# The parts and the whole of the story: Exemplars as argumentative strategy in Chilean news[1]

*Las partes y el todo de la historia:*
*Ejemplos como estrategia argumentativa*
*en las noticias chilenas*

INGRID BACHMANN[2]

http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2805-5148

CONSTANZA MUJICA

http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8003-1576

Exemplification is crucial for people's perception of the world and is common in mass media. Exemplars in news stories, however, are not necessarily accurate and could mislead audiences. This study relies on a content analysis to examine the extent of particular case reporting in a Chilean newspaper sample covering 25 years (1991-2015). Results show that particular cases (or exemplars) are widespread in the Chilean press, with a steady increase over the years.
KEYWORDS: Content analysis, Chile, journalism, news, newspapers.

*La ejemplificación es clave para la percepción de las personas sobre el mundo y es común en los medios. Los ejemplos en las noticias, sin embargo, no son necesariamente precisos y podrían confundir a la audiencia. A partir de un análisis de contenido, este trabajo examina la presencia de casos particulares (ejemplos) en una muestra de diarios chilenos de 1991 a 2015. Los resultados muestran que la ejemplificación está extendida en la prensa de Chile, con un continuo aumento a lo largo de los años.*
*PALABRAS CLAVE: Análisis de contenido, Chile, noticias, periodismo, periódicos.*

## Introduction

Exemplification –reducing general information to a particular case embodying it– is crucial for people's perception of the world. People are accustomed to understanding the world from parts that they deem can reliably represent a whole in general (Zillmann, 1999, 2002; Zillmann & Brosius, 2000). Indeed, exemplification is present in all domains of human communication and both argumentation theory and rhetoric emphasize the importance of arguments by a particular case to effectively persuade an audience about the structure of reality (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969; Saavedra, 1996).

Not surprisingly, then, exemplification abounds in media in general and news media in particular. However, exemplification is not necessarily impeccable, and several authors suggest that a certain degree of imprecision in exemplars is inevitable, if not even desirable from a practical approach (Zillmann & Brosius, 2000). The use of particular cases could result in a deficient delivery of information. Non-representative exemplars can be misleading and audiences can end up with inaccurate perceptions (Zillmann, 2006; Zillmann & Brosius, 2000; see also Westerman, Spence & Lachlan, 2009). Given the role of media as a substitute for first-hand, personal experience of much of the real world (McCombs, López-Escobar & Llamas, 2000; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Shoemaker & Reese, 2013), exemplification in news coverage may have important social consequences. For instance, empirical evidence from countries like Belgium, Germany and the United States shows that news consumers tend to exaggerate the importance of rare diseases with high media visibility at the expense of more common but equally dangerous maladies, and people overestimate political polarization due to news media's tendency to focus on extreme and conflicting positions that are not necessarily representative of the entire public opinion (Arpan, 2009; Lefevere, De Swert & Walgrave, 2012; Westerman et al., 2009; Zillmann & Brosius, 2000).

In order to explore how common is this reporting technique, the present study examines particular-case reports in news coverage in national and regional newspapers in Chile. Based on sample of 3 595 front-page stories from 1991 to 2015 –a period of major changes in both the Chilean society and news industry (Díaz & Mellado, 2017;

Gronemeyer, 2013; Humanes, Mellado & Márquez-Ramírez, 2017; Porath, Vergara, Gómez-Lorenzini & Labarca, 2017; Puente & Mujica, 2011)– the analysis aims to assess how frequently and in what contexts news reports included exemplars. As news not only present facts but also interpret them to construct reality, it is important to consider the context of these exemplars in the news.

## HUMAN CASES IN NEWS STORIES

For years the press has been understood as a key player in shaping our sense of the public realm in societies, particularly democratic ones (Sunkel, 2005). What the media express and make visible, including those issues they deem relevant, the sources that interpret social problems and the viewpoints they circulate, end up shaping reality and inform people's perceptions of all kinds of social phenomena (Pellegrini, Puente, Porath, Mujica & Grassau, 2011; Puente, 1997; Sunkel, 2005). In that sense, the press not only reports facts, but also builds stories. News, then, is a true story that reflects human experience. Ford (cited by Sunkel, 2005) states: "the growth of storytelling [in news] is closely associated with the importance as news that 'cases' have acquired... We give special importance... to the individual or microsocial versus macro or structural elements in modern culture" (p. 246).

While news accounts for social phenomena through factual, quantifiable and objective information of a matter (e.g., statistical data); descriptions of cases of individuals who qualitatively illustrate the extent of the problem in question, or a combination of both (Gibson, Callison & Zilmann, 2011; Oliver, Dillard, Bae & Tamul, 2012; see also Bachmann & Mujica, 2019), journalistic stories are increasingly told through people, as this makes for a clearer, less abstract and more vivid story (Lefevere et al., 2012). For example, unemployment is told from the experience of those individuals without a job and news about diseases often rely in the story of one or more patients (Geller, 2005), although case reporting is not limited to human cases.[3]

---

[3]  As Bachmann & Mujica (2019) explain, exemplars do not only refer to flesh-and-bone individuals; animals, species, and all kinds of inanimate objects and entities could be deemed particular cases.

Thus, when news stories provide information, they often personalize it as well. The inclusion of individuals who are participants and protagonists of news has been described as a strategy to attract audiences and generate interest in the experiences of those represented in the news (Puente, 1997; see also Brosius, 1999). This tendency to give a face to the news goes beyond the so-called "human interest stories" –reports that emphasize the participants of an event, discuss the way individuals are affected by the reported problem and focus on the more personal dimension of a given issue (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, see also Grabe, Kleemans, Bas, Gall Myrick & Kim, 2017)– and has permeated even hard issues like politics (Mujica & Bachmann, 2013). Therefore, the present study provides a preliminary analysis of front-page stories of national and regional newspapers as a means to explore the incidence of strategies such as this one on stories deemed as the most important events of the day (Pellegrini et al., 2011).

The extant academic literature (for a summary, see Lefevere et al., 2012) suggests that the use of human cases is common in multiple media types and in many countries –although results are not consistent–. In the United States, for instance, exemplars are much more common in the printed press that on television, while in Germany the incidence of the individual case is similar on both media types (Zillmann & Brosius, 2000). In the Chilean case, Bachmann and Mujica (2019) found that particular case reports are widespread in Chilean television news, and that such exemplification was not limited to flesh-and-bone individuals, with exemplars also referring to inanimate objects (e.g., a new mobile phone to showcase a specific trend in the tech industry).

The literature suggests that personalized coverage lends itself for powerful storytelling. News with human cases, for example, favors recall and allows readers to more frequently emphasize the implications of a fact on people (Valkenburg, Semetko & de Vreese, 1999; see also Bas & Grabe, 2016). Such stories allow for an explanation of the human condition (Fine & White, 2002) and make it easier for journalists to convey abstract information with more immediate and interesting stories (Andersen, Skovsgaard, Albæk & de Vreese, 2017; Bas & Grabe, 2016; Mujica & Bachmann, 2015). However, authors as Lule (2001), Sunkel (2005), and Vanderford and Smith (1996) criticize that news personalization leads to ignoring the social and historical context

of the events narrated, as well as exaggerating human drama, to the extent that tragic events are presented as occurring at random, unrelated to political or social order.

The presence of individuals, including their testimonies and anecdotes, in a journalistic story can affect the audience's perception, interpretation, memorization and evaluation of a subject to a great extent –much more than statistics or verifiable data– (Gibson et al., 2011; Hopmann, Skovsgaard & Elmelund-Præstekær, 2017; Igartua et al., 2008; Lefevere et al., 2012). For instance, testimonies of seemingly ordinary people –in contrast to experts or authorities– have a more profound impact on how people assess social phenomena (Arpan, 2009; Lefevere et al., 2012). Zerback and Fawzi (2017) suggest that exemplars may even trigger a spiral of silence, as they found evidence that exemplars in online news influenced the perception of support to different issues and affected the willingness to speak out when the exemplars contradicted the subjects' opinion.

The problem is that the inclusion of particular human cases does not necessarily aim for accurate representation of a given phenomenon, nor stems from a random selection by journalists, but responds to other factors. Studies in the United States and Chile suggest that journalists rely on personalizing particular cases in an attempt to capture the audience's attention via emotional reactions and to convey otherwise complex information (Andersen et al., 2017; Mujica & Bachmann, 2015; Gibson et al., 2011; Grabe et al., 2017). In so doing, however, news reports might end up connecting facts that are not necessarily linked (Andersen et al., 2017; Arpan, 2009; Grabe et al., 2017).

This is not a minor issue. Exemplars are typically more vivid and persuasive than abstract facts, but not necessarily more valid. Therefore, exemplification can lead to misinterpretation of social phenomena (Arpan, 2009; Hopmann et al., 2017; Zillmann & Brosius, 2000). In the field of communications, exemplification theory addresses precisely this problem.

EXEMPLIFICATION THEORY

Exemplification consists in the use of particular cases –exemplars– in order to represent reality. By using exemplars, one reduces information

of a whole (and typically complex) phenomenon to a specific occurrence that is supposed to characterize it (Zillmann, 1999, 2002). Exemplification theory describes the influence of exemplars used by the media on people's perceptions and reactions (Zillmann, 1999, 2002, 2006; Zillmann & Brosius, 2000). From evolutionary principles, this theory suggests that exemplars that are concrete, iconic, and emotionalizing shape the way people understand the world much more than factual yet abstract and emotionless data (Andersen et al., 2017; Bas & Grabe, 2015; Grabe et al., 2017; Zillmann, 2002; Westerman et al., 2011). Along these lines, it examines the conditions under which individual cases are perceived as representative, impartial and accurate depictions of a whole (Zillmann, 2006).

Exemplification theory also explains that faced with an exemplar people will tend to extrapolate that case to other contexts with similar attributes. Such inductive inference is not necessarily rigorous (Zillmann, 2006; Zillmann & Brosius, 2000), more so with events they are not familiar with (Zillmann, 1999). Thus, while an exemplar *can* reliably present information on a whole, exemplification is often affected by poor representativeness, in which the part does not constitute an adequate sample of the whole event at hand. Because of this, exemplification could result in oversimplifications, distortions and misrepresentations (Gibson & Zillmann, 1998; Zillmann & Brosius, 2000).

While they may be skewed, exemplars are common in different media and news story types, and their effects tend to be stable over time (Gibson et al., 2011; Zillmann & Brosius, 2000). For example, studies in the European context show that judgments and assessments of people exposed to news with distorted or poor exemplars still maintained their misinformed opinions two weeks after exposure, even after confronting news consumers with accurate quantitative information on the phenomenon concerned (Hwang & Jeong, 2012; Westerman et al., 2011; Zillmann, 2006). Research also suggests effects on political communication. Evidence shows that exemplars can promote misperceptions about public opinion and discourage the desire to speak out (Zerback & Fawzi, 2017). Further, exemplars could discourage political participation when they are perceived as different

to themselves by the public and encourage political participation when there is a perceived similarity (see Andersen et al., 2017; Bas & Grabe, 2016).

Exemplification can serve as a means to (re)present reality and persuade audiences. This is also the case of the so-called New Rhetoric tradition, especially the technique of argumentation by particular case.

## ARGUMENTATION BY PARTICULAR CASE

In today's world, absolute or universal truths are becoming scarcer and thus news reports –and not only opinion pieces in journalistic outlets– are argumentation exercises: reporters seek to persuade the audience regarding an interpretation of reality. As Saavedra (1996) explains, "the mere fact of communicating through language involves the use of an argumentative strategy" (p. 117-118).

Saavedra also refers to the work of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, who in their *Treatise on argumentation* (1969) recover the notion of rhetoric and argument techniques to persuade an audience (see also Hernández Olmedo, 2016). In their argumentation theory, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca give centrality to the concept of *presence* in the presentation of data for an effective argument:

> It is this presence what justifies the inclusion of narrative exemplars
> –little stories– the transcription of dialogues –describing a scene– and the
> use of details that seemingly have not informative value. Seemingly, since
> they do not follow the logic of an anecdote or adornment nor they fulfill
> a decorative function. [What they do] is build powerful [mental] images
> (Saavedra, 1996, p. 122).

Indeed, as explained by Fermandois (2003), an exemplar *is* a reason.
Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) propose several techniques to structure reality in an argument. Relevant to this study –and one of the most important resources in what they labeled as New Rhetoric– is called "argument by particular case". Its purpose aims to strengthen the representation of a possible world (Gómez & Capdevila, 2012). The particular case can operate as evidence of a regularity or generalization

one wants to persuade about (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969; Saavedra, 1996). Specifically, particular cases can adopt one of three variations: 1) as an *example*, a simple instance that in a few words and with no details conveys the concretization of a given generalization (e.g., "The Museum of Pre-Columbian Art and the Museum of Memory are must-see places in Santiago", with each locale serving as an example); 2) as a detailed *illustration* that embodies the generalization and in doing so creates a mental image of such idea (e.g., the detailed account of a real pair of tourists to report about foreigners' opinions about violence in a given city; or a photo of trading in the New York Stock Exchange to represent that in general global markets reacted negatively to specific political event, such as the 2016 Brexit vote); or 3) as *model* of certain circumstances as if it were a single case, a composite based on the commonalities of multiple instances (e.g., the description of a "typical" college student) (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969; see also Bachmann & Mujica, 2019).

In this conception, particular cases are not necessarily human cases. They often comprise individuals or describe human beings, but since mental images can represent any kind of reality (e.g., a company, a nation, a given situation, a public opinion), arguments by particular case are, strictly speaking, broader that what Zillmann called exemplars. In this paper, however, they are used interchangeably, as the present study combines both theories –exemplification and argumentation– to examine the inclusion of particular cases or exemplars in Chilean newspaper stories.

## METHODS

This study is based on a content analysis, a research technique where the characteristics and meaning of the message are examined systematically to extract inferences from it (Neuendorf, 2002). The analysis focused on front-page stories from 1991 to 2015 of the two main national dailies, *El Mercurio* and *La Tercera*, both newspapers of record based in the capital and each owned by one of the two major newspaper companies in Chile (Díaz & Mellado, 2017). A regional newspaper serving the third-largest city in the country, *El Sur*, was also included. Historically an important

newspaper in southern Chile, *El Sur* had been at the hands of the Lamas family for a century when it was bought in 2006 by the same company that publishes *El Mercurio* (Gronemeyer & Porath, 2013). Its relevance as regional daily, as well as evidence that the ownership change did not lead *El Sur* to resemble other outlets of *El Mercurio*'s parent company (Gronemeyer & Porath, 2013, 2015) informed the decision of including it in the sample.

The constructed week method was used to gather the sample, because it allows greater generalization over time than simple random samples or consecutive day samples. Acting "as a stratification for days of the week", it also avoids the possibility of oversampling Saturdays or Sundays (Riffe, Aust & Lacy, 1993, p. 135). Thus, two constructed weeks for each year under examination were included, for a total of 1 050 front pages. The unit of analysis was every single deadline story presented or announced on the front page.[4] This approach resulted in 3 525 stories analyzed.

In addition to identification variables (i.e., date, newspaper, and headline) the coding scheme included several items aimed at tapping into the agenda, news story characteristics, and the presence of difference particular cases. The agenda was coded as story topic (including national politics, economy, health, social affairs, and sports). The codebook also asked about the type of story (hard news or soft news), the number of sources, and the scope of the news and its consequences (from very local to global). Coders also had to specify whether the story included any exemplar, and based on Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's distinction (1969), if the exemplar served as an example (a self-explanatory and succinct particular case), an illustration (a detailed description of the exemplar to make the argument evident), or a model (an idealized representation based on the aggregation of multiple cases), and whether it was a human or a non-human case. Location of the particular case in the story was also noted, to see how prominent it was in the overall narrative.

—————

[4]   Features, weekly-section stories and articles in supplements were excluded. The focus was thus on stories dealing with the most important events of a given day.

Seven undergraduate students served as coders and completed several training sessions on the codebook. Once inter-coder reliability analyses on 12% of the sample showed substantial agreement among the seven coders on all variables (at least 0.75, measured as Cohen's *kappa*)*,* these individuals read and coded all the news stories. Data were then processed and statistically analyzed based mostly on frequencies and Chi-Square tests of independence.

RESULTS

Of the 3 525 stories analyzed, 1 349 were from *El Mercurio*, 1 255 from *La Tercera*, and 921 from the regional newspaper *El Sur*. The most frequent topics were national politics (27.8%), social affairs (15.1%) and sports (10.8%). The rank-order of these topics were similar in all of the newspapers throughout the 25 years under examination.

Overall, two-thirds of the stories (62.6%) included some kind of exemplar, with an average of 1.7 particular cases per news story, whether they were examples or succinct, self-explanatory cases (42.1% of all identified exemplars), detailed illustrations (53.5% of all exemplars) or models or composite cases (4.1%). Illustrations were significantly more common on crime stories (45.9%), whereas examples were more frequent on stories about disasters (39.0%) and sports (21.3%). In the case of disaster coverage, these results might be explained because prior events such as past earthquakes, which are frequently mentioned but not described in detail in Chilean news reports, since they are well-known events in Chile. Thus, references to the so-called 27F (the February 27th, 2010 earthquake and tsunami) and the 1982 floods of Central Chile were commonly mentioned to exemplify a major issue, such as the devasting effects of natural disasters or as evidence of Chile's history of damage done by catastrophes.

Illustrations were also significantly more common on *La Tercera*, one of the national newspapers, while both examples and models were, proportionally speaking, more frequently found on stories published by *El Sur*, the regional newspaper. *La Tercera*, currently an upper middle-class newspaper than in the last decade has tried to take *El Mercurio*'s place as elite newspaper, was also the daily most likely to report stories

with no particular cases at all. Indeed, about 31.4% of *La Tercera* front-page stories (394 stories) had no exemplification, in comparison to 26.6% stories from *El Mercurio* (345 stories) and 29.2% from *El Sur*. Table 1 summarizes the distribution of case reports by newspaper.

TABLE 1

DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICULAR CASES IN NEWS REPORTS
WITH EXEMPLIFICATION, BY NEWSPAPER

| Type of particular case | *El Mercurio* | *La Tercera* | *El Sur* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Example | 47.9% | 45.3% | 62.3% |
| Illustration | 48.3% | 51.8% | 32.5% |
| Model | 3.8% | 2.9% | 5.2% |

$x^2$=94.7065, *d.f.=4, p<.001*
Source: the authors.

News stories with particular cases are thus common in the Chilean press in the 25 years under examination, and while its use is moderate, it has consistently increased over the years. In addition, a breakdown by year shows a more nuanced story. If in the 1991-1995 period, stories about health and communication were the ones that concentrated more exemplars (with means of 2.6 and 3.0 particular cases, respectively); by 2001-2005, sports and population news stories were also including significantly more exemplars as well (means of 3.1 and 2.6, respectively). Arguably, this has to do with the analyzed newspapers including more photography over the years in the sample –on itself, a photo is a type of illustration, in the argumentation sense of the concept– and thus increasing the visibility of certain cases. Also, by the 2011-2015 period, stories about accidents and disasters (on average, 4.5 particular cases per story), and transportation (mean of 3.6) relied heavily in particular cases reporting. This could be explained by two major news events with high visibility in news stories during this period: the February 27th, 2010 earthquake and tsunami in central Chile and the adoption in the late 2000's of Transantiago, a highly criticized and problematic overhaul of public transportation in Chile's capital city. Qualitative analyses of these stories support this interpretation: reporters regularly relied on common

citizens' testimonies and victims' experiences to depict the magnitude and issues related to the earthquake and urban transportation in Santiago.

Similarly, case reporting steadily increased in story topics such as internal politics, economy, housing and social relations over the years, thus suggesting that the exemplification has been incorporated to the journalists' toolbox of reporting techniques. That is, in addition to including more citizen sources and relying less prominently on inverted pyramid formats, these reporters also increasingly relied on particular cases to tell the most important news of the day. This could also explain why the first years only a handful of topics tended to include the most exemplars, whereas by 2015 this reporting technique was more widespread. The diversity of front-page stories might also reflect on this.

News reports with particular cases not only became more frequent (from 33% of stories in the sample in 1991 to 71% in 2015), but over the years, illustrations specifically became more common, surpassing examples as the main type of particular case included in the news reports. If by the mid-1990's examples accounted for almost 40% of all particular cases in the front-page news, by 2010 illustrations were about two-thirds of all the particular cases reported in the analyzed news. Arguably, over the years journalists incorporated the use of vivid, emotional illustrations of single individuals that concretize the main argument of the story and serve as the main focal point of the news narrative. Thus, the analyzed news reports increasingly told stories like that of a widow who struggled to make ends meet in the current economy, the football fan that would go to extreme measures to go to all of his favorite team's games, or the primary student who embodied the reasons to change the school curriculum. Rather than issues, then, the news reports increasingly focused on individuals who experienced the issues. *El Sur*, however, tended to favor examples over illustrations in its coverage, although the proportion of illustrations also increased over the years –arguably, a particular case is harder to report on, but more engaging and in line with personalization trends in the Chilean press over the years–.

Three story topics show the steepest increase in using particular cases: economy, crime, and social affairs, especially from 2002 onward. This could be related to two related phenomena. One is a parallel rise in testimonial and ordinary-citizen sources, with non-experts increasingly

commenting in the news on the coming and goings of society (for example, *vox populi* approaches to report on –and often exemplify– "what the public think"). Another is a deliberate effort from journalists to translate typically abstract, arid topics into more relatable stories via personalization.

Past research with Chilean editors (Mujica & Bachmann, 2015) shows that news professionals consider the economy a predominantly hard topic that needs to be humanized in order to appeal to audiences. The increase in crime stories could be related to the media's tendency to report on spectacular crime stories in a proportion that often does not correlate with the incidence of crime in society (Gerbner et al., 1979). Both explanations could be tied to increasing levels of personalization and emotionalization of news found in Chilean media in general (Gronemeyer, 2013; Puente & Mujica, 2011), and television in particular (Mujica & Bachmann, 2013), with scholars assessing that, in the Chilean news, shared professional values and ways of doing favor homogeneity in news production (Díaz & Mellado, 2017; see also Mellado & Lagos, 2014).

Consistently over the years, more than half of the particular cases included in the news stories analyzed were not about human beings. These were exemplars of all kinds of situations and non-human entities, such as corporations, industries, nations, holidays and others. That said, over the years human particular cases became more prominent, especially in stories related to economy and social affairs. Conversely, the stories with more non-human particular cases over the years were stories about politics, communication and culture. Table 2 below summarizes the findings for the five most common story topics in the sample.

More interestingly, exemplification also flourishes in story topics that are not necessarily frequent front-page stories, such as transportation, communication, and accidents or disasters.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Results from this study show that particular case reports are widespread in the Chilean press. As could be expected, soft news topics –such as sports– use exemplification more frequently. However, the results

TABLE 2

EXEMPLIFICATION IN MOST COMMONS STORY TOPICS

| Story topic | Percentage of topic in sample | Average number of particular cases | Average number of human cases | Most common particular case |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Internal politics | 21.7 | 1.35 | 0.5 | Illustration (46.4%) |
| Sports | 14.5 | 2.34 | 1.3 | Example (68.6%) |
| International politics | 9.3 | 1.6 | 0.5 | Example (43.8%) |
| Economy | 8.6 | 1.66 | 0.7 | Illustration (56.8%) |
| Crime | 8.4 | 1.2 | 0.6 | Illustration (72.1%) |

Source: the authors.

also suggest that exemplars have become increasingly frequent in hard news topic like economy, internal affairs, and international politics. The latter cases seem particularly relevant given the potential effects of misrepresentation on political expression and participation (Bas & Grabe, 2015; Zerback & Fawzi, 2017).

The inclusion of these exemplars in news reports could be linked to the rise in testimonial and ordinary-citizen sources, which in turn can be associated to notions of pluralism: more (diverse) voices get access to the mediated public sphere. That said, the increase in exemplars in news reports cannot be explained solely by more diverse sourcing practices, and are likely related to certain journalistic techniques becoming more popular among news professionals and favored by the news industry in their efforts to draw the audience's attention. Previous research suggest that editors and reporters strive to tell the news in an engaging way, and there is evidence that audiences prefer emotional and concrete stories over the simple recount of abstract information. It makes sense, then, that news professionals are increasingly relying in more

attractive ways to report the news, and that editors and administrators encourage such approaches. The results support this perception: over the years, illustrations –vivid and detailed– have become more frequent than the rather succinct and simple examples, both in the national newspapers as in the regional one. The adoption of exemplification, thus, is pervasive.

Further research on journalism education, especially with regards to reporting and writing courses, can be useful to understand the ways in which these modes of constructing news stories that end up comprising the professional toolbox of reporting techniques is constructed and institutionalized in the classroom as journalistic routines and standards. This is particularly relevant in a news industry that has experienced major changes in the last three decades –from ownership to declining audiences– and has attempted different ways to win back news consumers, including personalization, tabloidization and clickbait (Humanes, Mellado & Márquez-Ramírez, 2017).

Future research should also tap into the consequences of these exemplars and whether they are as misleading as Zillmann and Brosius (2000) suggested, or as persuasive as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) argued. In any case, these results show that this line of inquiry is worth pursuing and can inform a debate about journalistic practice and the evolution of news narratives, more so in a country often ignored in the academic literature.

### *Bibliographic references*

Andersen, K., Skovsgaard, M., Albæk, E. & de Vreese, C. H. (2017). The engaging effect of exemplars: How an emotional reaction to (dis)similar people in the news media affects political participation. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, *22*, 490-509. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161217723152

Arpan, L. (2009). The effects of exemplification on perceptions of news credibility. *Mass Communication & Society*, *12*, 249-270. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/15205430802136721

Bachmann, I. & Mujica, C. (2019). Exemplars as argumentative strategy in broadcast news: Analyzing the case of Chile. *Journalism Practice* [Advance online publication]. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2019.1618198

Bas, O. & Grabe, M. E. (2015). Emotion-provoking personalization of news: Informing citizens and closing the knowledge gap? *Communication Research*, *42*(2), 159-185. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650213514602

Bas, O. & Grabe, M. E. (2016). Personalized news and participatory intent: How emotional displays of everyday citizens promote political involvement. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *60*, 1719-1736. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764216676247

Brosius, H. B. (1999). The Influence of exemplars on recipients' judgements: The part played by similarity between exemplar and recipient. *European Journal of Communication*, *14*(2), 213-224. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323199014002004

Díaz, M. & Mellado, C. (2017). Agenda y uso de fuentes en los titulares y noticias centrales de los medios informativos chilenos. Un estudio de la prensa impresa, online, radio y televisión. *Cuadernos.info*, *40*, 107-121. DOI: https://doi.org/10.7764/cdi.40.1106

Fermandois, E. (2003). Un ejemplo, una razón. *Revista Universitaria*, *80*, 14-17.

Fine, G. A. & White, R. D. (2002). Creating collective attention in the public domain: Human interest narratives and the rescue of Floyd Collins. *Social Forces*, *81*, 57-85. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2002.0046

Geller, A. J. (2005). *Some stories hurt more: The interaction of salience and exemplification on audience perception in news reports* (Unpublished bachelor's thesis). University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., Signorielli, N. & Jackson-Beeck, M. (1979). The demonstration of power: violence profile No. 10. *Journal of Communication*, *29*, 177-196. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1979.tb01731.x

Gibson, R. & Zillmann, D. (1998). Effects of citation in exemplifying testimony on issue perception. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *75*, 167-176. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/107769909807500116

Gibson, R., Callison, C. & Zilmann, D. (2011). Quantitative literacy and affective reactivity in processing statistical information and

case histories in the news. *Media Psychology*, *14*, 96-120. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/15213269.2010.547830

Gómez, L. & Capdevila, A. (2012). Variaciones estratégicas en los *spots* electorales de televisión y de Internet en campaña electoral. *ZER Revista de Estudios de Comunicación*, *17*, 67-86. Retrieved from https://www.ehu.eus/ojs/index.php/Zer/article/view/10615

Gronemeyer, M. E. (2013). La digitalización y sus efectos sobre las prácticas y productos periodísticos en Chile. *Palabra Clave*, *16*, 101-128. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5294/pacla.2013.16.1.4

Gronemeyer, M. E. & Porath, W. (2013). Los niveles de coincidencias temáticas en editoriales de cinco diarios chilenos de referencia en un contexto de concentración de la propiedad de los medios. *Estudios sobre el Mensaje Periodístico*, *19*(1), 433-452. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5209/rev_ESMP.2013.v19.n1.42531

Gronemeyer, M. E. & Porath, W. (2015). A study on homogeneity between editorials and news sources opinions in the Chilean reference press. *Cuadernos.info*, *36*, 139-153. DOI: https://doi.org/10.7764/cdi.36.567

Grabe, M. E., Kleemans, M., Bas, O., Gall Myrick, J. & Kim, M. (2017). Putting a human face on cold, hard facts: Effects of personalizing social issues on perceptions of issue importance. *International Journal of Communication*, *11*, 907-929.

Hernández Olmedo, J.L. (2016). El camino persuasivo de los valores en la propaganda televisiva. *Comunicación y Sociedad, 27,* 145-172. Retrieved from https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/4824

Hopmann, D. N., Skovsgaard, M. & Elmelund-Præstekær, C. (2017). What have I done to deserve this? The role of deservingness in effects of ordinary citizens as cases in the news. *European Journal of Communication*, *32*(4), 333-347. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323117710900

Humanes, M. L., Mellado, C. & Márquez-Ramírez, M. (2017). La presencia del método objetivo en los contenidos noticiosos de la prensa de Chile, México y España. *Comunicación y Sociedad*, *29*, 165-184. DOI: https://doi.org/10.32870/cys.v0i29.5738

Hwang, Y. & Jeong, S. H. (2012). Public's responses to aviation accidents: The role of exemplification and attributions, *Journal of Ap-*

plied Communication Research, *40*, 350-367. DOI: https://doi.org/1
0.1080/00909882.2012.712709

Igartua, J. J., Cheng, L., Moral, F., Fernández, I., Frutos, F. J. Gómez
Isla, J. M., & Otero, J. (2008). Encuadrar la inmigración en las no-
ticias y sus efectos socio-cognitivos. *Palabra Clave*, *11*, 87-107.
Retrieved from https://palabraclave.unisabana.edu.co/index.php/
palabraclave/article/view/1418/1728

Lefevere, J., De Swert, K. & Walgrave, S. (2012). Effects of popular
exemplars in television news. *Communication Research*, *39*, 103-
119. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650210387124

Lule, J. (2001). *Daily news, eternal stories: the mythological role of
journalism*. New York: Guilford Press.

Mellado, C. & Lagos, C. (2014). Professional roles in news con-
tent: Analyzing journalistic performance in the Chilean national
press. *International Journal of Communication*, *8*, 2090-2112. Re-
trieved from https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/2651

McCombs, M. E., López-Escobar, E. & Llamas, J. P. (2000). Set-
ting the agenda of attributes in the 1996 Spanish general elec-
tion. *Journal of Communication*, *50*(2), 77-92. DOI: https://doi.
org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2000.tb02842.x

McCombs, M. E. & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of
mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *36*(1), 176-187. DOI: https://
doi.org/10.1086/267990

Mujica, C. & Bachmann, I. (2013). Melodramatic profiles of Chilean
newscasts: the case of emotionalization. *International Journal of
Communication*, *7*, 1801-1820. Retrieved from https://ijoc.org/in-
dex.php/ijoc/article/view/2177/971

Mujica, C. & Bachmann, I. (2015). How Chilean editors perceive and
define the role of melodrama in television news. *Palabra Clave,
18*(2), 312-340. Retrieved from https://palabraclave.unisabana.edu.
co/index.php/palabraclave/article/view/4603

Neuendorf, K. (2002). *The Content Analysis Guidebook*. Thousand
Oaks: Sage.

Oliver, M. B., Dillard, J. P., Bae, K. & Tamul, D. J. (2012). The effect of
narrative news format on empathy for stigmatized groups. *Journal-
ism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *89*, 205-224. DOI: https://
doi.org/10.1177/1077699012439020

Pellegrini, S., Puente, S., Porath, W., Mujica, C. & Grassau, D. (2011). *Valor agregado periodístico, la apuesta por la calidad de las noticias*. Santiago: Ediciones UC.

Perelman, C. & Olbrechts-Tyteca, L. (1969). *The new rhetoric: A treatise on argumentation.* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Porath, W., Vergara, E., Gómez-Lorenzini, P. & Labarca, C. (2017). Cambios en la presentación de los personajes de la publicidad del retail en Chile en un contexto de modificaciones en la lógica de consumo asociadas a transformaciones socioculturales (1997-2013). *Comunicación y Sociedad*, *29*, 203-225. DOI: https://doi.org/10.32870/cys.v0i29.5635

Puente, S. (1997). *Televisión: el drama hecho noticia*. Santiago: Ediciones UC.

Puente, S. & Mujica, C. (2011). ¿Qué es noticia (en Chile)? *Cuadernos. info*, *16*, 85-100. DOI: https://doi.org/10.7764/cdi.16.162

Riffe, D., Aust, C. F. & Lacy, S. R. (1993). The effectiveness of random, consecutive day and constructed week sampling in newspaper content analysis. *Journalism Quarterly*, *70*, 133-139. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/107769909307000115

Saavedra, G. (1996). Escribir es –también en periodismo– argumentar. *Cuadernos de Información*, *11*, 116-127. DOI: https://doi.org/10.7764/cdi.11.226

Semetko, H. & Valkenburg, P. (2000). Framing European politics: a content analysis of press and television news. *Journal of Communication*, *50*, 93-109. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2000.tb02843.x

Shoemaker, P. J. & Reese, S. D. (2013). *Mediating the message in the 21st Century: A Media Sociology Perspective*. New York: Routledge.

Sunkel, G. (2005). Narrativas periodísticas y escándalos políticos: El caso Mop-Ciade. *Comunicación y Medios*, *15,* 85-100. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5354/0719-1529.2011.12084

Valkenburg, P., Semetko, H. & de Vreese, C. (1999). The effects of news frames on reader's thoughts and recall. *Communication Research*, *26*, 550-569. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/009365099026005002

Vanderford, M. L. & Smith, D. (1996). *The silicone breast implant story: Communication and uncertainty*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Westerman, D., Spence, P. R. & Lachlan, K. A. (2009). Telepresence and the exemplification effects of disaster news. *Communication Studies*, *60*, 542-557. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/10510970903260376

Westerman, D., Spence, P. R. & Lachlan, K. A. (2011). Telepresence and exemplification: Does spatial presence impact sleeper effects? *Communication Reports*, 28, 299-309. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/08934215.2014.971838

Zerback, T. & Fawzi, L. (2017). Can online exemplars trigger a spiral of silence? Examining the effects of exemplar opinions on perceptions of public opinion and speaking out. *New Media & Society*, *19*(7), 1034-1051. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444815625942

Zillmann, D. (1999). Exemplification theory: Judging the whole by some of its parts. *Media Psychology*, *1*(1), 69-94. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532785xmep0101_5

Zillmann, D. (2002). Exemplification theory of media influence. In J. Bryant & D. Zillmann (Eds.), *Media effects: Advances in theory and research* (pp. 19-41). Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Zillmann, D. (2006). Exemplification effects in the promotion of safety and health. *Journal of Communication*, *56*, S221–S237. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00291.x

Zillmann, D. & Brosius, H. B. (2000). *Exemplification in communication: The influence of case reports on the perception of issues*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum.