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University**

Meta framing and polyphonic structures

A case study of news reporting in sports journalism

Pedersen, Karsten

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Meta framing and polyphonic structures: A case study of news reporting in sports journalism.

Abstract

As part of a recurring Danish project mapping the news in one specified week (Brink Lund 2001; Willig et al. Forthcoming) this case study builds on some of the insights from (Hofma and Pedersen Forthcoming) and sets them into the contexts of framing analysis (Brüggemann 2014; Craig and Tracy 2010; Craig and Tracy 2010; de Vreese 2005; Matthes 2009) and polyphony theory (Bres et al., n.d.; Cooren and Sandler 2014; Dahl and Fløttum 2014; Dendale 2005; Fløttum and Dahl 2012; Nølke 1993; Nølke 2001; Nølke 2004; Therkelsen, Nina Møller Andersen, and Henning Nølke 2007), respectively. This makes it a rather traditional case study in the terminology offered by Gerring (Gerring 2004, 342) by offering an investigation into a single case of and/or the properties of a single case.

The method of the study is the harvesting of the entire news output in Denmark in the week from November 12 to November 18 2012 (Brink Lund 2001; Willig et al. forthcoming).

The present case study deals with the Danish tabloid BT's coverage of Cycling team owner Bjarne Riis's possible knowledge of doping use in his cycling teams. BT sees itself as a sports paper and tries to signal that it takes sports coverage as seriously other kinds of news. We see that reflected in various ways in BT's 2012 coverage of a doping case involving cycling team owner Bjarne Riis. In this article I investigate the way in which BT meta frames itself and its own actions in order to show and underline the seriousness with which BT treats sports journalism.

Key words: Sports journalism; framing; meta framing; doping; investigative journalism; linguistics; polyphony

Introduction

Just as journalists and newspapers frame the news (Brüggemann 2014; Craig and Tracy 2010; Craig and Tracy 2010; de Vreese 2005; Matthes 2009; Tankard 1991; Tankard 2001), newspapers frame themselves as a means to present the newspaper in a specific manner. And that is what I call meta framing.

In the analysis I use framing theory in combination with linguistic polyphony theory (Dahl and Fløttum 2014; Dendale 2005; Dendale 2005; Fløttum and Dahl 2012; Nølke 1993; Nølke 2001) in order to show how BT meta-frames itself.

BT is one of two Danish tabloid newspapers with nationwide coverage. Representing the two major newspaper conglomerates in Denmark, both newspapers have been losing readers over more than the last decade. The competitor, Ekstra-Bladet focusses on political scandal, whereas BT focusses on women and health and on sports coverage. Ekstra-Bladet boasts the most visited news web site in Denmark and the competition between BT and Ekstra-Bladet drove BT to launching its own sports site, sporten.dk. Sporten.dk was active at the time of data collection and some of the articles under scrutiny could also be found at sporten.dk. Sporten.dk has now been fully integrated into the BT website.

As part of a recurring mapping of the Danish media landscape (Blach-Ørsten and Willig Forthcoming; Brink Lund 2001; Willig et al. Forthcoming) a

Hofma and Pedersen looked into the BT's treatment of cycling team owner Bjarne Riis and his possible doping involvement (Hofma and Pedersen Forthcoming). In the chapter Hofma and Pedersen argue that BT seems to address the criticism aimed at sports journalism in the newspaper's insistence on covering an event that other newspapers chose not to cover, and in the paper's portrayal of BT in opposition to the other newspapers as well as its own readers. As this was a minor point in the chapter, I have chosen to take a deeper look into the matter here.

BT was the only newspaper to deal with the case in the week covered by the media mapping, so my data is the 12 articles published by BT from November 12 to November 18 in 2012.

Salwen & Garrison (Salwen and Garrison 1998, 89) quote Giamatti's call for a change in the editorial standards regarding sports journalism:

My impression is that editors generally ignore the sports section. They ignore it in the sense, and it is an important one, that the same set of editorial standards for accuracy, competence, distinguishing fact from opinion, rewriting, and editing are simply not applied consistently or rigorously to sports sections as they are applied to all other sections of the paper. (Giamatti, 1988, p. 204 in Salwen & Garrison, 1998, p. 204).

Giamatti is not alone in this call for a change in editorial attitude towards sports journalism. Rowe, Salwen and Garrison, Schultz-Jørgensen, and Boyle also see some problems in the way sport journalism is and has been practised (Boyle 2005; Rowe 2004; Salwen and Garrison 1998; Schultz-Jørgensen 2005). The main criticism aimed at the practise of sports journalism seems to be the notion that it is driven by fascination and a wish to report this fascination rather than by a wish to control and criticize the actions and activities within sports.

It was rather a surprise to find that BT seemed to employ news journalism standards to its article series dealing with cycling team owner, Tour de France winner and repenting doping user, Bjarne Riis and his possible involvement in doping in his cycling team (Hofma and Pedersen Forthcoming). This surprise is what makes the findings interesting beyond a local Danish context, because it seems as if BT is aware of the fact that they are addressing doping use in sports in quite a novel way and therefore have to mention the fact in a separate commentary article (Skaaning Andersen, November 15, 2012). This mix of genres, sports and news, has been addressed by e.g. Spalletta and Ugolini who refer to the mix as "[h]ybridization" (Spalletta & Ugolini, 2014, p. 223). It is by calling attention to this genre blending that BT meta frames its efforts to unveil Riis' role in his teams' doping activities.

It came as no surprise that BT took the doping question seriously, because the editor in chief for BT, Olav Skaaning Andersen, started out as a doping critical journalist (Skaaning Andersen and Jung 1999a; Skaaning Andersen and Jung 1999b; Skaaning Andersen and Jung 1999c; Skaaning Andersen and Jung 1999d; Skaaning Andersen and Jung 2000a; Skaaning Andersen and Jung 2000b).

Polyphony theory

Like Dahl and Fløttum (Dahl and Fløttum 2014) I use a downscaled version of the linguistic polyphony theory termed ScaPoLine (Nølke 2004; Therkelsen, Nina Møller Andersen, and Henning Nølke 2007). This approach

draws upon the insights from Ducrot and Anscombre that the notion of polyphony as introduced by Bakhtin as a literary concept can also be fruitfully applied in linguistics (Anscombre and Ducrot 1983; Ducrot 1972; Ducrot 1984).

In Dahl and Fløttum's article (Dahl and Fløttum 2014) the authors look at the climate debate and find polyphony theory quite useful for the purpose (Dahl and Fløttum 2014, 402).

My aims are slightly different, but what my study shares with Dahl and Fløttum's study is the fact that it analyses texts that belong to a field of rather heated debates at times.

The polyphonic approach adopted here, ScaPoLine, is based in linguistics and that comes to the fore when we deal with the identification of various voices realised in a given text. Polyphony theory enables us to uncover some of the utterances that are unsaid, but can be shown to lie behind word choices and specific grammatical constructions (such as e.g. speech act introducing verbs, conjunctions ('but', 'and', etc.) (Pedersen 1996)).

Polyphony theory furthermore provides the analyst with a vocabulary to address sender's (dis)agreement with the angles and frames of the newspaper articles (Nølke 1989, 16–7; Pedersen 1996, 1996:88–92).

In a simplification of the relation that senders can have with utterances in their texts (Nølke 1989, 16–7), we can say that senders can

- 1) Agree with a point of view expressed in an utterance
- 2) Accept a point of view expressed in an utterance
- 3) Disagree with a point of view expressed in an utterance.

Accepting a point of view is close to agreeing with it, because it leaves the point of view uncommented. It is accepted for the time being (Nølke 1989, 17–18). This means that for a sender to agree or disagree with e.g. a quote, they will have to mark their (dis)agreement explicitly.

Polyphony theory can supplement framing analysis by showing if and how the choice of certain words or phrases support or undermine a specific frame. I will address this in the analyses below.

Framing theory

Framing in news writing can be said to be the presentation of events or facts in such a way as to make the readers activate the "schemes in which [they] perceive the world" (Littlejohn et al. 2009, 402). In his presentation of approaches to framing, Entman (1993) identifies four entities believed to constitute the framing process, viz., communicator, text, receiver, and culture (Entman 1993, 52). Entman defines the frames realised in texts as follows:

The text contains frames, which are manifested by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments (Entman 1993, 52).

And since my concern here is how senders present themselves in texts, the combination of framing and polyphony theory seems to provide me with the tools for analysis appropriate for the job. Even if I thereby add another "strange bedfellow" to the rather promiscuous concept of framing:

... framing combines "strange bedfellows" that differ in important philosophical assumptions. "The diversity of theoretical perspectives—cognitive, constructivist, and critical—has been

beneficial in enabling a comprehensive understanding of all facets of the framing process (Matthes 2009, 349).

I try to exploit the versatility of framing theory in showing how polyphonic structures can be seen to support the overall framing efforts found in the texts. Entman characterises framing in the following way:

Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described (Entman 1993, 52).

Entman goes on to characterise framing as an activity that diagnoses, evaluates, and prescribes (Entman 1993, 52).

What I do in this article is limited in scope in the sense that what I address here is how framing is realised in texts. I will not discuss how framing is perceived by the readership.

Brüggemann also talks about different ways in which to introduce a frame into a text, viz., frame setting and frame sending. Frame setting and frame sending are seen as two extremes of a continuum. **Frame sending** is the text sender's (the journalist) way of letting external senders' wordings and framing into his or her text (accepting the point of view, unless explicitly rejecting it). **Frame setting** is his or her way of introducing their own wordings and framing into the text (agreeing with the point of view expressed in the frame) (Brüggemann 2014, 64).

This idea of giving external senders some kind of say in one's own text is just what polyphony theory is about (Dahl and Fløttum 2014; Fløttum and Dahl 2012, 16; Nølke 2004) and therefore it seems appropriate to try and describe framing processes using polyphonic terminology. Polyphony theory will give us the opportunity to anchor some of the insights from framing theory in the journalistic texts and in that way hopefully strengthen the analyses.

Sports journalism and doping coverage in the media

Traditionally, sports journalism has been seen as reportage journalism conveying sports fascination and results (Rowe 2007; Schultz-Jørgensen 2005). Sports journalism resembles celebrity journalism (Conboy, 2013) in both genres' lack of a critical approach to the people and events that they portray (Conboy 2013; B. Turner and Orange 2013; G. Turner 2013).

Also athletes can obtain celebrity status (Hoebeke, Deprez, and Raeymaeckers 2011; (Spalletta & Ugolini, 2014)) so that there is an overlap between the two genres.

Spalletta and Ugolini point to this merger between sports and celebrity journalism as part of a hybridisation of sports journalism whereby it takes in practices from other news genres. Spalletta and Ugolini also mention mediatization and popularisation as phenomena relevant in sports journalism today (Spalletta & Ugolini, 2014, p. 223)

Frandsen (Frandsen, 1997) in her analysis of sports Journalism in Denmark points to some of the same mechanisms and sees them as a movement towards a more serious kind of sport journalism (Frandsen, 1997, pp. 278–280).

My investigation deals with the blending of sports journalism and news journalism and I will show that even if Frandsen saw this development as early as 1997, BT found it necessary to explicitise their use of news journalistic principle in their coverage of Riis' possible doping involvement.

Doping in cycling has been the centre of attention in Danish media for quite some time (Gottlieb 2007; Jung 2014; Skaaning Andersen and Jung 1999a; Skaaning Andersen and Jung 1999b; Skaaning Andersen and Jung 1999c; Skaaning Andersen and Jung 2000a; Skaaning Andersen and Jung 2000b), but academic analyses of doping coverage in the news are rare. There are of course exceptions such as Hoebeke et al.'s analysis of the interrelations between sports and celebrity journalism (Hoebeke, Deprez, and Raeymaeckers 2011) as well as Spalletta and Ugolini's comprehensive analysis the treatment of Lance Armstrong's cycling career in two major Italian newspapers (Spalletta & Ugolini, 2014).

Findings

In the analysis I look at how BT meta frames itself and if and how linguistic structures can be seen to support the overall angles of the articles analysed.

The analysis is based on a qualitative content analysis. It was carried out as a coding of headlines, subheadlines, leads as well as informants' stance towards Riis (Hofma & Pedersen, Forthcoming). The coding classified the articles' angles as positive, critical or neutral towards Riis.

I illustrated the findings in the following chart. The genres were identified using the vocabulary of Frandsen (1997:19):

Headline	Date	Angle	Meta framing	Genre
Confirms Riis' innocence (Risager, Morten, 2012a)	12	Neutral	BT uses its sources to find out the truth	Interview
This is where Riis is hiding (Staghøj, Rasmus, 2012a)	13	Critical	BT will do what it takes to fulfil its duties as a conscientious newspaper	News report
Understands Riis (Staghøj, Rasmus, 2012b)	14	Positive	BT will do what it takes to fulfil its duties as a conscientious newspaper. The first and the last sentence address Riis' reluctance to talk to the press.	Interview
Grumpy Riis: Accept my no (Staghøj, Rasmus, 2012c)	15	Critical	BT will do what it takes to fulfil its duties as a conscientious newspaper (here: Taking the chances they get to talk to Riis)	Interview/news report
Riis' arrogance (Skaaning Andersen, 2012)	15	Critical	BT will do what it takes to fulfil its duties as a conscientious newspaper	Commentary
Riis leaves his riders in the lurch (Remar, Daniel, 2012a)	15	Critical	BT will do what it takes to fulfil its duties as a conscientious newspaper	Interview/report
New unit may bring Riis down (Risager, Morten, 2012c)	16	Critical	BT will do what it takes to fulfil its duties as a conscientious newspaper (here: interview the doping agency)	Interview
Come out in the open, Riis (Risager, Morten, 2012b)	16	Critical	BT will do what it takes to fulfil its duties as a conscientious newspaper (here: interview politicians)	Interview
- Riis (BT, 2012)	16	Critical	BT sees the case as very important so they repeat it whenever they can	N/A
Sports bosses: Riis must answer (Remar, Daniel, 2012b)	17	Critical	BT will do what it takes to fulfil its duties as a conscientious newspaper (here: sports executives)	Interview
Team Denmark [Denmark's official elite sports organisation] presses DCU [Dansk Cykle Union, the national Danish cycling organisation] (Remar, Daniel, 2012c)	17	Neutral	BT will do what it takes to fulfil its duties as a conscientious newspaper (here: sports executives)	Interview
The master of silence (Lund, Benjamin Munk, 2012)	18	Critical	BT will do what it takes to fulfil its duties as a conscientious newspaper (here: Journalists from competing media)	Commentary, interview

The predominantly critical angles lead to an overall negative framing of Riis' role in doping use in his teams. Note that even in neutral and positive articles, we see meta framing supporting BT's claim that the newspaper will do what it takes to fulfil its duties as a conscientious newspaper.

The polyphonic analysis takes a closer look at four words or expressions that are all central to the texts and to the meta framing. These words or expressions are “Riis”, “we/BT”, “accuse/accusation”, and “but” (including however/although). Also I discuss aspects of the article “Riis’ arrogance” which is central to BT’s coverage of the Riis-case.

‘Riis’ is chosen because Riis is the central person in all the articles, “we” and ‘BT’ because they can be used to refer to what the newspaper says and thinks, and ‘accuse/accusation’ as a way of referring to text external speakers while at the same time characterising the text external speaker’s speech act. The reason why I look at ‘accuse’ as well as ‘accusation’ is because ‘anklager’ in Danish is a (present tense) verb as well as a plural noun and therefore might serve various purposes in a text. I analyse ‘but’ because contrastive constructions such as ‘but’, ‘however’ and ‘although’ have very interesting polyphonic functions (Pedersen 1996, 1996:59–74) and allows the sender to accept two propositions as true while favouring one of them.

The keywords were found in their contexts by the help of the text analysis tool AntConc (Anthony, 2014). The programme lets the user search for specific words or phrases and see them in their context.

BT as an active newspaper We/BT

“We” is not an entirely unproblematic pronoun (Fløttum and Dahl 2012, 18), so here I will limit my analysis to cover instances of “we” that can be seen to be partly or entirely synonymous with “BT”. Thereby “We/BT” signals the use of a text internal voice, a voice that belongs to the writer of the article.

I identified 65 instances of “we” in the articles. 35 of those are clearly attributed to text external senders (mostly parts of quotations) and thus not relevant here. Some of the instances of “we” are repetitions (e.g. BT repeats a list of 12 questions several times over the week under scrutiny). “BT” is mentioned 41 times and also here there are a number of repetitions.

Taking a look at the instances where “we” and “BT” are used we see that whereas “BT” is rather straightforward in its scope of reference, “we” is not.

SINCE TOUR OF SPAIN in August/September, **BT** tried to make an appointment with Bjarne Riis. **We** also did that in Gran Canaria, but via his public relations officer he declined.

BT IS WELCOME IN THE TEAM’S HOTEL and is allowed to interview riders, but since Bjarne Riis does not want to answer **our** questions, **we** found it necessary to confront him as the team was testing some equipment in the basement garage.

BT HAR SIDEN VUELTA A ESPAÑA i august/september forsøgt at aftale et interview med Bjarne Riis. Det har vi således også gjort på Gran Canaria, men han har via sin pressechef afvist.

BT ER VELKOMMEN PÅ HOLDETS HOTEL og må gerne interviewe ryttere, men da Bjarne Riis ikke vil svare på vores spørgsmål, så vi os nødsaget til at konfrontere ham, da holdet i går testede udstyr i parkeringskælderen
(Staghøj, Rasmus, 2012a, p. 3).

Here “BT” and “we” are synonymous. “BT” and “we” are used to refer to BT and to frame BT as active in a quest to get Riis to address the doping issue.

In the following quote “we” may mean ‘BT’ as well as ‘the public’:

Angry Bjarne Riis rejects BT’s envoy and suggests that we accept that he does not want to answer doping related questions

Vred Bjarne Riis afviser BTs udsendte og opfordrer til, at vi accepterer, at han ikke vil svare på dopingspørgsmål
(Staghøj, Rasmus, 2012c, p. 2).

The Danish original does not give information as to the number of envoys as ‘udsendte’ is ambiguous in that respect. We know that there is a journalist and a photographer, but there is no way of telling if ‘udsendte’ covers one or both. Therefore ‘we’ is also ambiguous. You could say that ‘we’ is a reference to both the journalist and the photographer, but the reference might be broader and refer to BT, to BT and its readership, or to the entire Danish population. Another interesting aspect of the quote here is that even if “we” is the journalist’s word, it is the journalist’s representation of Riis’s word. We do not know what Riis actually said. What we do know is that the journalist has several versions of what Riis has said.

There is the headline:

Angry Riis: Accept my no

Sur Riis: Acceptor mit nej

(Staghøj, Rasmus, 2012c, p. 2).

There is the subheadline:

Angry Bjarne Riis rejects BT’s envoy and suggests that we accept that he does not want to answer doping related questions

Vred Bjarne Riis afviser BT’s udsendte og opfordrer til, at vi accepterer, at han ikke vil svare på dopingspørgsmål
(Staghøj, Rasmus, 2012a, p. 3).

And there is a version in the text, presented as a representation of the exchange between Riis and the journalist:

– Now listen. I don’t have any comments on the matter right now.
End of story. You have to accept that

– Prøv og hør. Jeg har ikke noget at kommentere på den sag lige nu.
Færdig. Det må I acceptere, siger Riis
(Staghøj, Rasmus, 2012c, p. 3).

The English translation is ambiguous since there is no difference between second person singular (Eng: you, Dan: du) and second person plural, but that ambiguity does not exist in the Danish original (Eng: you, Dan: I), from which it is clear that Riis’s utterance is represented as second person plural. What is not clear from the Danish text is whether Riis means ‘you=journalist and photographer’, ‘you=BT’, ‘you=journalists’, or even ‘you=the Danish public’. The text in the newspaper provides no way of testing if Riis used the exact words that are used in the quote.

So even if the ‘we’ that is used in the phrase “[Riis] suggests that **we** accept ... [emphasis mine]” is the textual sender’s rendition of something said by a text external sender (Riis), we have no way of determining the exact meaning of “we” in the context.

The exchange is part of BT's meta framing in the sense that BT's journalist approaches Riis with the knowledge that Riis is not interested in talking to journalists. Thereby BT can be seen as a newspaper that does not take no for an answer and inexorably pursues the answers deemed necessary and important in the sports journalistic practice. Thus these uses of 'we'/'BT' serve as a way of emphasizing the effort made by BT and thereby as a means of meta framing. And the nature of this meta framing is that of frame sending (Brüggemann 2014, 64) whereby the text sender introduces a point of view with which they agree.

Characterising external speech acts, the use of accuse/accusation

"Accuse/accusation" is used to characterise speech acts originating from mostly text external voices. There are 11 hits in the corpus.

BT presents the fact that Tyler Hamilton in his 2012 book mentions Riis's involvement in his doping while riding for Riis's team CSC as "accusations":

Hamilton accuses Riis of having been an accessory to the blood doping regime Hamilton set up for himself in Team CSC in 2002 and 2003

Hamilton anklager Riis for at være medvirkende til det bloddopingprogram, som Hamilton iværksatte for sig selv på Team CSC i 2002 og 2003.

(Staghøj, Rasmus, 2012c, p. 2).

The central word here is "accuses". It is central for various reasons. First of all because 'accuse' is a speech act evaluating verb and thereby a polyphonic verb. Without going too deep into an analysis of the word, we can say that 'accuse' is "to say that somebody has done something wrong or is guilty of something" (Accuse - Definition and Pronunciation | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com 2014).

The use of the noun "accusations" and the verb "accuse" to refer to (speech) acts performed by Hamilton is significant, because it characterizes Hamilton's claim that Riis was part of his doping regime as a reflection of BT's view on doping rather than a reflection on Hamilton's view of doping. BT introduces and characterises Hamilton's speech act by the use of 'accuse'.

We can see that there might be a difference between BT's view of Riis's actions in connection with Hamilton's doping programme in Hamilton's own account of doping related discussions with Riis:

You could see my new attitude in the season's first major event, Paris-Nice in March. In the past, I'd always shown up for Paris-Nice, that weeklong competition known as 'the Race to the Sun,' with a question in my mind: Was I good or not? Now, with the help of Cecco and Ufe and Riis, I knew. And I delivered. (Hamilton and Coyle 2012, 335).

So rather than a reference to Hamilton's utterances, BT's use of 'accuse/accusation' is BT's interpretation of the utterances. BT interprets utterances from Hamilton's book as a specific kind of speech act, thereby setting the frame of 'accusation', which at the same time works as a justification for the newspaper's interest in the case:

Therefore we have an obvious duty to investigate the harsh accusations directed at Riis.

Derfor har vi en helt åbenlys forpligtelse til at undersøge de hårde beskyldninger, der rammer Riis (Skaaning Andersen, 2012, p. 15).

BT's use of 'accuse/accusation' emphasizes the importance of the effort to have Riis give an interview and that underlines BT's meta framing as a newspaper that takes sports journalism seriously. This is what might lie in the use of the phrase "obvious duty".

Whether or not Hamilton's utterances are accusations is not important to whether or not the case is worth investigating. Riis is a high profiled Danish athlete turned team owner and he was and is a cycling icon in Denmark. And that means that any links between him and doping are newsworthy and relevant to investigate. When BT adds a layer of interpretation to the fact that Hamilton says that Riis not only knew about, but took part in the planning of Hamilton's use of banned substances, it emphasizes the importance of BT's efforts and thereby underlines the meta frame set by the newspaper, viz. that BT finds sports journalism important and wants to treat it accordingly. What we see here is that the polyphonic structures of speech act reporting and characterising, supports the frame set by BT. BT defines a speech act as a "harsh accusation" and therefore has to investigate the case in order to fulfil its journalistic obligations.

The wording "harsh accusations" has no explicit sender. That means that we will have to attribute its use to the sender of the article. In the polyphonic analysis we can say that the textual sender claims that the utterances to the effect that Riis knew about doping use in his team are 'accusations'. So the phrase "harsh accusations" is presented by the textual sender as a point of view that he accepts or even agrees with. In framing terminology we would be undetermined as to whether or not we are dealing with frame setting or frame sending as the former is sender's "way of introducing their own wordings and framing into the text" (Brüggemann 2014, 64). But the fact that the words that are used here are not, as we saw earlier in the Hamilton example, the words of an external sender, we can conclude that it is the sender of the article/the journalist who sets the frame by characterising the speech acts referred to as "harsh accusations". In this case, polyphony theory and framing theory seem to inform each other. The polyphonic analysis shows us that text external senders are introduced in the text, and framing theory helps determine that the sender of the text (the journalist) is responsible for setting the frame and therefore can be said to agree with the utterance.

Creating contrast and concession: The use of BUT

There are 45 instances of 'but' in the corpus. In introducing two different points of view, 'but' creates a contrast in a text:

... we listen to all the comments we get.

BUT WE SEE it as our simple duty to try and ask the important and relevant questions that can be read in the sports paper ...

... vi lytter til alle de kommentarer, vi får.

MEN VI SER det ganske enkelt som vores pligt at forsøge at stille de vigtige og relevante spørgsmål, som kan læses i sportsavisen (Skaaning Andersen, 2012, p. 15).

The extract is from an article written by the editor in chief of BT. And here he most clearly formulates the reason why he finds it important to deal with the

Riis case. In doing so, he underlines that he sees it as a necessity to go against what the readership thinks.

There are two claims in the extract:

- a) We listen to all the comments we get.
- b) We see it as our simple duty to try and ask the important and relevant questions

Fløttum and Dahl see this as 'concession but' (Fløttum and Dahl 2012, 16). And their analysis of 'concession but' is that

The concession expressed by the text segment preceding the connective *but* represents one point of view and the claim following *but* another one. The linguistic instruction inherent in *but* says that the speaker is identifying with the last point of view (Fløttum and Dahl 2012, 16)

In polyphonic terms, the text sender accepts the former point of view, and agrees with the latter (for a more detailed analysis of 'but', please see Pedersen, 1996, pp. 59–74). Both points of view are attributed to BT (introduced as "we" in the text). What this means is that 'but' is used in accordance with what I have claimed to be central in the meta framing of BT, i.e. the marking of BT's efforts as special within the realm of sports journalism. The concession in the use of 'but' is a way of highlighting BT's perception of its own boldness in the face of its readership. The newspaper finds the point of view attributed to the readers a valid point, but marks its own point of view as more important. That means that the linguistic instructions inherent in 'but' are put to use in BT's meta framing efforts and that the use of 'but' here enables the sender of the article to also send the frame that BT is willing to go beyond the opinions of its readership.

This fits very well with the self-presentation of BT as the newspaper that takes sports journalism seriously enough to treat it like any other kind of journalism, and we can see the underlining of what the text sender sees as his newspaper's duties as a reference to a wording earlier in the article:

This year, BT's journalist, Rasmus Staghøj and photographer Niels Meilvang are the only members of the press to have left for the cycling event that just a few years back used to be quite the attraction: Riis Cycling's annual training camp

BT's journalist Rasmus Staghøj og fotograf Nils Meilvang er de eneste pressefolk, der i år har begivet sig til den cykelbegivenhed, der for få år siden var et regulært tilløbsstykke: Den årlige træningslejr på Riis Cycling (Skaaning Andersen, 2012, p. 15).

What we see here is that BT presents itself as a newspaper standing out from the other newspapers. As the newspaper that does its duty and asks the questions necessary.

This ties in nicely with BT's repeated mentioning of BT as the only newspaper covering the Riis story. So BT position themselves as a newspaper that sees the stories that others do not, and that is not afraid to follow its own lead irrespective of the reactions of the readership or the actions of the other newspapers.

The other words and phrases are interesting in the sense that they are parts of an attempt to position BT as a newspaper that deals with matters that BT deems important. The phrases quoted immediately above fit nicely with

phrases from the other articles such as “the only members of the press”, “BT several times tried to make Riis elaborate on his version of the case”, and “had the opportunity to confront”.

Conclusions

In the article from November 15, written by BT’s editor in chief, BT addresses most of the issues mentioned by Giamatti (in Salwen & Garrison, 1998, p. 89), such as editors ignoring the sports section or neglecting to use regular editorial standards on sports reporting. The fact that the article is written by the editor in chief of BT, means that he does not ignore the sports section, and he emphasizes the notion that because BT covers cycling “vividly and intensely”, the newspaper has a “duty” to look beyond the fascination, and thereby he can be said to support using regular editorial standards in sports reporting. In that way we can say that BT’s efforts to get an interview with Riis is a way of meta framing, a way of positioning BT as a serious sports paper.

BT’s positioning of the newspaper is twofold. There is the image of a newspaper that is more persistent than the other newspapers. There is the image of a newspaper committing itself to do what the editor in chief calls “our simple duty”.

The ‘simple duty’ is a reference to the task that all journalists and newspapers have and this is where we see the explicit formulation of a possible change in the covering of sports events.

Although he does call for further research, Rowe concludes on the basis of his data as well as data from Schultz-Jørgensen (Schultz-Jørgensen, 2005) that whether or not sports journalism is the ‘toy department’ is not the question,

... but whether its controllers and practitioners are content to operate within the selfimposed and isolating limits that leave it continually open to professional challenge and even contempt (Rowe 2007, 401)

BT addresses some of the criticism launched at sports journalism, by meta framing itself as a newspaper that takes the coverage of sports seriously and thereby distancing itself from the other newspapers as well as part of its own readership. The most important finding is the fact that the editor in chief addresses the readers with a programmatic announcement setting journalistic duty higher than readership satisfaction.

Polyphony theory makes it possible for us to identify and describe some of the mechanisms in framing. We saw how frame setting and frame sending can be reinterpreted in polyphonic terminology and thereby give us a vocabulary with which we can characterise the text sender’s relationship with the points of view introduced in the text. We also saw how polyphony theory lets us identify how a text sender can select one point of view over another with the use of contrastive conjunctions such as ‘but’.

Framing theory makes it possible to distinguish between frame sending and frame setting. This distinction can be further qualified by the use of polyphony theory. But we also saw how the reverse can be true, i.e. that polyphony theory can use insights from framing analysis to distinguish between a sender’s relationship with external voices.

Finally, the analysis showed how the various articles portray BT as a conscientious newspaper determined to show that it takes sports journalism serious even in times when other newspapers do not and when readers disagree.

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