



## COMPONENTS OF A MEDIA IMAGE OF POPULAR BLOGGERS IN INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL NETWORK

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### RESUMO

**Antecedentes:** Este artigo identifica e estuda componentes de imagens midiáticas de Anastasia Ivleeva e Yury Dud, os dois blogueiros de vídeo populares entre o público jovem russo da Internet atualmente. Milhões de inscritos seguem seus canais do YouTube e os espectadores comentam ativamente seus vídeos. **Objetivo:** O objetivo do estudo foi testar a hipótese de que os videoblogueiros podem influenciar seu público-alvo (predominantemente, os jovens) e dar o exemplo. **Materiais e Métodos:** No estudo, trinta vídeos de cada blogueiro feitos de 2019 a 1º de julho de 2021 foram revisados para considerar critérios como sua problemática de fala, comportamento no quadro, direcionamento ao público-alvo, especificidade do estilo de roupa, peculiaridades de comunicação com os entrevistados enquadrados, o vocabulário e a distinção do estilo de narração, bem como a qualidade do estilo criativo. **Resultados e Conclusões:** Detectou-se que ambos os blogueiros queriam conquistar o público e se tornar amigos íntimos. Eles procuraram alcançá-lo vestindo roupas casuais e usando a linguagem forte. Os blogueiros tentaram evocar a sensação de consumir a paisagem real e objetiva do mundo com seu público; nisso, os videoblogueiros ousados e honestos não escondiam nenhum problema social (diferentemente de muitos programas de TV importantes dos canais de televisão federais); pelo contrário, falaram abertamente, forneceram dados diversificados e permitiram que seus assinantes tirassem conclusões por conta própria.

**Palavras-chave:** Blogue; Blogueiro; Diário de Internet; Mídia do autor; Jornalismo cidadão; Imagem de mídia; Avaliação; Anastasia Ivleeva; Yury Dud; Youtube.



## **COMPONENTES DE UMA IMAGEM DE MÍDIA DE BLOGUEIROS POPULARES EM REDE SOCIAL INTERNACIONAL**

### **ABSTRACT**

**Background:** This article identifies and studies components of media images of Anastasia Ivleeva and Yury Dud, the two video bloggers popular among the Russian youth Internet audience at present. Millions of subscribers follow their YouTube channels, and viewers actively comment their videos. **Objective:** The goal of the study was to test the hypothesis that the video bloggers can influence their target audience (predominantly, the youth) and set the example. **Materials and Methods:** Under the study, thirty videos by each blogger made in 2019 to 1 July 2021 were reviewed to consider such criteria as their speech problematic, behavior in the frame, drive to the target audience, clothing style specificity, peculiarities of communicating with the framed interviewees, vocabulary and narration style distinctiveness as well as creative style quality. **Results and Conclusions:** It was detected that both bloggers wanted to fetch the audience and become close friends. They sought to achieve it by wearing casual clothes and using the strong language. Bloggers attempted to evoke a feeling of consuming the real and objective world landscape with their audience; at that, the bold and honest video bloggers did not conceal any social problems (unlike many leading TV shows by the Federal television channels); on the contrary, they spoke openly, provided diversified data and enabled their subscribers to make conclusions on their own.

**Keywords:** Blog; Blogger; Internet diary; Author's media; Citizen journalism; Media image; Assessment; Anastasia Ivleeva; Yury Dud; YouTube.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The objective of the article is to identify and study components of the media images by the two video bloggers popular with the Russian youth Internet auditory at present – Anastasia Ivleeva and Yury Dud. As of July 05, 2021 4.3 mln people (92 videos) follow A. Ivleeva's YouTube channel (Ivleeva, n.d.), while Yu. Dud ('vDud') attracted 9.2 mln followers (123 videos) (Dud, n.d.). On average, each blogger's video usually gets several million views, major part of which is accounted for the first ten days after a video is posted.

Every year, still more people are engaged into the Internet space to keep their own information resources – social media accounts, blogs or Telegram channels of versatile spectrum. Each blogger is distinguished by a certain creative style coined and further maintained to popularize their author media, personal ideas and views disseminated therein as well as to produce a certain impact on the audience.



“Blogging” is a rather recent concept as publicist B. Graham invented the word “blogosphere” in 1999. As a definition, the word was introduced into everyday circulation in early 21<sup>st</sup> century while some online resources were created and gradually gained popularity among a wide audience (for instance, LiveJournal, LiveInternet). Any person can freely create their own communication space and post their thoughts there, both for certain informational reasons and none at all.

It is hardly possible to calculate how many author’s media currently exist on Runet. Every minute, new information channels are created; old resources are reformatted or cease to exist. Any of them contains a specific goal, including a potential content monetization in the future. By offering an “agenda” alternative to conventional mass media, the media type and the bloggers quickly gained popularity among the Russian audience (especially, the youth). It is evidenced by various sociological polls. In turn, the information channel host is marked by a certain behavior, which often depends on the person’s anonymity or openness. At present, all available resources are fiercely competing for the audience attention, the magnitude of the addressees’ engagement and involvement into the information process. Therefore, we assume it is vital to regularly study their creative manner, data presentation style as well as techniques and methods used by the personal media authors to influence the audience and a specific individual in general. The media type is neither controlled nor externally edited, which is probably why it often distributes all kinds of fakes, for example, regarding the COVID-19. Via their own media, each blogger can now impose quite a strong effect on the information consumer, and, sometimes, it does not socialize but confuses an addressee as well as causes and increased tension in a person’s soul and among their near and dear ones.

We presume that to minimize the negative impact on the audience even a little, it is required to constantly study the original approach of the media author, while everyone is encouraged to keep moulding their critical thinking.

Each author making regular posts shapes their own creative technique and style, while some coin a media image during the activity period. Modern domestic researchers study the global media images, socially significant phenomena in different professions or areas of human endeavors as well as the personality as such.

In Russian scientific literature, E.N. Bogdan (2007a) investigated the content of “media image” concept. At present, the “media image” concept is most often defined by researchers either as “a combination of emotional and rational ideas based on information



received from the media” (Bogdan, 2007b) or as a “special image of reality presented to a mass audience by the media industry” (Pokidova, 2018). The study results are confirmed by findings of the following researchers: E.J. Lee and B. Watkins (2016), K.M. Laeeq (2017), A. Ferchaud, J. Grzeslo, S. Orme and J. LaGroue (2018), M. Hou (2018), R.A. Deller and K. Murphy (2019), R. Ladhari and H. Skandriani (2020), K. Gvantseladze T. Ph. Do, J.M. Hansen, R.E. Shapiro and M. Ashina (2020), J. Paolillo, B. Harper, C. Boothby and D. Axelrod (2020), Yu.V. Belousova (2015), N.V. Buyanova, R.A. Yagufarova (2017), L.V. Khochunskaya (2013) and supplemented by examples from contemporary Russian practice in forming media images by video bloggers.

The study results are confirmed by conclusions of such researchers as E.J Lee and B. Watkins (2016); K.M. Laeeq (2017); A. Ferchaud, J. Grzeslo, S. Orme and J. LaGroue (2018); R.A. Deller and K. Murphy (2019); R. Ladhari and H. Skandriani (2020) and supplement those with examples from modern Russian practice on forming a media image by video bloggers.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

We reviewed thirty videos of each blogger with different running time and functional topicality posted on YouTube channels by A. Ivleeva and Yu. Dud from 1 January 2018 to 1 July 2021. In total, we studied 160 videos (75 of them were published on the video channel of Anastasia Ivleeva and 90 were published on the You-tube channel of Yuri Dud). The following methods were applied in the study:

1. *Content analysis* of each blogger’s video enabled us to discover primary and secondary topics highlighted by them.

2. *Lexical and stylistic analysis* of videos, firstly, was required to determine the blogger’s assessment of events or occurrences covered; secondly, to identify the creative style quality of each blogger; and, thirdly, to understand components of media images by A. Ivleeva and Yu. Dud.

3. *Comparative analysis* of creative activity revealed in the bloggers’ videos was applied to expose similarities and differences in their media images formation.

When identifying the bloggers’ media images, we considered the following criteria:

- topicality of the video;
- behavior pattern in the frame and drive to the target audience;
- clothing style peculiarities;



- communication specificities with the interviewees in the frame;
- singularity of their vocabulary and narration manner;
- creative approach quality.

Our study was not tasked to review advantages or disadvantages of their videos (quality of script and video editing, cameramen view diversity, expressive means, etc.).

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

While Yu. Dud Scientific researchers (Podsokorsky, 2018; Vasilchenko, 2019) previously examined dud's artistic method and manner; A. Ivleeva's creative activity remained outside the academic spotlight.

We reckon that popularity of A. Ivleeva and Yu. Dud (as well as other media persons) among the Russian audience completely depends on the creative style they molded, which we can study throughout the entire period – from its coining, the first video filmed and posted on media platforms, and up to interviews with front-most media personalities or launching their own YouTube show.

A. Ivleeva and Yu. Dud have been operating their author YouTube channels since 2013. During the four years of their activities, they managed to form and are currently working on maintaining their positive media image among their respective audiences. Still, each of them achieves the task through unparalleled artistic means, attempts to appeal the youth audience interests and attract new viewers to turn those into their subscribers. The bloggers' videos differ in terms of running time, genre, style, and creative opportunities implemented.

A. Ivleeva creative activity is established through the so-called vines. Her first ones were generally small humorous video clips five to twenty seconds long. Usually, something amusing or funny happened in the video based on life facts everybody recognizes and is familiar with – she filmed it on a regular smartphone and simply shared her thoughts while at the workplace or at home, while shopping, standing in line, walking in the park, etc.

While watching her video items, one can observe a common girl with no frills about clothing or selecting a conversation topic. We believe it is a calculated decision to engage and fetch a mass audience. In this case, the technique of identifying a given media persona with ordinary viewers ("she is like all of us") can play a positive role. The conclusions and language tools used by A. Ivleeva in her videos reviewed during the study were based on her personal observations, ideas about the bad and the good as well as





frequently stereotyped phrases. Thus, in one of her videos, Anastasia portrayed different types of women having a child and said, “I’m the mom!” several times – a widely used phrase in the Russian blogosphere. We assume that, in the case, the blogger’s communicative strategy was that, upon hearing it, the audience should probably understand that the woman emphasized her new status as a mother and, most likely, was proud of it (Ivleeva, 2019a). So, the video is put in a social context. Her other video plots appeal the topics of marriage of convenience, friendship with benefits, everyday lies, personal secrets, power prevailing over kindness as well (Ivleeva, 2020a; Ivleeva, 2019b).

Furthermore, all videos by A. Ivleeva are revealed to impose an emotional predominance while presenting information manifested not only through a widespread use of conversational style with pieces of the strong language, but also by means of active peculiar gestures and increased voice intonation. A. Ivleeva probably expects that the more emotional her story is on any topic and various issues, the better it is imprinted with the audience.

Judging by the next video titled *Typical Girlfriends*; we can assume what it is about. Catch-all phrases like, “I’ll start doing that on Monday”, “Beauty is inside”, “It’s all about soul”, “I’ve got nothing to put on”, etc. are maximally relevant to us and fetch the audience furthermore (Ivleeva, 2020b; Ivleeva, 2019c; Ivleeva, 2021a).

The following video presents issues typical of the Russian youth. A. Ivleeva is no longer alone, she engages her friends to play their parts – girl and guys, and she sometimes transforms into amazing images as well. All actions framed with musical background. The first story is about a girl selecting clothes to take numerous photos for Instagram. The point is that she always has nothing to wear. The second one is about the same plot: how to get ready in a minute to a date when you are not ready at. The third video reveals that girls like to talk a lot and it is important for them to be heard, while guys often try to avoid it (Ivleeva, 2020c; Ivleeva, 2021b).

According to the blogger’s vision, viewers should draw a conclusion (moral) at the end of each plot (the so-called vine), which becomes the foundation of almost all her videos.

Having revealed peculiarities of A. Ivleeva’s media image, we can state that she appeals to her audience and attempts to keep it engaged through her spontaneous behavior in the frame and the youth slang. She kind of says to the audience, “I am like all of you.” When playing various roles or doing some actions, she also connects to any given



personally type – girls, people in general (their behavior, communication manner, way of thinking, worldview, and upbringing). Her speech is always emotional, the foul language is often used. She is gesturing always and everywhere. Maybe, some viewers liked her because she was a wine fan, and it gradually became her “trick”, but she did not violate the rules of the Ministry of Health in any way and urged people to frequent abuse of alcohol.

Yu. Dud’s media image is weightier compared to A. Ivleeva’s one. Hosting his Internet show “vDud”, Yury openly interviews the most prominent people from various areas and of diverse outlooks on life and opinions on what is going on.

Running time of his stories is usually from forty to ninety minutes. Shortly before the interview, one-minute-long sneak peek is presented featuring the most unexpected and sometimes provocative answers of the interlocutor. Probably, the technique is used to attract the audience attention; its task is to make viewers watch the interview to the end. The interview is hosted in a relaxed environment, while the interviewees can smoke, freely express their ideas, and behave liberally. Yury prefers casual and comfortable clothes to formal suits. He is calm, confident about his words and questions even when incidents happen like, “...forgot, didn’t clarify, didn’t get to the point, mixed up”. He can always laugh it off or say, as in an interview with V. Pozner when he said, “Awfully sorry for my meagre education.” The viewer feels that Yury Dud does his best to win over the interlocutor and cultivate trust as the interview quality and possibility to obtain exclusive information directly depend on that. Should the blogger succeed in doing that, he may expect his interview citation index to be dramatically increased (Gvantseladze, et al., 2020).

At the end of an interview, he traditionally asks his visitors several questions – either directly related to their professional activity or the general ones, which that can be posed to everyone. For instance, “What will happen to Russia in 10 years?”, “What would you tell Putin if you faced him?”, “What do you dream of?” The interviewer asks only open-ended questions. Though, he sometimes disagrees with his interlocutors in the frame, and a lack of journalistic experience is observed, still Yu. Dud turns it into a joke, saying about himself, “I believe I’m a journalist.” We trust it does not dramatically impact the viewers’ perception. During the interview, he avoids using catch-all words or phrases, his speech is emotional; occasionally, it contains the obscene language. He is a rapt listener in spite of the fact he often interrupts his interviewees and makes exclamations. Apparently, Yury may be deemed as a haughty and arrogant person as he dares to cross his legs in the



frame while talking; yet, it can still be considered his everyday habit turned into a component of his media image.

It is customary to hold a contest for his subscribers – *The Most Extraordinary Commentary*, *The Incredible Story*, *The Script*, *The Song Verse*, etc. The winner is awarded with a gift from the interviewee, which is usually brought directly to the studio. Yury diversifies a discussion with quizzes aimed at engaging the audience in consuming and assimilating information presented (Dud, 2020a; Dud, 2020b; Dud, 2020c; Dud, 2019; Dud, 2021a; Dud, 2021b).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

1. Blogging as a mass media phenomenon emerged quite recently and quickly expanded in the Russian Internet space. Having studied components of media images by both A. Ivleeva and Yu. Dud, we can conclude that they are emotional, active, inquisitive and well-rounded in their onscreen activities on the screen. We noticed that they attract subscribers to their YouTube channels by their ingenuous behavior, style tenuity, the use of the strong language, and by covering issues relevant to the Russian youth. We believe that by applying the components, the bloggers deliberately formed and continue to form a positive media image in the youth minds and monetize it by hosting ads on their YouTube channels.

2. Although, topics discussed by A. Ivleeva and Yu. Dud sometimes overlap, the bloggers are rather different media personalities with particular component sets to coin and present the media images of bright, independent and bold individuals not afraid to tell the truth, highlight the acute social issues of the Russian society to their audience and, thereby, create a feeling of portraying an objective reality picture for their viewers. We assume the sense can contribute to further design the Russian audience loyalty (primarily, the youth) to the media resources by A. Ivleeva and Yu. Dud, which is manifested by an increase in number of their subscribers. A. Ivleeva presents herself to the audience as a dummy, eccentric, and fussy girl not delving into (or not eager to delve into) the essence. Yu. Dud poses as an attentive interviewer able to win over the interlocutor; he is not afraid to cover and go into the acute social problems and tell the audience about features of people's lives in peculiar and challenging climate environment throughout the planet.





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