CORECON

The Coverage and Reception of the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict

AI-Assisted News Values Analysis: Trivialization, Sensationalism, and Newsworthiness. But until when?

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Introduction and research focus

1. To conceptualize and define the notion of **news values** within journalistic discourse, drawing on established theoretical frameworks.

2. To identify and analyze the **linguistic devices** typically associated with the construction and expression of news values.

3. To integrate linguistic analysis with **multimodal approaches** in order to provide a comprehensive account of how news values are realized across modes.

4. To examine the discursive construction of **personalization** as a selected news value, using both qualitative and quantitative insights.

5. To evaluate the **effectiveness of artificial intelligence** tools in the identification and interpretation of news values in media texts.

6. To assess **the impact of prompt design** on the quality and accuracy of AI-generated analyses of news discourse

Theoretical framework: News values

„**News values** can be defined in many different ways, but in essence they determine **what is news(worthy)**. In the Journalism/ Communication Studies literature, news values are typically defined as properties of events or stories or as criteria/principles that are applied by news workers in order to select events or stories as news or to choose the structure and order of reporting." (Bednarek, Caple 2014:136)

Galtung and Ruge's 12 News Factors

1. FREQUENCY
2. THRESHOLD
3. UNAMBIGUITY
4. MEANINGFULNESS
5. CONSONANCE
6. UNEXPECTEDNESS

7. CONTINUITY
8. COMPOSITION
9. REFERENCE TO ELITE NATIONS
10. REFERENCE TO ELITE PEOPLE
11. REFERENCE TO PERSONS
12. REFERENCE TO SOMETHING NEGATIVE

A contemporary set of news values:

Tony Harcup & Deirdre O'Neill

1. THE POWER ELITE
2. CELEBRITY
3. ENTERTAINMENT
4. SURPRISE
5. BAD NEWS

6. GOOD NEWS
7. MAGNITUDE
8. RELEVANCE
9. FOLLOW-UP
10. NEWSPAPER AGENDA

News values: key linguistic devices
Monika Bednarek & Helen Caple

1. NEGATIVITY
2. TIMELINESS
3. PROXIMITY
4. SUPERLATIVENESS
5. ELITENESS

6. IMPACT
7. NOVELTY
8. PERSONALISATION
9. CONSONANCE

Theoretical framework:
# News values – cognitive or discursive?

"From a **linguistic perspective**, **language can be seen as expressing, indicating, emphasising or highlighting news values** (Bednarek, 2006; Bell, 1991; Conboy, 2006), or news values can be regarded as becoming embedded in language (Cotter, 2010:67). More radically, news values have also been defined as values that are *construed* in and through discourse (Bednarek and Caple, 2012a, 2012b)." (Bednarek, Caple 2014:136)

# **News values and language**

1. EVALUATIVE LANGUAGE
2. INTENSIFICATION
   AND QUANTIFICATION
3. COMPARISON
4. REFERENCES TO EMOTION
5. 'NEGATIVE' VOCABULARY
6. WORD COMBINATIONS
7. METAPHOR/ SIMILE
8. STORY STRUCTURE

9. REFERENCES TO TIME AND PLACE
10. REFERENCES TO THE NATION/ COMMUNITY
11. FIRST-PERSON PLURAL PRONOUNS
12. ROLE LABELS
13. QUOTES FROM 'ORDINARY' INDIVIDUALS
14. REFERENCES TO INDIVIDUAL

AI-Assisted News Values Analysis (quantitative analysis?)
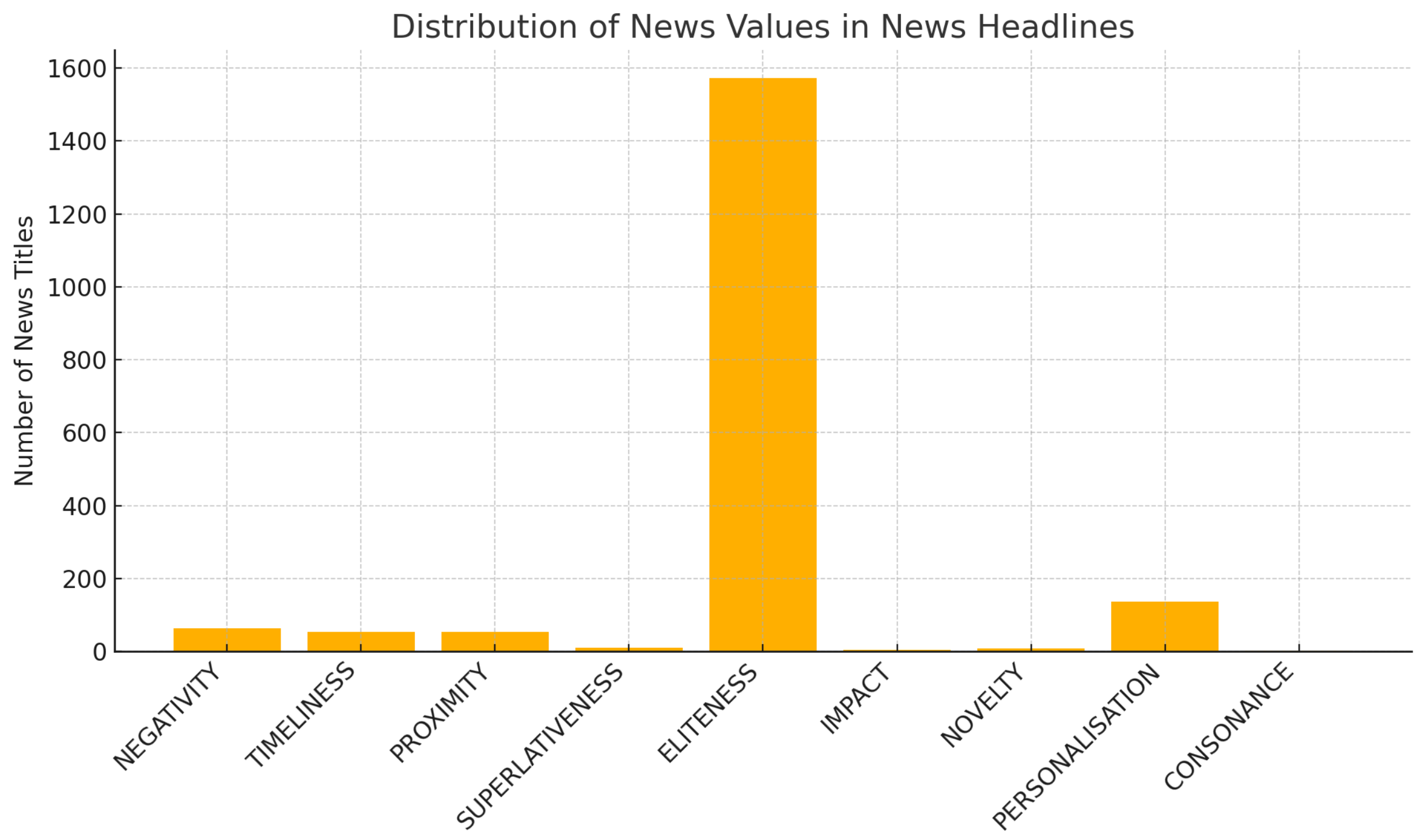
Distribution of News Values in News Headlines

AI-Assisted News Values Analysis (quantitative analysis?)

Frequency of News Values Across All Headlines
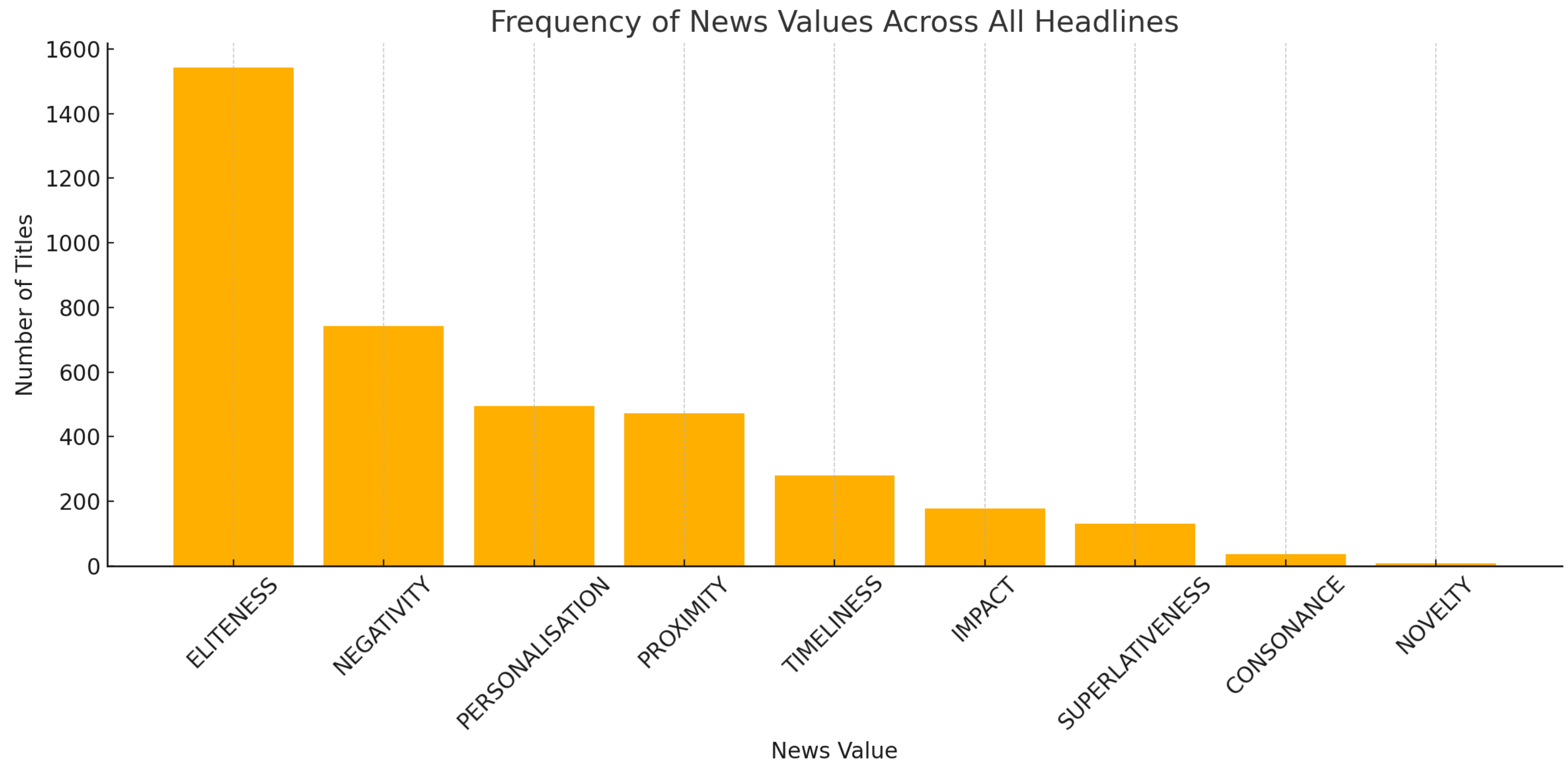
AI-Assisted News Values Analysis (qualitative analysis)

„VIDEO Copiii de la o creşă din Rusia, puşi să cânte că sunt pregătiţi să moară pentru Vladimir Putin"

(*"VIDEO Children from a Russian kindergarten made to sing that they are ready to die for Vladimir Putin"*)

(https://hotnews.ro/video-copiii-de-la-o-cresa-din-rusia-pusi-sa-

cnte-ca-sunt-pregatiti-sa-moara-pentru-vladimir-putin-125429)

AI-Assisted News Values Analysis

ZERO-SHOT PROMPT

FEW-SHOT PROMPT

INSTRUCTIONAL PROMPT

ROLE-BASED PROMPT

CONTEXTUAL PROMPT
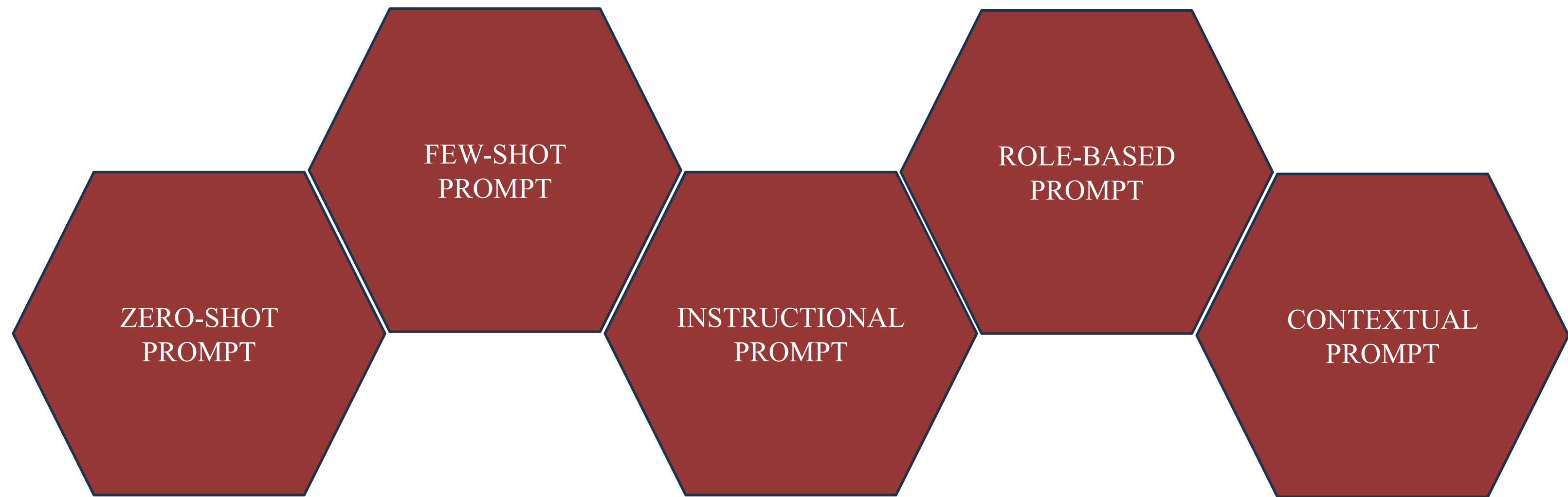
AI-Assisted News Values Analysis (cognitive analysis)

1.Personalisation – ✅ YES
The story centers on **individual children**, a vulnerable group, emphasizing a human/emotional dimension. The title focuses on what these specific children are made to do — this brings the abstract issue of propaganda into the personal sphere.

2.Eliteness – ✅ YES
The name **Vladimir Putin**, a high-profile political figure, brings elite involvement into the narrative, reinforcing the importance of the event via association with a powerful individual.

3.Negativity – ✅ YES
The act of **children being made to sing about death** is emotionally and ethically disturbing — highlighting negative, controversial, and morally charged content.

4.Consonance – ✅ YES
The title reinforces existing narratives or expectations about **authoritarianism in Russia**, particularly in Western media — this fits with what audiences may already believe about political control and propaganda.

AI-Assisted News Values Analysis (cognitive analysis)

5. Impact – ✅ YES
This situation suggests **psychological and cultural impact** on children, which could also trigger wider societal reactions (parental concern, political debate, media outrage). Impact is both **local** (on the children) and **symbolic/global** (on public opinion).

6. Novelty – ⚠️ Partial
While the idea of children being used in propaganda may not be new, the **specific act of singing about dying for a leader** is unusual and may be perceived as a **discursive novelty** in this context.

7. Timeliness – ✅ YES
The use of "VIDEO" in the title implies **immediacy and recency**, which aligns with the value of timeliness. It signals the event is current and documented.

8. Proximity – ⚠️ Partial
Geographically, this event happens in Russia — not necessarily close for Romanian readers — but the **cultural/emotional proximity** (children, authoritarianism, war context) may still generate strong engagement.

9. Superlativeness – ⚠️ Partial
While not expressed with overtly extreme language, the **emotional extremity** (children singing about death for a political figure) gives this title a form of **qualitative superlativeness** — it's presented as morally and symbolically "extreme."

AI-Assisted News Values Analysis (linguistic analysis)

📊 Lexical Analysis Based on Bednarek's 9 News Values

News Value	Lexical Cue(s) from Title	Explanation
Personalisation	*"children"*, *"made to sing"*	Refers directly to **individual human beings** (children). The passive structure *"made to"* emphasizes that people are involved and acted upon.
Negativity	*"to die"*	Clear use of a **negative verb** associated with harm, loss, and emotional intensity.
Eliteness	*"for Vladimir Putin"*	Includes a **named elite figure**, signaling the involvement of a high-profile leader.
Consonance	*"from a Russian kindergarten"*, *"for Vladimir Putin"*	Activates **pre-existing schemata** about Russian authoritarianism and indoctrination, familiar in Western media discourse.

AI-Assisted News Values Analysis (linguistic analysis)

Impact	*"children", "made to sing", "to die"*	Suggests **emotional and societal consequences**, especially involving children and death — strong emotional salience.
Timeliness	*"VIDEO"*	A **paratextual element** often used in online headlines to imply **recency or immediacy.**
Novelty (partial)	*"children made to sing... to die"*	While not lexically marked with novelty indicators, the **semantic oddity** of the act contributes to perceived **news novelty.**
Proximity	—	No direct **lexical indicators of geographic or cultural closeness** to the audience.
Superlativeness	—	Lacks overt **superlative adjectives or intensifiers** (e.g., "shocking," "extreme," "never before").

AI-Assisted News Values Analysis (multimodal analysis)

🖼 Visual Analysis Table (Based on Bednarek's image-based criteria)

Criterion (Bednarek)	Visual Indicator in the Image	News Value Constructed	Explanation
References to individuals	Children are individually visible in the image (faces, bodies)	Personalisation	By showing real children, the image brings abstract ideas (e.g., propaganda) into a human, individual focus.
References to emotion	Facial expressions may be neutral, serious, or confused	Negativity, Impact	Emotional detachment or discomfort in children reinforces the disturbing nature of the event.
Negative elements	The children are depicted singing about death	Negativity, Impact	Visual depiction of a troubling action – thematically focused on mortality and manipulation.
Role labels	No elites shown, but the children act as symbolic figures	Personalisation, Consonance	Children visually stand in for a wider cultural-political issue, representing "victims" of a system.

AI-Assisted News Values Analysis (multimodal analysis)

Intensification (emotional)	Emotional weight conveyed through the contradiction of childhood + death theme	**Superlativeness**	Strong emotional dissonance is created visually without using extreme symbols.
Comparison	Small bodies (children) potentially arranged in a large space or formation	**Novelty, Impact**	The contrast between child size and formal staging emphasizes vulnerability or spectacle.
References to time/place	Interior space with no clear landmarks or visual date indicators	—	Lacks specific temporal or spatial references; proximity is not visually constructed.
Aesthetic arrangement *(excluded)*	Possibly symmetrical/staged group arrangement	*(Not a Bednarek core value)*	Aesthetic value is not among Bednarek's core 9 news values, though mentioned as a secondary factor.

Conclusion and further directions

Conclusion:
- AI can be useful for both cognitive and linguistic analysis of news values, especially when supported by clear prompts and a solid theoretical background.
- Qualitative analysis with AI is generally well-written and insightful.
- Quantitative analysis is still a challenge for AI, as it lacks consistency and precision in counting and categorizing complex data.
- AI tools can help identify sensationalism and manipulation techniques in news, such as emotional language or exaggerated framing.

Further directions:
- Extend the **qualitative analysis** to a **quantitative study** focused on *personalisation* as a news value, using larger datasets and clearer coding criteria.

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