more people, conducted with a certain purpose, at least for one of the participants (the interviewer) and during which „both sides speak and listen” (Nicki Stanton in Cernicova 1997:68). Thus, all conversations in the form of interviewing, are intended to obtain, transmit or clarify information.

According to John Brady (1976: 68), the interview is „the science of gaining the trust of the other and obtaining information”. According to Ken Metzler, „the interview is a conversation, usually between two people, to get information for the benefit of an unseen audience. The interview is often an informational exchange that can rise to a level of understanding to which, alone, neither side would have access. So, we can say that the interview is, above all, a conversation with an investigative approach” (Tolcea 1997: 69-70). The interview is both „art and professionalism (Gross 1993: 43), not necessarily „a formal event (...) it covers any situation where the reporter talks to someone face to face to get information” (Crump 1974: 125).

Of all the genres of written press, as Emil Ludwig points out, the interview is the most refined and attractive form. The average newspaper reader may think that this is nothing more than the recording of a conversation; in reality, the interview requires the reporter to have a great deal of skills and well-defined qualities. Through the interview „it is as if the interviewee spoke to each reader individually” (Watson 1973: 45). For beginners in journalism, I recommend to thoroughly inform about the person you are going to interview, taking into account the way the guest looks, by consulting a photo of him if the journalist does not know him: „If possible, examine his photographs because photographs are the most valuable help, nothing reveals more clearly the personality of a man, as his physiognomy”. (Watson 1973: 45)

After Charles J. Stewart and William B. Cash Jr. (1995: 3), we define the interview as a diadic process (from person to person) of communication, having „a serious and predetermined purpose, designed to change behaviors/opinions and involving questions and answers”. The word process brings with it the connotations of dynamics/interactions, as well as the idea of continuous change. „We Americans love the interview so much that we create it every time” points out analyst John Brady (1977: 2) in his book, *The Craft of Interviewing*. Each dialogue is nothing more than a new/fresh discovery of the side of the interviewed personality. An infinite portrait about one and only, inexhaustible subject. In the same book, Daniel Boorstin quoted by Brady (1977: 2-3) calls the interview „a pseudoevent”, an „artificial news” in which things happen only because journalists want it. „We bring people together.

We introduce questions. We predict. We publish. We print and read the results. We judge the participants. We talk endlessly about them” (Brady 1977: 2-3).

The cultural interview illustrates – perhaps in the most successful manner – Boorstin’s statement, but at the same time it raises new questions: How much of the economy of a successful interview belongs to the one who asks the questions and what role do the answers play in this binary ensemble? Does the guest’s personality is important for discussion or the interviewer’s technique/ability/method to bring out the essence of the other in front of the microphone/camera/paper?

According to George Garrett (Brady 1977: 3) the interview is „another sign of our sadness, of our restless existence [...] it’s our compelling desire to achieve the real, our great craving for something authentic while everything around us seems false, a way of believing that at least the naked truth is possible. And we come to see that these people we meet, in the various types of interviews, are like us, they are neither wiser nor braver or less virtuous [...], but only something more intelligent and – of course – luckier than the rest of the world”.

Although it is used in the realization of other journalistic species (portrait, survey), the interview has the main function of expressing an attitude, an opinion (Husson 1991: 51). According to professor Shirley Biagi (1986), an interview is an exchange of information, opinions or experiences from one person to another, while in the *Media Dictionary* (2005: 178), the interview appears as a „conversation made by a journalist with a person, in order to be published in an newspaper”.

În the handbook of Centre de ressources en éducation aux médias³ we can distinguish the following genres of written journalism. I’ll summarize them in the table below to better understand the place of interviewing.

3 <http://reseau-crem.lacsq.org/projet/genres.pdf> , pp.1-15, accessed: 9.07. 2022.

Les genres et les formats médiatiques (pp.1-15) Media genres and formats			
L'information rapportée (pp.1-4) The information reported	L'information expliquée (pp.4-6) The information explained	L'information commentée (pp.6-7) Commented information	Les genres expressifs non journalistiques (pp.7-8) Non-journalistic expressive genres
Le compte rend (the report, account) -"Le terme est utilisé lorsqu'il s'agit de rapporter les éléments importants d'une réunion, d'une conférence de presse, d'une manifestation. Le journaliste qui assiste à ce genre d'événement rédige chronologiquement ce qu'il a vu et entendu de façon purement factuelle. Toutefois, les médias personnalisent aujourd'hui de plus en plus l'information qu'ils communiquent et ce genre journalistique est de moins en moins utilisé". (p.1)	L'analyse (the analysis) - "C'est l'étude en profondeur d'un fait d'actualité, d'un événement, d'une situation afin d'en faciliter la compréhension: le journaliste rapporte les faits, les analyse, les replace dans leur contexte, les met en relation avec d'autres événements passés, fait ressortir les constantes et parfois les contradictions pour en arriver à une ou des conclusions, mais non à des solutions".(p.4)	Le billet -ticket, short opinion text, often written with humor, in French press. - "Il s'agit d'un court article d'opinion, souvent encadré et mis en italique, qui présente de façon humoristique, légère et même sarcastique un événement d'actualité, une idée nouvelle, un sujet d'intérêt humain. L'auteur du billet nous fait part de ses impressions et réactions face à un événement, ou à la suite d'une expérience personnelle".(p.6)	L'article d'opinion et d'analyse (opinion and analysis article) -readers can express their views on an up-to-date topic. - "Plusieurs journaux publient cette forme de texte dans une page annexée à la page éditoriale. C'est la page Forum, Idées, Opinions etc. Tout comme pour la lettre d'opinion, c'est l'équipe de l'éditorial qui décide de sa publication, de son titre, de son illustration par une photographie et de son emplacement dans la page réservée à cette fin. Ce type de texte peut être une lettre d'opinion plus élaborée et fortement argumentée. Il peut aussi être rédigé sous la forme d'un article. Il fait valoir un point de vue sur un sujet ou un événement appuyé sur une expérience et des connaissances souvent spécialisées".(p.7)

<p>L'entrevue (interview)</p> <p>-”L’interview est d’abord un outil de collecte de l’information essentiel à toute démarche journalistique». (p.2)</p> <p>-l’interview d’information.</p> <p>-L’interview de description.</p> <p>-L’interview d’analyse.</p> <p>-L’interview de commentaire.</p> <p>-L’interview d’opinion.</p> <p>-L’interview de personnalité.</p> <p>-L’interview à grand theme. (p.2)</p> <p>- variation of the interviews: the information interview; the description interview; the analysis interview; the comment interview; he opinion interview; the personality interview; the interview with a big theme.</p>	<p>La chronique (column)</p> <p>-genre on the border with literature.</p> <p>-implies a discover of reality in a personal approach, from a memorable angle.</p> <p>- “La chronique (ou column, en anglais) constitue le genre journalistique le plus libre, le plus diversifié. C’est un texte ou un propos amalgame où peuvent se retrouver de la nouvelle, de l’analyse, du commentaire ou même du reportage au fil d’une lecture personnelle qu’en fait le ou la journaliste (le ou la columnist). La chronique repose non pas sur la transmission de l’essentiel (la nouvelle) ni sur la remise en contexte (l’analyse), mais sur la personnalité de celui à qui on la confie. C’est sa lecture de l’actualité, et sa façon de la raconter”. (p.5)</p>	<p>La caricature (caricature)</p> <p>-it is a graphic,funny representation of an event.</p> <p>- “La caricature est une représentation graphique d’un événement d’actualité, d’une situation controversée, telle qu’elle est perçue par un membre de l’équipe éditoriale d’un journal. Elle comporte habituellement un message verbal reflétant une pensée bien articulée”. (p.6)</p>	<p>La lettre d’opinion ou lettre ouverte (open letter)</p> <p>- “Elle est un genre de texte qui nous informe sur les opinions d’une personne par rapport à une situation précise ou un problème donné. Elle est le reflet de la pensée d’un individu et parfois d’un groupe d’individus. Elle s’appuie sur des faits et sur une argumentation tout en n’étant pas impartiale. Comme une lettre, elle est généralement rédigée à la première personne et fait valoir un regard personnel. Elle se fonde sur l’expérience, les connaissances, les informations et l’observation de son auteur. Elle propose une interprétation explicite et porte un jugement qui peut susciter un débat”. (p.8)</p>
--	---	--	---

<p>La nouvelle (dépêche ou brève) (The news dispatch or brief).</p> <p>- “La nouvelle (aussi appelée dépêche ou brève) est un texte qui, à partir d’un événement, met en scène le plus efficacement possible l’essentiel des faits nouveaux, significatifs ou intéressants, en replaçant ces faits dans leur contexte de signification” . (p.3)</p>	<p>Le dossier (the file)</p> <p>-a series of articles on a particular topic that leads to a broad, overall view of a specific theme.</p> <p>- “Le dossier est un texte ou un reportage (ou une série de textes et de reportages) qui cherche à projeter une vue d’ensemble d’un problème ou d’une situation; il cherche à mettre les éléments en relation les uns avec les autres”. (p.5)</p>	<p>La critique (criticism)</p> <p>-”La critique est un genre journalistique qui tient à la fois de l’opinion et de la chronique. Si elle correspond à une forme de commentaire le plus souvent associé au domaine des arts et de la culture (arts, lettres, variétés, cinéma, théâtre etc.), on la retrouve aussi très présente dans le domaine des sports. C’est le domaine par excellence du journalisme d’opinion, où la subjectivité du critique peut être totale. La convention de subjectivité qui régit ce genre fait en sorte que la personnalité de l’auteur devient là aussi, comme dans la chronique, un élément clé dans l’interprétation de ses propos”. (p.6)</p>	
<p>Le portrait (the portrait)</p> <p>-”Le portrait cherche à mettre en scène un sujet (une personne, un groupe, une entreprise, etc.) au moyen d’anecdotes et d’interviews multiples”. (p.3)</p>	<p>L’enquête (the investigation)</p> <p>- “est l’exercice d’une pensée critique et d’une information indépendante. Elle demande du courage intellectuel aux journalistes et aux médias eux-mêmes, car elle conduit à explorer ou à lever le voile sur des réalités ou des problèmes qui dérangent les acteurs, les institutions ou les organisations concernées”. (p.5)</p>	<p>L’éditorial et le commentaire (the editorial and commentary)</p> <p>- “ce sont des textes d’opinion, s’appuyant sur une argumentation logique, tout en ne demeurant pas impartiaux. Ils sont l’expression d’une opinion, avec ou sans son contexte d’analyse, où prime le point de vue personnel du commentateur ou de l’éditeur de la publication”. (p.6)</p>	

<p>Le potin (gossip news) – info for yellow journalism, news without a clear checking.</p> <p>- “Le potin, c’est un fait d’information rapporté tel qu’il a été vu ou entendu, c’est-à-dire sans toutes les vérifications et remises en contexte qui caractérisent le traitement ordinaire de la nouvelle”. (p.4)</p>		<p>La revue de presse (the press review)</p> <p>- “est une comparaison de ce qu’il y a dans les journaux. Elle retient des extraits d’éditoriaux et d’articles. Elle les assemble en un montage de citations, organisé selon un angle particulier ou autour d’un thème. La revue de presse peut s’intéresser à l’ensemble des informations ou se limiter aux informations essentielles. Elle peut se limiter aux seuls éditoriaux ou à un événement particulier”. (p.7)</p>	
<p>Le reportage (the report)</p> <p>- “Il désigne un genre journalistique où l’accent est placé non pas sur l’événement (comme dans la nouvelle), ni même sur sa signification (comme dans l’analyse), mais sur le contexte social et humain de la situation décrite ou de l’événement rapporté”. (p.4)</p>			

These important definitions of the interview lead to the establishment of a complex genre that used questions and answers, as a result of the collaboration between the interviewer and the interviewee in the process of a dialogue. The answer and the question play a consistent role in the economy of interviewing.

Journalistic Style and Interviewing

The editorial style of the cultural interview could be circumscribed to the journalistic style (more on this subject: Neamțu 2009: 170-189), having at the same time an accentuated aesthetic dimension. This brings it closer to the language of literature, which takes on characteristics from all styles of language. We can say that cultural interviews embrace the “emotional function of language” and cultivate “the poetic function of the world”⁴ (Ruști 2002: 8).

Thus, the style of the interview must be a direct, clear, simple way for the reader to understand the text (Neamțu 2007, 2022). The style makes the reading attractive and turns the reader into an “indirect witness to the facts reported by the journalist” (Gaillard 2000: 126). The journalistic style must be simple and alive.

4 If the main concern of the journalist is to inform, that of the writer is to transfigure reality in a truthful way”(Ruști 2002, pp. 11-12)

In the table below I will present, in summary, the main characteristics of the journalistic style, evoked by the French professor.

Simplicity of the journalistic style	The concrete, precise character of the journalistic style	The vivacity of the journalistic style
<p>This is the dominant feature of the journalistic style. It is the most difficult quality to obtain and it focuses primarily on vocabulary. (p. 128)</p> <p>Grammatical simplicity requires avoiding the use of a difficult and precious topic (p. 128)</p>	<p>The slightest trace of useless talk will distract the reader and “remove” him from the text. (p.128)</p>	<p>Simplicity and precision give the style a certain vivacity. (p.129)</p> <p>To be lively, to capture the reader, Gaillard recommends: writing in the present tense, inserting quotes, visual images and comparisons into the text.</p>

Trying to conclude, I would say that the journalistic style must place interviewing between the pleasure of reading and the exact information transmitted to the lecturer (Neamțu 2007: 178). To say a lot in a few sentences and in the most attractive way possible, here is the secret of a successful interview.

So, through questions, the journalist wants to discover the other guest, to find out his life experiences, advices, success or desires etc. According to my experience, the best interviews are the ones that pass the test of time, which make the reader discover pieces of life, feelings, problems that he has faced too over time.

Preparing An Interview

For didactic reasons, I will summarize below the main steps to be taken in documenting an interview.

- Establishing the subject, the topic of discussion.
- Familiarizing of the journalist with the topic of the interview by consulting the different sources that the journalist has at his disposal (books, textbooks, dictionaries, other studies or articles, other Internet sources, people close to the guest or experts who know the issues you will address in the discussion etc.)
- Election of the guest according to his competence or according to his representativeness. (The guest must be a person competent in the field to be addressed, or a person representative for the subject of discussion).
- Familiarity with the guest (knowledge of his CV, possibly by requesting him in advance or by documenting by the journalist; going through other statements, interviews, news with and about the guest; knowing some details about the invited person, such as temperament, sensitive points, which should be avoided or, on the contrary, used in the interview.)
- Clarify the purpose of the interview and establishing a plan for discussions ap-

proached by the journalist. We will communicate to the guest the topic(s) under discussion. This does not mean that the journalist will tell his guest, before the interview, what are all questions. The journalist will have to notify the interviewee about the topic and the discussion time allocated to the interview, precisely so that his guest can come prepared.

The documentation in an interview consists of a collection of information on the ground and the use of different techniques to better understand the person. Pre-documentation consists of a familiarity of the journalist with the topic he will address. The journalist will find out all about his guest, he will be interested in his future discussion partners, checking other interviews of the guest.

Here is a situation: the journalist wants to interview an actor. In the pre-documentation phase, the interviewer can call the theater agency to find out the date of the show in which the actor is playing (or watch the street posters with the theater's schedule for the current month, or follow the facebook page of the theater). If he contacts the press relations office of the theater, he will receive details regarding the cast, the genre of show (musical, comedy, step and pantomime, drama etc.). All these informations help the journalist to establish the topic of the interview, but also a possible scheme of the questions he wants to ask his guest. That's not to say that the dialogue can't deviate from the originally proposed line, or that following the actor's answers, the journalist can't ask anything else than what he set out from home. The beginning plan serves him for the coherence of the discussion, not to forget or left uncovered any theme.

The interview can start from a simple news story announcing a performance, a painting exhibition or a book launch. From my experience of 26 years in the written press, I can say that the interview is much more consistent if it is done by the journalist after he watches the show, reads the writer's book or sees the exhibition of the painter he wants to interview. In this case, the journalist's questions can be more applied, more to the point. And the guest is much more open to respond to a journalist who shows interest in what the guest does.

Important weapons of the interviewer: politeness and insistence

Spontaneity is welcome in the interview, even if, frequently, it is played by the journalist. An affable journalist always has spare questions ready for situations in which he cannot fully predict in what direction the discussion could evolve. The choice of the interlocutor is therefore essential, the guest of the journalist must be competent and must have the information that the public needs.

From my experience of 26 years in written press, when you arrange an interview with a person, it is important to be polite and punctual. Remember that when you call to set up an interview, the person in question has its own important things to solve. Insist on discussing, explaining to him politely, without raising the tone, why you want the interview, where it will appear and how long it should be. Be prepared to rephrase the questions, especially if the guest gracefully avoids the answer you expect. Thus, an answer that was initially elusive, can take substance by reformulating your questions.

Many times when my guest did not want to answer a questions I used the so called reader's technique. I told him that my curiosity is nothing more than the curiosity of any reader, who wants to know what the guest thinks about this topic. My experience in interviewing has shown me that when you conduct an interview it is important to close your own mobile phone before the discussion begins. It's rude for your guest to hear your phone ringing bell. This interruption can harm the interview, the guest forgetting his idea or easily passing a difficult question, saved (from discussion) by the bell.

I recommend that you look your interviewee in the eye, showing him that you are interested in what he is saying. The face can speak in your favor. To avoid nodding your head, which can be disturbing over the course of a long interview, you can use phrases like: *Really?; Is that true?* I used this technique in an interview with photographer and explorer Alin Totorean who walked alone through entire Mongolia. I chose to play the card of innocence, using the formula - *Really? Are you sure?*, but also interjections or statements instead of questions: *There is a touch of madness in the middle, you have to confess it to me ...or Please, be honest [...] I cannot imagine that...*

„I was surprised by the vastness of the places. On the map the spaces didn't seem so wide to me”, said the explorer tot me. And to innitiate the discusion in an interesting direction, I challenged my guest:

„*There's a touch of madness in the middle, you have to admit it...*

I'm doing mountaineering, caving and mountain tourism for 20 years. For two years I prepared especially for this expedition, I climbed Făgăraș Mountains. I didn't start from scratch.

Here are some questions that I used in my interview with the explorer Totorean: *Did the people from Mongolia look at you strangely? You stand out by your physical appearance; And in the yurt, with your hosts, when you told them you were coming from Romania, how did they react?; You know what is said, the story of the creepy Genghis-Han. That in Mongolia we encounter cruel people. I read that Genghis-Han killed the sheep in a certain, cruel way, just to preserve its blood inside. Is that true?; Have you seen in Mongolia the gap between rich and poor, between village and city?; What do you mean when you say that the people from Mongolia have too much faith in strangers?* The guest says that he happened to eat at an inn. Next to him stood a man who gave him the address of his wife. How many of us would have done that? To invite a stranger to sleep in his absence, in the same house with his own wife? The journalist's natural question is: *And you agreed to go to the village. You slept in the same yurt with a wife alone from her husband. Dare I ask you how the Mongolian women seemed to you?*

Because the journalist is persistent, Alin Totorean confesses that in Mongolia: “my house is also your home. The yurt is always open and that he was surprised by the locals each day. He always received small presents, cheese, milk, cakes and handwritten letters. Someone later on translated them to me. They wrote that they were glad to encounter me and that they were praying for me to arrived safe back home. I can tell you that they never asked me for money. But I gave them sweets, balloons for their children, cigarettes.

I left them clothes from my backpack, notebooks, pens, sometimes when I had nothing to give them, I left them money”.

Journalist as a chameleon

The chameleon’s method in interview is the journalist’s attempt to get closer to his interlocutor, gaining his trust by the way he looks. The journalist is trying to resemble his guest. Thus, the interviewer’s clothing should not be ignored by him. An interview with a soprano in shorts, t-shirt and plastic shoes can block the discussion, harm the dialogue. We communicate through our words but also through our clothes, with the gestures we make, with the way we look at an interview.

For obtaining an interesting interview, the guest must feel comfortable during the dialogue. Analyst Max Eggert (1998: 43) believes that in a communication we are more than the words we speak, so the way we present ourselves says a lot about each of us. In his work, *The Perfect Interview*, he quotes Alfred Adler: „If we want to understand a person [...] we’re going to have to imagine we don’t hear it. We just have to look at it. In this way we will be like the spectators of a pantomime exercise”. The way we present and discuss ourselves is of particular importance. Specialists speak of an impression management, in which 60% of the credibility of our words is due to our body language. (Neamțu 2018)

Here’s another example of an interview with theatre director Alexander Hausvater. My curiosities led to an engaging discussion, not at all boring. It’s certain that his performances do not leave you indifferent. The director discovers with every play his ability to sneak under the viewer’s skin, long after the curtain fell.

“I would like to start our discussion from an idea that you have said me in a previous interview: «you’ll never succeed either in profession, or in love, if you do not abandon yourself and risk».

Risk is a necessity of creative process and any cultural evolution is based on the risk of an individual or group of people who have risked their personal freedom, career, finances, and safety in order to improve and to reform. The concept of risk is one of the culture evolution.

I can’t imagine that someone can move forward in creative thinking, if not probably risks losing everything he accumulated in the present for the future. It’s something I’ve realized over the years, by watching at those people who have influenced me. All had this enormous courage to risk in order to change.

[introducing the reader’s technique that is of a different opinion than the guest]

However what do you say to those who would reply to you: Mr. Hausvater, it is easy to you to talk about change, risk, you have a name, financial stability, you do not have young children, you do not have to pay the bank every month ...

I would say that this is the definition of mediocrity. And the definition of a society that does not want to change. To risk that to change it! In theatre we talk about change. If we complain about the present moment, what do we do to improve it? If we say: it’s not good now, why don’t we risk to lose this *it is not well from now for it will be better*. It’s in human nature to fight in order to exploit his talents and qualities. The sublime moment in the life of a man in which he was exploiting the infinite possibilities that they have.

What is tragic is to see people who cannot use the opportunity to do well. That affect me and saddens me most today.

Just that they think to go permanently in the West. What do you say to people who admit: I'm tired of Romania! I want to escape from Romania!

When you get tired of Romania is a signal that Romania was not tired of you and will follow you in a negative way wherever you are. People who are leaving to another country are those who do not have how to survive. They go there with their culture, with their destiny, and with love for the country, which gave them a personal history, grandparents and grand grandparents. Those who want to escape from their country are naked people, and who if I would see them in America or Canada, I would cross the street. Because you read them immediately. The only way to understand the departure- it is of a man who leave there to be SAVED himself. The departure of the Romanians, as a phenomenon, it's among the most odious. In the USA and Canada they had a crucial responsibility towards the country and which they have left it behind. Because of this, the Poles, in USA and Canada, made sure based on their money to translate their writers and poets. The same made the Italians. Mircea Eliade is not translated in English, and what it is translated is not at a high level. The fact that Eminescu is considered a mediocre poet, it is the fault of people who have translated him miserably. You see, this supreme selfishness makes me think that most of those who have left the country, there are people with whom, I would want to drink a coffee. How about my returning...

Mr. Hausvater, how do you face up to the daily alert? Are you not exhausted?

How do you choose the shows, do you have a programme/project after you get off the stage?

Do you think that each text has its time?"

Any news story that has appeared in the press can be the starting point for a good interview.

"Mr. Hausvater, I read yesterday that we, Romanians, are the most unhappy of the Europeans. Are you happy? What makes you happy?"

Family, kids. Things when they are going well. When you see that you've managed to get a group of people over a period of time who have been transformed. They have become something else, what was in their potential. And even if you have taken out the best in them, temporarily, you have the pleasure to see how a potentially indefinite form until then, now fostered. I am happy when I see actors abandoned completely. When I feel that I have contributed for a second, for a time, at a good moment of someone else. My happiness is to produce happiness in each other. Maybe it is a smile now. Maybe it's a common thought ... I am a man who communicates a thought. However that thought I did not want to change you, I don't want to repeal your all your personality. I want to get on with a smile. I always defined the smile as primary state of creation.

So to open the day with a smile...

I start the rehearsals, it is a good feeling and you never need an Indian guru to induce

you this. We need to find this state in us.

Do you often smile?

I am more depressing than happy ... and I'm terribly upset on myself when I fall into the thinking, when I closed silently. Because of this profession it is very difficult to communicate after. Think that 8-9 hours I talk and after I want to hear the silence, to feel it. And those close to me believe even that I don't want to talk to them.

It is difficult after playing Hamlet all day to go and do the dishes?

To take aspirin at the pharmacy for children ... Because of this, my fellow colleagues have wasted their lives in drink or drugs. I have never found happiness in such temptations. It is almost a rule in Romanian theatre after rehearsals, the director and the actors to get drunk. I have always discouraged players into believing that they are friends of the drink. We together we are creative partners. After you finish the performance, we can remain friends. I think that is a lot of vodka, beer, and wine in relationships that must be professional. When I entered yesterday in the rehearsal room, I saw two forgotten texts there. I was very severe with the actors who have left the texts. It means that you have not used them in the evenings and they came the next day to work without any thought. It's inadmissible.

Today there are so many temptations cheaper than theatre, less demanding. Think that they are Romanians who don't know where the cashier of the theatre is, but they know where the mall, the supermarket is. What's your frivolous pleasure?

It seems to me very important to see life, to observe it. I told to Mr. Radu Beligan, the well known Romanian actor, that I hate low quality oriental-like songs. However I, unlike him, I have listened to them. I have analysed precisely. And I do not like them. Every morning I read about 15 newspapers from the countries in which I have lived or I am still living. I know little details in all sorts of news. They give me the impression of multiple existences. When I go somewhere and I want to buy a newspaper, I want to talk to the lady from that kiosk. And I am obfuscated that she thinks the whole relationship is that I give her the money and she give me the newspaper. It lost the art of the dialogue, of the conversation. Every man is a bearer of many stories. I am a seeker of many stories. I want to show them. Every man is a source of joy. I worked three months in Canada, America, Israel, and when I came back in Romania I smile to the people all the time. However here in Romania, when you smile, people say: «what do you want from me? Women - are you not ashamed ... Do you want it. .. and that...»

The smile is more than a gesture, is a way of reaction...

Smile is a form to respond that we have seen. By responding you can live in any country. When you pretend that you do not see, or you do not hear, not only that we do not live, but we increase the chain of negative things today".

Conclusions

Highlighting some important steps in interviewing, the paper regards interview as a main genre of the written press and focuses on several interviewing strategies, along with exam-

ples for a better understanding of the interview. The paper also sheds light on the fact that interview can be used by the researchers as a tool of direct documentation on the writer, actor, painter or director interviewed.

Daniel Boorstin see the interview as a pseudoevent, an artificial news in which things happened only because journalists wanted it. „We bring people together. We introduce questions. We predict. We publish. We print and read the results. We judge the participants. We talk endlessly about them” (Brady 1977: 2-3). The cultural interview illustrates – perhaps in the most successful manner – Boorstin’s statement, but at the same time it raises new questions: How much of the economy of a successful interview belongs to the one who asks the questions and what role do the answers play in this binary ensemble? Does the guest’s personality is important for discussion or the interviewer’s technique/ability/method to bring out the essence of the other in front of the microphone/camera/paper? All these questions emphasizing the complexity of the communication situation will find out a possible answer during my paper. To say a lot in a few sentences and in the most attractive way possible, here is the secret of a successful interview.

My 26 years experience in practicing interviewing proved to me that it is all about the journalist’s intelligence to determine his guest to offer statements as surprising as possible, as interesting as possible. Thus, you must enter in the universe of your interviewee, building a framework of intimacy that allows you to launch questions and receive the desired answers. For this ideal framework to be realized, it is necessary to challenge your guest.

References:

- Attali, Jacques. (2022). *Istoriile mass-mediei. De la semnele cu fum la rețelele de socializare și dincolo de ele*, Iași, Ed.Polirom.
- Biagi, Shirley.(1986). *Interviews that Work. A Practical Guide for Journalists*, California State University, Sacramento.
- Brady, John.(1976). *The Craft of Interviewing*, Cincinnati, OH: Writers Digest Books.
- Capelle, Marc. (1994). *Ghidul jurnalistului*, București, Ed. Carro.
- Cernicova, Mariana. (1997). *Interviul, un dialog specializat*, Timișoara, Ed. Augusta.
- Eggert, Max. (1998). *Interviul perfect*, București, Ed.Național.
- Gaillard, Philippe. (2000). *Tehnica jurnalistului*, București, Ed.Științifică.
- Husson, Didier, Oliver Robert. (1991). *Profession Journaliste*, Paris, Eyrolles.
- Larousse.(2005). *Dicționar de media*, București, Ed. Univers Enciclopedic.
- Neamțu, Carmen. (2007). *Limbă și stil în presa scrisă*, Arad, Ed.Mirador.
- Neamțu, Carmen. (2009). *Stilul jurnalistice*, in *Manual de jurnalism*, 3rd edition, Iași, Polirom, pp.170-189.
- Neamțu, Carmen. (2018). *Interviuri, dialoguri, discuții și alte meniuri ale științelor comunicative*, Arad, Ed.Mirador.

- Neamțu, Carmen. (2022). "Trends in the Romanian Local Regional Written Press", *Transylvanian Review*, vol.XXXI, 4/2022 (winter), pp.67-78. WOS:000921942600005; ISSN 1221-1249; IDS Number 8I7XC.
- Ruști, Doina. (2002). *Presa culturală. Specii, tehnici compoziționale și de redactare*, București, Ed. Fundației PRO.
- Spencer, Crump. (1974). *Fundamentals of Journalism*, Ed .Mc.Graw-Hill Book Company.
- Stewart, Charles J. and William B. Cash Jr. (1995). *Interviewing. Principles and Practices*, Dubuque, Iowa, Ed. Wm. C. Brown Publishers.
- Tolcea, Marcel. (1997). *Interviul*, in *Manual de jurnalism. Tehnici fundamentale de redactare* (eds. Mihai Coman), Iași, Editura. Polirom, 1997, pp. 69-70.
- Yate, Martin John. (1985). *Knock em Dead. With Great Answers to Tough Interview Questions*, Boston, Ed. Bob Adams.

CURRICULUM VITAE

CARMEN NEAMȚU (17.11.1973) is a professor at at the Faculty of Humanistic and Social Sciences at "Aurel Vlaicu" State University of Arad, Romania. Doctoral Habilitation - Faculty of Letters, History and Theology from West University of Timisoara. Ph.D. *magna cum laude* from 2002.

1992-1997: Bachelor Degree, Faculty of Letters, History and Philosophy - West University of Timisoara.

1997-1998: Master Degree, Faculty of Letters, History and Philosophy - West University of Timisoara. Comparative Literature and Intertextuality.

1994-1998: Bachelor Degree in Journalism, West University of Timișoara.

Member of the editorial board of the Professional Association of Writers`s Journal, "ARCA". Member of Romanian Association of Professional Journalists and of the Association of Training Experts in Journalism and Communication – Romania.

Volumes published in Romanian language:

Limbajul publicitar, Arad, Mirador, 2002.

Stilul publicistic, Arad, Mirador, 2004.

Limbă și stil în presa scrisă, Arad, Mirador, 2007.

Convorbiri cu vedere la microfon. Arta interviului. Chipuri și moduri, Arad, Mirador, 2009.

Reclame pe limbă. Publicitate și ubicuitate, Arad, Mirador, 2012.

Interviuri, dialoguri, discuții și alte meniuri ale științelor comunicante, Arad, Mirador, 2018.

Co-authored of the *Handbook for Journalism* (Eds. Mihai Coman), Iași, Polirom, 2009.

Co-authored of the *Media Rhetoric. How Advertising and Digital Media Influences Us*, (Eds. Samuel Mateus) Cambridge Scholars Publishing, UK, 2021.