

Abstracts

Geert Jacobs, Ghent University

Rich points and interviews: on what chief editors and journalists do – and on what they say they do.

In this paper I will present a number of rich points in the analysis of the transcript of two semi-structured interview that I conducted with the chief editor and one of the political correspondents of the TV news of the Belgian French-language broadcasting corporation RTBF. My main ambition is to shed light on how the interview data can be enriched by the broader newsroom ethnography that they are part of and the other way round

Jana Declercq, Ghent University

(De)constructing health news: An analysis of the lifecycle of elderly-related news stories through multi-sited, linguistic ethnographic research.

'(De)constructing Health News' is a transdisciplinary project of the Health, Media & Society research centre (Ghent University), aiming at investigating the processes and stakeholder interaction involved in the (de)construction of elderly-related health news in Belgium. Today, laypeople are overwhelmed with health-related news and information, and they often have difficulties processing it all (Andreassen et al., 2010); meanwhile, the aging of the population drastically changes the demographic landscape and makes health care costs surge. To examine the societal background, processes and impact of these issues, four PhD researchers are working on four work packages, i.e.:

- (1) Stakeholder analysis; mapping the political-economic and institutional relations between different actors involved, like pharmaceutical companies, health insurance companies, journalists, researchers, doctors, patients, etcetera.
- (2) Lifecycle analysis of elderly-related health news stories in press releases, newspapers and online weblogs; by taking a multi-sited, linguistic ethnographic perspective, the complex discursive processes and professional routines at work will be examined.
- (3) Quantitative analysis of the output of the news production, by scrutinizing news sourcing, and conducting a frame and discourse analysis on elderly-related health news content.
- (4) Qualitative audience research; to gain understanding of uptake, perception, interpretation of elderly-related health news.

As a PhD student focusing on the second work package, my research sets out to answer how and why elderly-related health news stories are selected by journalists, how news stories travel back and forth between stakeholders, and to map the lifecycle of news that is initiated by PR-offices. Are these news stories reproduced more or less verbatim by the news media, or do journalists make critical inquiries into the facts they are provided with and recontextualize these (Catenaccio et al., 2011)? The linguistic ethnographic

fieldwork will show which of these two scenarios occur most often in journalistic practice, and which factors influence the processes and decisions involved.

Daniel Perrin, Zürich University of Applied Sciences

Methodology and methods in (news-)writing research.

Doing writing research from an applied linguistics (AL) perspective means investigating individual, collaborative, and organizational writing and text production as language-based activities in complex and dynamic real-life contexts. In doing so, micro and macro levels, product and process perspectives, as well as theoretical and practical questions are combined. Appropriate methods have to be deliberately chosen and transparently explained and combined. Methodological questions need to be clarified, such as: which method fits which problem – and how should and can various methods complement each other? – In this contribution, I start from two methodologically complementary ways of doing research into real-life writing processes: ex post and in situ (part 1). I then outline a typology of state-of-the-art methods in writing research (2) and explain some challenges of combining perspectives and methods in research projects (3).

Gilles Merminod, University of Lausanne

Analyzing public story telling as products and processes: The added value of a newsroom ethnographic perspective.

This presentation focuses on story telling in broadcast news reports. In the frame of a linguistic perspective, narrative is usually seen either as a text (the product of telling) or as an activity (the process of telling). In the framework of discourse analysis and sociolinguistics, one observes integrative approaches considering narratives both as a product and as a process (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012; Filliettaz 2001). The perspective of newsroom ethnography goes even further and grasps media narratives as embedded in a twofold process:

- a) Seen from the stage, narrative is a written text built by a journalist, and is seen as a product. However, at the same time, narrative is a talk introduced by an anchor-man and uttered by a speaker, and appears as a process.
- b) Seen backstage, narrative is an ongoing production caught up in a complex network of praxeological relations emerging from professional routinized practices.

The data under analysis were collected (2007) at TSR1, the French Speaking public service broadcast in Switzerland. The data combine broadcast products (two almost identical reports of the same event: an airplane crash) and backstage activities (e.g. editorial meetings, preparatory sessions).

To describe public story telling seen from the stage, we provide a discourse analysis of the two newsreports and their preface (Adam 2011; Revaz 2009; Norrick 2005): what kind of textual structure does the reports achieve and how does the anchor-man introduce them? Then, to describe public story telling seen from the backstage, we adopt an ethnographic perspective on newsmaking processes (Burger & Perrin 2014; Perrin

2013; News Text & Talk Research Group 2011): what issues do journalists meet at the workplace and how does the consideration of these issues lead to reshape our understanding of the news products?

Marcel Burger & Laura Delaloye, University of Lausanne

“Maybe there is a very simple debate”: How journalists stage a public discussion from the backstage?

Our paper aims at describing how a public discussion is favoured and shaped by journalists in a specific news product: a short report in a broadcast news bulletin. We consider both the report and the complex set of newsmaking processes that leads to it.

Promoting public discussion and understanding constitutes a civic remit of the news media achieved through a variety of genres: from editorial in the written press to broadcast debate. As a matter of fact, the news bulletin’s report on which we focus shows antagonistic voices on the given issue (a possible ban on smoking in public places in Switzerland). Such divergent positions are expressed in interviews with experts, politicians and lay people and are selected, cut and put together.

Using a multimethod of analysis combining tools from conversation analysis (AC), interaction analysis (IA) and argumentation theory (AT) we first show the underlining debate structure staged in the report for the audience of TV watchers. Second, we go backstage considering the newsmaking processes: they show best how, why and when specific choices are made by the journalists and what is at stake with them in order to figure the public discussion.

We focus on one specific process: the morning editorial conference at TSR1 (a public service channel in the French area of Switzerland) to describe one particular dimension of the report: how a topic for the newscast turns out to be a trigger for a potential public discussion. We analyze in details the negotiations between the journalists and the chief-editor to highlight how the journalists link together the antagonistic argumentative positions in their effort to frame-reframe the idea of a public debate. The data have been collected at the SRG-SSR (the Swiss public broadcasting company) in 2007 and our case study anchors in the context of an Initiative against passive-smoke in the Swiss public space and the following counter-Initiative.

Lauri Haapanen, University of Helsinki

Rethinking quoting in written journalism: From a verbatim reproduction to an intertextual chain.

This paper addresses quotations in written journalism. In guidebooks, quotations are often defined in two aspects, with regard to the form and the meaning. These guidelines suggest that utterances pronounced in an interview should be quoted verbatim, but if the textual form needs to be amended, at least the meaning must be maintained. My data, which consist of recordings of interviews conducted by Finnish journalists

(Dataset 1) and the published articles based on these interviews (Dataset 2), show that the relation is, however, much more complex than presented above. Thus, I will suggest a new kind of interpretation for quotations and quoting: a journalistic interview and the published article with its quotations can be seen as parts of an intertextual chain (Fairclough 1992). In this chain, the former genre transforms into the latter “in regular and predictable ways”. My analysis is based on three datasets (Datasets 1 and 2, together with so-called stimulated recall interviews with some of the Finnish journalists mentioned above), and my goal is to explore this transformation process and the influencing factors (cf. Grounded Theory Method). My analysis reveals that influencing factors include, for example, the linguistic ideals and narrative goals for the article, the practical constraints such as layout, and ideologies and values of the particular media and its publisher.

Andrea Rocci, Università della Svizzera Italiana

Economic-financial journalists as argumentative intermediaries.

Economic-financial journalists rely on written corporate sources more than other journalists (van Hout 2010). Corporate earnings press releases, annual reports etc. produced by stakeholders in the financial markets typically form the starting point of the economic-financial news writer. Earlier research examined how corporate sources try to influence the reporting by means of pre-formulating strategies (Jacobs 1999) aimed at having the corporate viewpoints reproduced in the journalist’s text and examined how journalists cope with these strategies by looking both at the news product (Pander Maat 2007) and at the newsmaking process (van Hout and Macgilchrist 2010). The present research aims at merging this strand of research with recent research on the argumentative nature both of corporate financial reporting (Filimon 2011, Hursti 2011) and of economic-financial newswriting (Miecznikowski, Rocci and Zlatkova 2012, Zlatkova 2012). In order to observe how economic-financial journalists deal with the argumentation of their corporate sources we conducted an ethnographic observation of the business desk of an Italian language Swiss daily newspaper during a week characterized by the publication of the annual results of several Swiss companies, including two major Swiss banks and a regionally important bank. Following the methodology of Progression Analysis (Perrin 2003) a multiplicity of data was collected on site (including video-recorded interactions, computer logging and interviews) allowing us to draw a bridge between the arguments of the corporate sources and their reporting in the news, reconstructing the role of argumentative intermediary played by economic-financial journalists. The journalist rarely takes the explicit role of co-arguer or critic of the corporate standpoints, but he is still active (and indirectly critical) in reconfiguring the topical choices of the corporate arguments to better respond to the perceived demand of the readers. In the data considered this topical reconfiguration is particularly apparent in the reporting of the corporate standpoints (or lack thereof) concerning the issue of executive compensation, which was at the time at the centre of Swiss political debate in view of an imminent popular vote.

Margherita Luciani, Università della Svizzera Italiana

The mental grounding of linguistic representations of unaware emotions emerging in argumentative interactions: a case study from newsroom editorial meetings.

In this paper I set out to explore the linguistic representations of unaware emotions, conceiving them as grounded in mental representations, in argumentative interactions of editorial meeting discussions. In order to achieve this aim, I intertwine two theoretical frameworks, namely Semins' psycholinguistic approach known as Linguistic Category Model (henceforth, LCM) and the semantic-pragmatic approach called Congruity Theory. Following the LCM paradigm, with abstractness of language I refer to linguistic forms such as stative verbs, adjectives and substantives on the contrary, with concreteness of language I refer to language containing action depicting verbs and action interpretative verbs. This theory suggests that abstract language implies a greater likelihood of repetition than concrete terms and therefore abstract words refer to stable characteristics, whereas concrete words refer to temporary characteristics. In order to test this framework I carried out a semantic analysis of abstract/concrete words following Congruity Theory, highlighting the different perspective given by them with respect to the features of specificity and generalization of words contained in argumentative interactions. If abstract language implies that the supported opinion refers to stable characteristics, then abstract language used to describe journalists' negative opinions referred to the antagonist should highlight negative conceptualizations of the antagonist. Similarly, the usage of concrete language to support negative journalists' opinions referred to himself that do not generalize beyond the specific situation, will convey the idea of an unrepresentative feature. I hypothesize the same for positive opinions referred to the antagonist; if such opinions are supported by concrete language, then such information will deny a generalization of the positivity of the antagonist. Hereby, I propose a case study concerning a discussion between a journalist and the editor in chief in an editorial meeting discussion, showing how abstract language can convey and foster a negative characterization of the antagonist through unaware emotions.

Astrid Vandendaele, Ghent University

The sub-editing stage of news production: Beyond "Trimming the fat".

Making the news is seldom a solo performance (Bell, 1991): Rather, a myriad of people and practices are inherent to it. This paper tracks the interventions in newspaper articles in the sub-editing phase of news production, using a multi-method approach of corpus-based discourse analytic research, interviewing and participant observation. Relying on a pilot corpus of 30 articles from a Belgian broadsheet newspaper, we trace the differences between the 'initial' (version of the article right before the sub-editing stage) and 'final' (published) versions of five different types of news article. We categorized the detected interventions along four scales, ranging from (i) Addition, (ii) Deletion, (iii) Replacement to (iv) Translocation, and subsequently allocated them to a specific location in the article's structure, e.g. headline, body text, photo caption.

Our main findings are that, contrary to popular belief that sub-editors mainly 'hack away' at news stories, and merely 'trim the fat' (Ellis 2001), additions to the original text

are predominant. Second, most interventions occur in the high stakes articles (e.g. front page news articles). And finally, interventions are mainly found in the so-called 'entry points' of an article, i.e. headlines, photo captions and drop quotes, which are read most often. (Holmqvist & Wartenberg 2005).

This paper is part and parcel of a full-scale investigation into the "forgotten stepchildren of the newsroom" (Vane 1997), the sub-editors. Reflecting on what happens in the sub-editing phase, this paper aims to uncover when in the writing process, the elements that actually draw readers into (and sell newspapers) a text are created. Moreover, we want to open the debate about the changing role of the journalist, and the skills he/she should be equipped with to compete in the ever-changing, economically challenged news media landscape.