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MODELLING QUOTING IN NEWSWRITING
A framework for studies on the production of news

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A framework for studies on the production of news

The Mediated Social Communication (MSC) approach considers mass media a venue for opposing and complementary societal groups to publicly negotiate socially relevant topics. This negotiation is conducted through representatives of these groups and mediated by journalists. Inspired by the MSC approach, this paper presents an empirically grounded model that structures the mediating process through the process of quoting. By identifying the key phases of newswriting as sub-processes of quoting, the paper argues that journalists (1) decide on a topical issue to be addressed (topicalisation), (2) identify groups of people who are linked to this issue (societal localisation), (3) pick some people as representatives of these societal groups (personalisation), and (4) verbalise these people's points of view, often by means of quoting, inter alia (verbalisation). The four-phase model is then operationalised into a data collection method that facilitates access to and fosters new insights into the subtle dynamics of newswriting. Hitherto, these dynamics have often remained obscure, because the craft ethos is adopted as tacit knowledge through implicit socialisation and is therefore difficult for journalists to verbalise. The paper concludes by calling for reconsideration of journalists' role as gatekeepers who decide which issues and voices are heard in public discourse.

KEYWORDS journalistic decision-making; mediated social communication (MSC); methodology; newswriting; newsroom ethnography; quoting; retrospective verbalisation

Introduction: The process of newswriting

There are no circumstances or events that are news in themselves. Rather, circumstances and events are elevated to newsworthy status and then constructed and mediated as news. This selection and prioritisation of news is still – contrary to the high expectations set for social media and participatory journalism – mainly conducted by professional journalists (e.g. Carlsson and Nilsson 2016; Jensen 2016; for discussion, see Fürst, Schönhagen, and Bosshart 2015, 329–330).

So, how do journalists and their editorial teams carry out the selection and prioritisation? After studying journalistic products, researchers have suggested interminable and vague lists of news value criteria and argued that the more criteria an event satisfies, the higher the probability that it will become news (e.g. Galtung and Ruge 1965; Staab 1990; Bell 1991; Harcup and O'Neill 2001).¹ However, such an approach lacks explanatory power as regards the subtle dynamics of the production of news – the dynamics that reflect on the finalised, unique news items. Prior to elections, for example, there are dozens of news items about any popular candidate, and these items share a range of news values: they are *predictable*, *meaningful*, *unambiguous*, and *logistically easy* to cover. Nevertheless, no two of these news items are identical in terms of their

¹ The research on news values is abundant. For an overview, see O'Neill and Harcup (2009), and Zampa (2017, Chapter 4).

topics and emphases, let alone their structure and linguistic detail (see below, *Next step: Operationalising the model*).

Traditional accounts of news values have focused mainly on the characteristics of potentially newsworthy circumstances. In order to deepen the picture of journalistic decision-making, research has also uncovered other factors, related to the producer or to practicalities, that can affect selection and prioritisation, such as the ideologies of the medium in question and audiences' expectations; pre-set parameters of the item in the making; production routines in the newsroom; collaboration with colleagues and also external actors; the journalist's personal preferences; and chance – e.g. whether it turns out to be a busy or a slow news day (e.g. Aldridge and Evetts 2003; Becker and Vlad 2009; Gravengaard and Rimestad 2012; Singer 2011; Usher 2017; Van Hout and Van Praet 2011). In their theory of gatekeeping, Shoemaker and Vos (2009) have grouped such influential factors as these into five levels: individuals, their routines, organizations, institutions, and society at large.

All the same, scholars have long agreed that news values and other aspects of the craft ethos are adopted through socialisation, and this makes them difficult for journalists to verbalise. Nevertheless, newsroom ethnography has managed to show that also these instinctive actions can be talked about and analysed when there is disagreement inside the newsroom, and that “[a]rgumentation is thus employed not only to find agreement on courses of action, but also to flesh out routines and principles, leading to emergent solutions” (Zampa 2017, 185). Research on newswriting that has adopted an emic, journalist's insider perspective, has also revealed that besides interpersonal argument, the argument also takes place intrapersonally, “in a soliloquy where protagonist and antagonist of the critical discussion are embodied in the same person” (Zampa and Perrin 2016, 9).

This paper participates in the on-going discussion in two ways. Firstly, I will present a model that structures newswriting² through the process of direct quoting (hereafter referred to simply as *quoting* that produces *quotes*). The model is inspired by the Mediated Social Communication (MSC) approach, which considers established mass media to be a venue for societal groups to publicly negotiate socially relevant topics. In effect, this negotiation is conducted through representatives of these groups and mediated by journalists. In this mediating process, mass media audiences may expect the representatives' voices to be heard most directly, and to be minimally interfered with by journalists, when they are reproduced as quotes. Therefore, drawing on recent research on journalistic quoting, my analysis identifies the key phases in the process of newswriting – from the selection of a topic through to the surface realisation of a news item – as four sub-processes of quoting. In the section that follows, the MSC approach and the practice

² Following a line of research adopted among media linguists (Catenaccio et al. 2010), the term *newswriting* also encompasses various practices preceding actual writing and editing, such as negotiating the subject matter, searching for background information, as well as planning and carrying out interviews (e.g. Perrin 2013). Further, the initial part of the compound, *news*, is not restricted to news articles but also includes profiles, fact-based articles, and other typical kinds of journalistic output. Such a broad approach not only increases the applicability of my findings and their explanatory power in the multifaceted field of journalism, but also diminishes the hegemony of news-focused research (for discussion, see Haapanen 2017b, 13–14). The approach is also practical, as the boundaries between different genres of journalistic articles are blurred and rarely defined (for an exhaustive categorisation of news articles, see Vandendaele et al. 2015).

of quoting will be further discussed, after which I will look at two case studies to illustrate the course of the analysis that resulted in the model.

Secondly, this paper contributes to the methodology of (news)writing research. For a long time, writing research has neglected procedural insights and writers' emic perspectives, a shortcoming that stems mainly from the challenges in data collection (Grésillon and Perrin 2014; Haapanen 2018). By operationalising the model into a method for data collection, I introduce a method that is especially suitable for documenting relatively long newswriting processes in detail, and from both etic and emic perspectives. The analysis of a data sample collected using this method provides some new evidence of the practices enacted in newswriting. This, in turn, leads to problematising the long-standing and cherished fundamental tenet of journalism, that is, the distinction between facts and commentary (e.g. Harbers and Broersma 2014; Schudson 2001).

Finally, this paper takes a look at the decline of trust that mass journalism is nowadays experiencing. On the basis of the empirically-grounded model that structures the process of, and serves as a framework for further studies on, newswriting, the paper call for reconsideration of the fundamentals of journalism and, in so doing, for the scrutiny and clarification of journalists' role as gatekeepers who decide which issues and voices are heard in public discourse.

The MSC approach and the role of quoting

The Mediated Social Communication MSC approach³ is based on the idea that in modern societies, socially relevant topics are publicly discussed by societal groups that disagree or are in competition with one another (e.g. Berger and Luckmann 1991; Fürst, Schönhagen, and Bosshart 2015) and that the established mass media are the stakeholders that provide a venue for this public negotiation. In this light, mass media combine two processes: the *communication* process between different actors in society on the one hand, and the *mediation* of this communication by journalists via mass media on the other.

The *mediating role* of journalism is fulfilled by publishing concise overviews of statements expressed by ad hoc groups as well as by more permanent groups and their spokespeople; groups and (mostly collective) actors exchange ideas and claims, which enables the process of communication. Journalists can also have a *productive role*, in other words, they also mediate their own perceptions and opinions. However, this role is seen as a complement to the core function of mediating others' voices in society (Groth 1960). Nevertheless, the two roles could be seen as a continuum, as in some forms of journalism (e.g. in party newspapers) the journalist is not expected to fulfil chiefly the mediating role.

³ The MSC approach, still relatively unrecognised outside the German-speaking academic world, was developed by German scholars like Otto Groth, Bernd Maria Aswerus, and Hans Wagner during the twentieth century, and is based on even earlier contributions; for example, by Albert Schäffle (see Fürst et al. 2015; Schönhagen, and Fürst in press). As regards this article, I am especially grateful to Professor Philomen Schönhagen for sharing her expertise on the MSC approach in personal communication and in comments on the different stages of the manuscript.

In the MSC approach, the traditional journalistic rule of objectivity is manifested in a concept of journalistic *impartiality* that relies on four central rules (Schönhagen 2002, 39; see also 1998; Fürst, Schönhagen, and Bosshart 2015): journalists 1) grant equal consideration to different stances, not necessarily within a single news item but in the longer term; 2) keep news separate from journalistic commentary; 3) attribute primary sources transparently; and 4) report statements faithfully in accordance with their original meaning, even if they are subjected to editing for reasons of intelligibility, space restrictions, etc. “[T]he claim for journalistic objectivity is (...) rather a claim for impartial reporting of the different points of view, the different interpretations of reality, and the different truths apparent in society. Journalistic objectivity therefore is not a problem that needs to be solved by theories of cognition but instead it is a sign of quality of editorial reporting” (Schönhagen 2002, 43).

The MSC approach considers mass media to be interaction, not in the sense that journalists and their target audience are interacting, as this process is largely unidirectional – even in today’s era of social media (cf. e.g. Hänska Ahy 2016; Jensen 2016) – but the interaction takes place between societal groups. Here, the concept of *representation* becomes key. Representation is understood as originating in the statements of representatives of societal groups, and these statements are implicitly attributed to all other members of the same group. At the same time, the represented members recognise these statements as being pronounced on their behalf, thus considering it unnecessary to raise their own voice.⁴ (Wagner 1978, 74.)

The main goal of representatives is to get their voice heard in the journalist-mediated public discourse as correctly and authentically as possible. In this light, a *quote* can be considered a discursive means that reproduces the original statement with minimum interference on the part of journalists. This idea derives from the common perception that quotation marks signify verbatim and faithful reproductions of original utterances. Such a perception is also widely mirrored in institutional metadiscourse, i.e. journalistic guidebooks and ethical guidelines (for an overview, see Haapanen 2017b: 1.2.1).

Recent research on journalistic quoting has shown, however, that the relationship between original interview discourse and the published quoted discourse is by no means so simple and simplistic. Instead, utterances to be quoted are deliberately selected and extracted from the source discourse; they are positioned in the manuscript so that they serve the emerging storyline; and their linguistic appearance is amended to meet not only the stylistic and narrative objectives that have been pre-set for the item but also the individual journalist’s personal writing preferences (Clayman 1995; Nylund 2003; 2006; Haapanen 2017b, Marinos 2001). Quotes are actually discursive devices that enable journalists and other media stakeholders to express their stance (Perrin 2012) and control public discourse while maintaining an *ostensible* impartiality (e.g. Ekström 2001; Haapanen and Nylund forthcoming 2019; Haapanen and Perrin 2017). This clash of expectations and actual practices makes quoting a “rich point” (Agar 2004, 21) in

⁴ Wagner (1978, 73–78) distinguishes three types of communicative representation. *Legitimised representation* is realised e.g. by the statements of a spokesperson of a party, company or association. *Claimed representation* refers to representatives without formal legitimation but who claim to speak for a group, while *statistical representation* refers to actors without formal legitimation and specific status but who are making statements that others approve.

journalism studies; a moment when something does not seem to make sense and therefore calls for research to revise the conceptualisation.

In the next section, I will introduce my empirical study on the process of quoting that resulted in the model that incorporates the procedural principles of the MSC approach.

The study: Modelling quoting in newswriting

This study investigated journalists' role as mediators of public discourse and, thus, the subtle dynamics of newswriting, through the process of quoting. On the one hand, quoting is one of the key elements in newswriting, both mentally and materially: searching for quote-worthy statements orients news production from the very beginning and, similarly, quotes-to-be are the starting points for the actual writing around which the journalist-narrator's own running text is then drafted (Haapanen and Nylund forthcoming 2019; Kroon Lundell and Ekström 2010). On the other hand, as tracking the process of news production could be difficult, given that items may derive from dozens of documents and interviews and be affected by a plethora of gatekeeping factors, quotes seem to offer an obvious advantage: they create a relatively linear connection between the process of production and the finished article because they are easily identifiable by their formal markings and, by definition, they have only one source, the person to whom the quoted discourse is attributed.

As my data I re-analysed two corpora that document the production processes of Finnish news items written for print and/or online media and of Swiss television news items. These corpora share a process-oriented approach to the study of newswriting and document both the material activities and the mental decision-making involved in newswriting (for a discussion, see Haapanen 2018). Besides the published media items, they also consist of recordings of journalistic interviews, editorial meetings, and workplace discussions, of semi-structured interviews, and of journalists' retrospective verbalisations of their writing processes.

The analysis started by focusing on the quotes in each of the case studies. In written media, quotes are distinguished from the surrounding text by visual cues like quotation marks. In audio-visually broadcast media, sound bite quotes can be distinguished from the surrounding item either auditorily, as with radio, or audio-visually, as with television, where the audience may not only hear but also see the quoted person speaking.

From the etic point of view, I then considered the attributed persons to be REPRESENTATIVES,⁵ who represent some SOCIETAL GROUPS, such as *experts* or *parties* or *people concerned*, and who negotiate the particular TOPICS and their SUB-TOPICS presented in the news item. Next, in order to uncover the emic point of view, that is, the journalists' perspective on newswriting strategies and decision-making, I used mainly retrospective verbalisations. They revealed why particular TOPICS, SOCIETAL GROUPS, and REPRESENTATIVES were selected but, importantly, also why others were not.

⁵ In this article, SMALL CAPITALS stand for the key aspects of the communication and mediation processes of mass media as conceptualised in the MSC literature. *Italics* stand for the role that the particular REPRESENTATIVE of a certain SOCIETAL GROUP has in the negotiation of the TOPIC in question.

Finally, once the pattern had been analysed in the reverse order, from quoting back to the selection of topics, I also analysed the data chronologically, starting from the phase of topic selection. Searching for the other phases then resulted in the observation that not all the societal groups that are incorporated in a news item are personalised, let alone quoted.

In the following sub-sections, I demonstrate the analysis through two case studies, one from each data corpus. After that, I sum up the general findings, the four-phase model of the processes through which journalists organise public discourse.

Case Study 1: GastroSuisse

The first case study, *GastroSuisse*, deals with a news event concerning a potential smoking ban in public places in Switzerland. The television item was published in *Téléjournal*, which is *Télévision Suisse Romande*'s main news programme, and its production was documented in the *Idée Suisse* corpus (for details, see Perrin 2013, chapter B3).⁶

The news item began with the anchor introducing the topic and continued with an alternation between the journalist's voiceovers and interviewees' sound-bite quotes. As can be seen in Table 1, which summarises the contents of the item, the storyline depends almost exclusively on quotes: all the insightful and ideological material is presented in quotes, and the voiceover of the journalist merely creates transitions between them. In the final product, the *GastroSuisse* item, quotes play a central role. But here I will illustrate that also the process of quoting – the search for, and crafting of, quotes – plays a central role throughout the one-day-long production of the item.

Table 1. Summary of the *GastroSuisse* item by the speakers.

| Element | Speaker | Duration (128 sec. in total) | Summary of the content |
|----------------|------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | Anchor | 20 sec. | <i>GastroSuisse</i> (the restaurateurs' organisation) wants some flexibility in the legislation. |
| 2 | Journalist's voiceover | 10 | In this restaurant (where the video is shot), the co-presence of smokers and non-smokers works rather well. |
| 3 | Restaurateur | 13 | [Direct Quote] We have spaces for smokers and non-smokers |

⁶ I am grateful to Daniel Perrin, the project leader of the research project "Idée Suisse: Language policy, norms, and practice as exemplified by Swiss Radio and Television", for his kind permission to use data from corpus and case studies based on earlier analyses of these data. The *Idée Suisse* project was funded from 2005 to 2007 by the Swiss National Science Foundation. It is worth noting that this corpus dates from over ten years ago, and during these years the mediascape has been undergoing continuous change. Nevertheless, I consider the corpus to be entirely valid for modelling the fundamental procedure of news writing.

| | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|----|--|
| 4 | Voiceover | 6 | Stricter legislation might be coming |
| 5 | | 12 | [Indirect Quote] GastroSuisse demands exceptions to a ban. |
| 6 | Representative of GastroSuisse | 17 | [DQ] The restaurateur should be able to decide. |
| 7 | Voiceover | 6 | [IQ] “Mr. Anti-Tobacco” (a member of the Swiss parliament) is not yet satisfied. |
| 8 | “Mr Anti-Tobacco” | 9 | [DQ] The proposal still does not regulate enough. |
| 9 | Voiceover | 5 | Consumers have divided opinions |
| 10 | Customer 1 | 15 | [DQ] I don’t favour overly strict regulations. |
| 11 | Customer 2 | 8 | [DQ] I am happy if smoking is forbidden in restaurants. |
| 12 | Voiceover | 7 | Cigarettes might soon be banned in restaurants. |

The day began as usual with a morning editorial meeting in which the editorial team of Téléjournal discussed potential TOPICS to be covered. Among other issues, they discussed prospective changes to the legislation about smoking in public places such as restaurants. The trigger for this discussion was a press conference that GastroSuisse, an umbrella organisation of Swiss restaurateurs, was organising that morning to present their point of view on proposals for a new law. “It is a topical issue today and will cause an active debate”, said the editor, referring to the fact that restaurateurs thought that the legislative changes could harm their business.

In these circumstances, it was clear from the very beginning that the two main conflicting SOCIETAL GROUPS that would be negotiating in the emerging news item would be restaurateurs and legislators. Especially in an audio-visual platform, however, the viewpoints of these key groups could not only be paraphrased; instead, these societal groups also needed some REPRESENTATIVES who could be interviewed and then their voices and faces could be presented. Such representatives were easily identified: the vice president of GastroSuisse, Claudio Casanova, would be available at the press conference, so he became the spokesperson for the restaurateurs. For the legislators, an obvious choice was a member of the Swiss parliament, Felix Gutzwiller, who was also an expert on social and preventive medicine and had therefore been nicknamed “Mr Anti-Tobacco”. Since the press conference was held in Bern, and Gutzwiller worked in Bern, the Geneva-based editorial office of Téléjournal co-operated with colleagues working in Bern for the German-speaking counterpart of Téléjournal for the interviewing of these two individuals.

This was the rationale that was co-negotiated in the editorial meeting. The further realisation of the news item was assigned to a journalist, C.S., who decided rather intuitively that the item also needed other kinds of sources. She therefore wanted to interview – in addition to Casanova representing the *party concerned*, and Gutzwiller representing *legislators* and *experts* – some of the people concerned, basically smokers

and non-smokers in restaurants, at the grass roots level. She therefore went along to a local pizzeria, together with a cameraman.⁷

In the pizzeria, C.S. conducted four interviews with *people concerned* about the prospective changes in legislation: the owner of the pizzeria, who was satisfied with the current situation (Element 3), a customer who was against the change in the law (Element 10), another customer who was in favour of the smoking ban (Element 11), and a third one with mixed thoughts. As Table 1 shows, this third customer was not included in the broadcast item. The reasons for the omission of this REPRESENTATIVE of the SOCIETAL GROUP of *people concerned* becomes clear by analysing, on the one hand, the workplace discussions that C.S. had with her boss and with a video editor and, on the other hand, her retrospective verbalisation, in which C.S. comments on her video-recorded work process immediately after the writing assignment was completed.

When C.S. returned from the field to the newsroom, there were less than five hours left to the broadcast of the evening programme at 7.30 pm. Despite the fact that the raw video material of the interviews with Casanova and Gutzwiller conducted by the Bern-based colleague had not yet arrived, C.S. started to outline a manuscript. She also drafted Casanova's and Gutzwiller's quotes in her emerging manuscript, because she knew "more or less" what they were likely to have said in the interview. In the first version of her manuscript, C.S. included five interviewees: Casanova, Gutzwiller, the restaurateur and two customers. The "third customer" was left out, as the timeslot was too short for six talking heads, and the representative with mixed thoughts was the weakest choice from the point of view of the narration.

Then, when the video material that was shot elsewhere finally arrived, C.S. realised a problem: Gutzwiller "didn't speak very well". That is to say, C.S. considered what he said to be poorly focused and too wordy. The journalist immediately called her boss, who advised her to leave out the interview with Gutzwiller. She agreed to follow this advice and to include three customers instead. Similarly, the video editor who actually put together the video material preferred three customers and no Gutzwiller.

Nevertheless, C.S. felt that the item "would be perfect" if they could in fact include Gutzwiller. Therefore, after rigorous selection and cutting, they finally managed to include a short, 9-second quote from Gutzwiller, at the expense of the unsure customer. This "really made the item more complete", as C.S. explained to the researchers in the retrospective verbalisation. By juxtaposing supporting and opposing stances – Casanova vs. Gutzwiller as well as two customers with contradictory views – C.S. created an "imaginary dialogue" (Ekström 2001, 579), and thus enhanced the dramaturgy of the item.

To conclude, the news coverage of this event that was raised to newsworthy status was a result of both inter- and intrapersonal negotiation on three different fronts: the journalist's perception of a smoothly flowing text and balanced presentation; the hierarchy of the organisation and their ability to co-operate; and the pre-set temporal architecture which was, due to interviewee-related issues, successfully negotiated up by C.S. from 100 seconds to 108 seconds (excluding the 20-second-long introduction). Table

⁷ For a standard model of roles in media items (decision-makers, experts, people concerned, ...) see Perrin (2015).

2 structures the GastroSuisse item by TOPIC, SOCIETAL GROUPS, their REPRESENTATIVES, and the representatives' key statements.

Table 2. Summary of the GastroSuisse item by topic, societal groups and their representatives, and the representatives' key statements.

| Topic | Societal groups | Representatives | Key statement |
|--|---|--|---|
| Legislation about smoking in public places | <i>experts / legislators</i> | Felix Gutzwiller, aka "Mr. Anti-Tobacco" | The proposal still does not regulate enough. |
| | <i>party concerned</i> | Claudio Casanova, Vice President, GastroSuisse | The restaurateur should be able to decide. |
| | <i>people concerned</i> restaurateur | Antonino Miracola | We have spaces for smokers and non-smokers. |
| | customer, against ban | customer 1 | I don't favour overly strict regulations. |
| | customer, for ban | customer 2 | I'm happy if smoking is forbidden in restaurants. |
| | customer, mixed thoughts | customer 3 | It's our right to choose how to die. |

In terms of theory building we can, at this stage, propose that journalists and their editorial teams decide on a TOPICAL ISSUE to address, then identify the key SOCIETAL GROUPS relating to that issue, pick certain people as REPRESENTATIVES of these societal groups, and finally reproduce their key statements by means of direct and indirect quoting. However, not all the intended representatives are finally incorporated in the published news item.

The next sub-section presents a case study that enables us to elaborate on the emerging theory because of its greater complexity in terms of 1) the selection of the topic (and sub-topics), societal groups, and representatives; 2) their roles in the final product; and 3) the process of verbalisation of their key statements.

Case study 2: Hollywood

The Hollywood case study looks at the production process of a broad profile article about a Finnish actress, Pihla Viitala. The article was published in a well-known Finnish cultural magazine, and its production was documented in the corpus collected for my PhD research project (for details, see Haapanen 2017b, Chapter 2).

The process started when a freelance journalist, K.K., who specialises in films and the film industry, contacted Viitala. A trigger for this was the fact that Viitala was playing a central role in a forthcoming Hollywood film. Viitala agreed to give an interview, after which K.K. offered the idea to the magazine. The actor was undoubtedly someone of current interest due to the forthcoming film, and the journalist was a regular and trusted contributor to that magazine. As a result, the magazine immediately expressed its interest, although the exact angle of the profile was not yet clear. “At this point, I didn’t have too clear an idea what would be the key issues in the story, besides her great adventure [to Hollywood]”, K.K. told the researcher in a retrospective verbalisation.

Basically, K.K. felt confident: he had met Viitala and knew that she was willing and confident enough to talk a lot – contrary to many other actors. “Although she’s temperamental, she’s quite easy-going about quotes. She’s the type [of person] that says that ‘I said what I said, full stop’. And that’s great.” K.K. did not prepare for the interview with a list of questions. “For me, it’s an optimal situation not to have anything on paper because the paper chains me and I kinda protect myself behind it. I’ve noticed that a sort of off-topic discussion often turns out to be very fruitful, if you just have an opportunity for it.”

The strategy worked well. Viitala was talkative and relaxed, and the discussion wandered naturally from one topic to another during the two-hour interview. Besides the forthcoming film, they also talked about earlier phases of her career, her future plans, and the Hollywood film industry. In addition, she wanted to present her political opinions and revealed her decision (“I won’t do it”) on quite a big but still-to-be-announced role in a high-profile TV series – a secret that K.K. did not want to publish in his article, as he wanted to respect their mutual trust.

K.K. audio-recorded the interview without taking any hand-written notes. Following his usual practice, he then transcribed the entire interview without, at this point, processing the text or cutting anything. He laid out the printouts, and by studying the material he came up with the idea that the main TOPIC of the article would be the conventions of the film industry both in Finland and abroad, particularly in Hollywood. Viitala’s forthcoming film and her recent news would be SUB-TOPICS of the article.

K.K. wanted to discuss the topics richly by bringing “various points of view into the story”. In terms of SOCIETAL GROUPS, his source material included the views of *people concerned*, i.e., actors, managers, directors and producers, and of the audience, i.e., Finnish people interested in celebrities. K.K. himself interviewed some REPRESENTATIVES of these societal groups, while taking some statements from elsewhere, for example, from other journalistic items.

When K.K. began to outline the structure of the article, his main goal was to identify “quote-worthy” material. “Quite often quotes create the structure: I have good quote-to-be blocks and my task is to put them in an order that creates a good dramaturgy for the story.” However, not all the societal groups that were mentioned got their nominated representative in the article or were quoted. For example, Finnish people interested in celebrities were treated as one group and collectively paraphrased through Viitala’s quotes, without bringing any representative onto the podium (i), and Swedish and Finnish actors were merely paraphrased by the journalist without any references (ii):

i) “I feel frustrated that people have so many assumptions and expectations”, Viitala says.

ii) Swedish actors who have made it to Hollywood have typically done it in the wake of some internationally acclaimed Swedish film. (...) For Finnish actors the problem has been the fact that our films don’t often achieve overseas visibility.

Table 3 summarises the TOPIC and SUB-TOPICS, the SOCIETAL GROUPS and their REPRESENTATIVES, if any. Sub-topics that were brought out in the interview between K.K. and Viitala but ignored in the article are in parenthesis. The last column indicates whether these representatives got their voice through in the article as direct quotes – the practice that will be explored next.

Table 3. Summary of the Hollywood item by topic, societal groups and their representatives.

| Topic(s) | Societal groups | Representatives | Quotes |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|--------|
| Film industry | People concerned | | |
| Viitala’s forthcoming movie | <i>actors</i> | Actress Pihla Viitala | 27 |
| Viitala’s recent news | <i>managers</i> | Manager-publicist S.V. | 9 |
| (Viitala’s political opinions) | <i>producers/directors</i> | Lots of name-dropping of other actors and people related to the film industry | – |
| (Scoop about a considerable role) | Audience | | |
| | <i>Finnish people interested in celebrities</i> | – | – |

As mentioned above, the general understanding is that direct quotes enable representatives to get their statements heard with as little interference as possible on the part of journalists. However, this expectation of non-interference is ill-founded, as a version analysis between the transcript of the interview and the published quotes reveals (Example 1).

To contextualise the example, before the transcribed stretch K.K. and Viitala have been discussing the fact that in Hollywood big projects misfire all the time. Viitala explains that this is why she does not want to rely entirely on one single project (lines 1–6) and she tells K.K. her attitudes towards professional misfortunes (7–15). The

discussion goes on, and after some two minutes, they have got round to comparing the film industry in Hollywood to a game of chance (16–26). Then Viitala expresses her hesitation about pursuing superstardom (27–28), after which K.K. says there is only a very small chance of becoming incredibly rich in Los Angeles, whatever the profession (29–34).

Example 1. Transcript of an extract from the interview (translated from the original Finnish by the author).

Journalist K.K. and interviewee Pihla Viitala (PV) have been talking about the fact that in Hollywood big movie projects collapse all the time.

1 PV: (...) and that's part of the reason why(.) no I mean (.)
2 I'd be stupid if I counted on just some (.) umm (.)
3 single movie or TV series or any one thing over there
4 KK: uh-huh
5 PV: to make my own career
6 KK: yes yes
7 PV: and that's (.) because of that it's pointless for me
8 to think that (.) that (.) if like something works out then good
9 KK: uh-huh
10PV: and then if something doesn't work out then (.) it's probably a
11 bit annoying (.) but (.) it can't be (.) I'm not betting
12KK: uh-huh
13PV: my life on it (.) and I'm not going to (.)
14KK: uh-huh
15 (1.0)

(2 min 10 sec removed. They have been saying that besides skill, success depends on both timing and luck.)

16PV: (...) that is kinda hit and miss
17KK: uh-huh
18PV: or a kind of gamble really and then (.) everyone there is
19 expecting to hit that jackpot
20KK: yeah
21PV: all the time and (.) not I I don't want to bet my entire life
22KK: yeah ((laughs))
23PV: on that kind of
24KK: yeah
25PV: waiting game
26KK: uh-huh exactly
27PV: because that isn't to me (.) at the end of the day it's like (.)
28 superstardom like ain't exactly worth fighting for in my opinion.
29KK: uh-huh (.) and moving to L.A. is almost (.) in any kind of
30 profession is the reason to go there so one goes there because
31 there's that teeny weeny chance of becoming huge- incredibly
32PV: yeah
33KK: rich
34PV: yeah

In the retrospective verbalisation, K.K. told the researcher that for this part of the interview he wanted to quote Viitala’s personal views, which reflected her attitudes to the subject matter. He also decided to combine utterances that were originally spoken more than two minutes apart into one quote to construct the narration in the way that best fitted and contributed to the emerging storyline. “Here we have three great insights and I wanted to put them all into my article and I felt that they served their purpose best when put together”.

On this basis, K.K. wrote the following quote and some running text leading to it (Table 4). In the table, the one lengthy quote is divided into three lines for the sake of presentation. The first column indicates the lines in the transcript (Example 1) on which the particular part of the quote is based.

Table 4. Extract from the Hollywood article.

| Line in the transcript of the interview | The running text leading to the quote, and the quote. |
|---|---|
| 29–31, 33 | People go to Hollywood because there is that smaller than small chance of becoming insanely rich. |
| 18–19, 21, 23, 34 | "Having a career there is like a gamble. Everyone just expects to hit the jackpot all the time, and that's a game I don't want to waste the rest of my life on. |
| 2–3, 5 | I'd be stupid to stake my career on one role. |
| 8, 10, 11 | If something doesn't work out, it's a bit annoying, but then you just move on to the next job." |

The “direct” quote above is a compound of several statements and has undergone substantial deletions, insertions, and revisions. Furthermore, the quote has been *monologised*. This refers to the phenomenon that an interactive exchange of turns between the journalist and the interviewee is simplified in the resulting article. In this case, although the journalist is not only asking questions but also constantly engaging in the interview with various responsive devices, such as *uh-huh* (lines 4, 9, 12, etc.), *yes* (line 6), and *yeah* (lines 20, 22), the quote based on this interaction appears to be an unprompted and continuous utterance by the interviewee. (The phenomenon of monologisation is thoroughly discussed elsewhere, see e.g. Haapanen 2017a.)

In terms of theory building, the process of newswriting does not necessarily start with selecting a TOPICAL ISSUE. Especially in human-centred journalism, the news item can be triggered by an interesting and available REPRESENTATIVE, for example a popular, topical or evergreen celebrity, around whom the item is then woven. This case study has emphasised and illustrated journalists’ productive role when they are mediating the public negotiation of interacting and competing SOCIETAL GROUPS. The analysis has shown that the sub-processes of quoting do not always lead to direct quoting, but what has been said can be verbalised in various ways.

General results: A four-phase model of newswriting

In this section, I present a model that theorises the practice of quoting in newswriting. The model consists of four phases – topicalisation, societal localisation, personalisation, and verbalisation – that follow and can partly overlap each other in flexible sequences and cycles. As the paper has drawn on research on quoting, in this section I emphasise findings that, in turn, contribute to it.

Topicalisation: A journalist and his or her editorial team monitor public discourse in order to identify and define a TOPICAL ISSUE to be covered. Sometimes the topic might be the outcome of a journalist's own research, sometimes it might be selected from press releases or pre-scheduled events (e.g., elections, summits, etc.). **Societal localisation:** The journalist identifies (some of the) key SOCIETAL GROUPS involved in, and negotiating, the selected topic. Societal groups are selected so that they represent various roles (e.g. *people concerned*, *authorities*) and approaches (e.g. pro, contra) to the issue at hand (Perrin 2015). Naturally, journalists are not the only ones active here; advocacy groups especially do their best to be involved in news items, and in a positive light (e.g. Kim and McCluskey 2015), for example by producing and offering materials, such as press releases, for media to exploit (e.g. Jacobs 1999). **Personalisation:** The journalist selects people as REPRESENTATIVES of the societal groups and includes them in the emerging news item. By artificially juxtaposing representatives with various or contradictory views, the journalist can create an imaginary dialogue between them. For example, a statement from representative A can be extracted from its original interview context and positioned as a critical response to a statement made by representative B in another interview (e.g. Ekström 2001).

My analysis provides empirical evidence that quotes and their mental representations already play a key role during the sub-processes that precede the verbalisation phase. That is to say, when journalists select relevant societal groups, they often draw on their knowledge of statements that have been presented earlier in public discourse by representatives of these groups. The same applies with the selection of representatives, which is often influenced by journalists' previous experience of prospective people. Especially in television and radio, so-called pre-interviews play a crucial role. In the pre-interview, a journalist contacts prospective interviewees, listens to what they know, and assesses whether or not they are capable of delivering compact, smooth and usable quotes. Then the interview conducted in front of the camera or microphone tends to repeat the selected pre-interview questions and answers, which reduces unexpected and incoherent communication. (Gravengaard and Rimestad 2016, 299; Nylund 2011, 483.) In written journalism, however, such disfluencies are not so serious because the discourse to be quoted can easily be edited in the writing phase to meet the desired content and linguistic form (Haapanen 2017b).

Verbalisation: The views of the societal groups can be presented collectively (e.g. *The conservative party claims...*), or spokespeople can be verbalised, for example, indirectly (e.g. *She says that...*). However, nowadays it seems to be the rule that journalistic items also contain quotes – whether direct quotes in written journalism or soundbite quotes in audio-visually broadcast media.

Quotes have several important functions (Haapanen and Perrin 2017). For example, they animate the text and lighten the reading/watching experience, add

credibility that that is what the person quoted has actually said, and characterise him or her. However, in order to fulfil these functions, it is often necessary for journalists and their editorial teams (as for the role of sub-editors, see Vandendaele 2017) to modify the quoted discourse. This finding, drawn from the analyses used here as well as from other recent research, suggests that instead of being, or even being aimed at being, exact reproductions of what was originally uttered in an interview, journalistic quoting can rather be defined as a journalist's *purpose-oriented recontextualisation of prior discourse while marking it as a quote* (437).

The analyses conducted for this paper suggest that these sub-processes of quoting are a prerequisite for the publication of today's journalistic news items. In other words, a "proper" piece of journalistic newswriting – be it delivered in the form of a television or a written news item or, for example, as a radio insert or podcast – cannot merely name a topical issue and introduce competing societal groups, but it must explicitly identify some key agents and embed a selection of their statements in a range of different ways. These ways include strategies, practices, and processes of intentional selection and rejection. In the next section, the model is operationalised into a method for documenting newswriting and so figuring out the subtle dynamics of this journalistic decision-making.

Next step: Operationalising the model

Capturing writing processes has long been methodologically challenging (Haapanen 2018). Grésillon and Perrin (2014) have explained this problem by using a *double black box metaphor*. In this metaphor, the first of the boxes refers to the fact that real-life writing activities are performed behind the scenes, out of researchers' reach. Then, if researchers succeed in shedding light on the material activities, they are confronted with the second, inner black box. This box conceals the mental activities of writing, as it is methodologically difficult to "open a window into the mind of the writer" (Perrin 2003, 915).

There are already some workable methods for capturing the material activity of relatively short writing assignments, and writers' mental reflections on it. The state-of-the-art method in this field could be considered to be progression analysis (Perrin 2003, 2013, chapter B|3). However, due to the complexity of such methods, investigating long(er) assignments with somewhat comparable intensity – from product and process perspectives; as material, mental and social activity; and on micro and macro levels – is hard to achieve. The reason is that the core of the multimethod procedure of progression analysis depends on the screenshot recording and key logging of the entire writing process, followed by cue-based retrospective verbal protocols.⁸ However, such a procedure is difficult to adopt when the writing sessions take place in various settings, and the entire process takes place across several days or even weeks, as can typically be the case with, for example, reportages and profiles as well as with television documentaries. Therefore, the model summarised in the previous section will now be operationalised into a method of data collection to overcome the lack of means to comprehensively document longer processes of newswriting. The procedure, which also

⁸ In the cue-based retrospective verbal protocol, the screenshot recording of the writing process is shown to the journalist right after the writing is completed and s/he is asked to continuously comment on what his or her intentions and writing strategies were while writing (Perrin 2003).

depends heavily on retrospective verbalisation, will be introduced in the following paragraphs.

A researcher meets a prospective informant-journalist immediately after s/he has finished his or her manuscript. The informant-journalist is asked to walk through the production process – with a brand-new manuscript as a stimulus – by answering the researcher’s questions regarding the phases of 1) topicalisation, 2) societal localisation, 3) personalisation, and 4) verbalisation, and other issues related to these phases.

1. Why did you select this topic and sub-topics, and this particular approach to deal with them? Why was it decided to do this item right now? How did you come up with the structure of the storyline, and what is the role of multimodal elements (e.g. photos, hyperlinks)?
2. Why did you select these societal groups to negotiate this topic? Did you consider selecting any other societal groups as well?
3. Why did you select these particular representatives? How did you prepare for, conduct, and record the interview(s)? Did you obtain any information in other ways, and were there some pieces of information that did not end up in the finished manuscript?
4. How did you decide between various means of verbalisation (e.g. content summarising, indirect quoting, direct quoting, etc.)? Were there any issues when verbalising interview statements in the manuscript?

The data corpus thus produced consists of manuscripts and (recordings of) accounts in which informant-journalists respond to stimuli and verbalise the mental activities they went through during the writing. In addition, the corpus includes tabulated summaries of the structure of the content (see Tables 2 and 3), as these tables are useful in supporting the course of retrospective verbalisation sessions.

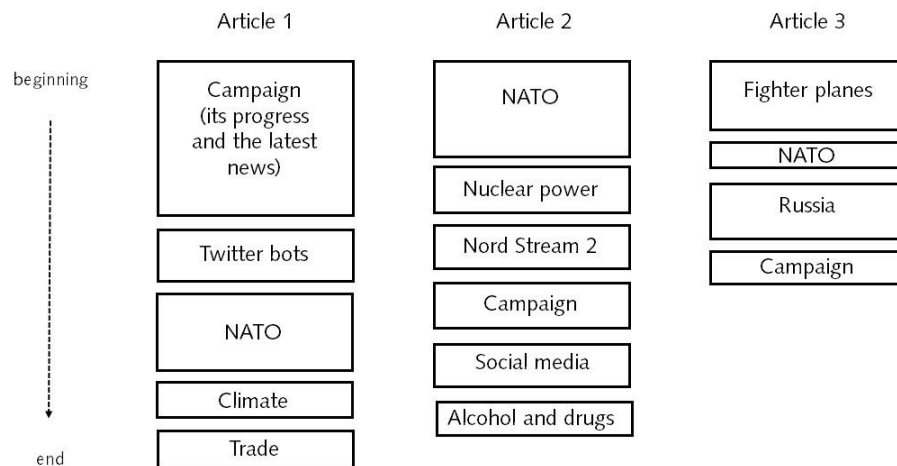
The procedure outlined above has some obvious advantages over the sometimes simplistic interview methods (often lumped together under the term *semi-structured interviews*) that dominate in the social sciences (Haapanen 2018). The immediacy of the verbalisation helps informant-journalists to recall the process accurately and in detail. Furthermore, focusing on a particular assignment, instead of discussing practices in general, increases reliability; presenting general questions about such an everyday process as newswriting is for journalists would be as if the researcher were “outsourcing” the task of generalisation to the informant, who then does it without following any consistent methodological procedure (40).

Next, I will exemplify the method by briefly presenting one more case study, Election. This case study is part of my on-going follow-up project that makes use of the framework described above. The project, whose results will be discussed elsewhere, identifies the subtle dynamics of single newswriting sessions. Then, following the principles of grounded theory, it draws generalisations describing the factors that enable and constrain journalistic production processes.

The Election case deals with the presidential election held in Finland in January, 2018. Before the election, three journalists who work for the same media company but

for different publications conducted a joint interview with one of the candidates. Then, based on this 50-minute interview, each of the journalists wrote his individual news item. The main TOPIC of the items was naturally the same, the candidate, but the SUB-TOPICS varied. Composition 1 presents a rough outline of each of these three parallel articles.

Composition 1. Outline of the three parallel articles in the Election case.



First of all, the journalists selected different SUB-TOPICS because they were writing for different publications and they anticipated what their target audience would want to read. In other words, the publisher’s purpose and values and the interests of the audience affected the newswriting.

A retrospective verbalisation was conducted with the journalist who wrote Article 1. He told the researcher that he left out one prominent sub-topic – Nord Stream 2, a gas pipeline under the Baltic Sea – because it was “a big issue and there wasn’t enough space for it, and it has already been discussed in another article, so the omission didn’t matter so much”. So both the pre-determined parameters of the publication and earlier news coverage affected the newswriting. In addition, the journalist usually built his storylines by linking all the sub-topics together textually; here, he decided to disregard one sub-topic because he could not find “a good, smooth way to work it in with the others”. His personal writing preferences therefore also affected the newswriting.

The journalist also knew that this candidate had been inconsistent when talking about Twitter bots. The journalist wanted to point out this inconsistency but, at the same time, he wanted to seem to remain neutral, objective – as journalists are often thought and required to be. He therefore personalised some other people as REPRESENTATIVES of opponents, who then presented their critical points of view as direct quotes in the article.

Apart from the candidate, people who were in this SOCIETAL GROUP of opponents were the only people who were quoted in this article. They got their voice heard because their opinions happened to fit into the story the journalist wanted to tell his readers.

So, what tentative conclusions can we draw from this? The process of newswriting, which proceeds from a range of different source materials to a pre-planned and thoroughly polished text product, involves a lot of decisions.⁹ These decisions cannot be evaluated in terms of what is right or wrong, or termed differently, true or untrue. On this basis, we can say that the analysis of the sub-processes of quoting has revealed practices that are not in line with the core principle of journalism, i.e., that journalism must be based on facts (which is, by the way, a term very loosely used in everyday discourse), and if the item contains commentary, the audience must be able to distinguish it from the facts. This separation is the basic premise of journalism, and therefore the media criticism that has welled up inside the field has mainly concentrated on fact-checking (cf. Mena 2018). However, such a fact-centric approach is inadequate: quotes do not reproduce interviewees' statements verbatim, and the processes that precede quoting are never concerned with the truth per se, which in the constructivist view is quite an impossible idea anyway (cf. e.g. Godler and Reich 2013; Graves 2017). Quite the opposite is the case: journalists engage in prioritising, constructing and mediating newsworthy circumstances through discursive resources (see also e.g. Beeman and Peterson 2001; Huan 2018; Van Hout and Jacobs 2008; White 1998).

To sum up, by approaching interviewees selectively, conducting interviews in purpose-oriented ways, and moderating between, and modifying, interviewees' contributions dramaturgically, journalists construct discursive realities in ways comparable to implicit commenting.

Closing remarks: Enhancing the transparency of journalistic principles

This paper has presented an empirically grounded model that structures the process of, and serves as a framework for further studies on, newswriting. Inspired by both the Mediated Social Communication (MSC) approach and the multimethod approach of progression analysis, as well as drawing on research on quoting, the four-phase model explains how journalistic items come into being, which is as follows. 1) Journalists and their editorial teams decide on a topical issue to be addressed, and at the same time reject other topics. 2) Journalists identify societal groups that are somehow linked to this topical issue, such as victims, authorities, lay people, or politicians, and bring these groups, but most likely not all of them, into the emerging news item. 3) Journalists select some people as representatives of these societal groups, and 4) verbalise their points of views, often by means of quoting, inter alia.

As the MSC approach emphasises journalists' role as *mediators* of the negotiations of societal groups, my analyses have illustrated how this mediation unfolds in practice. The analyses have provided evidence that the *productive* role of journalists is organically intertwined with the mediating role. This leads us to call for reconsideration of the relationship between facts and comment and, furthermore, for clarification of

⁹ It is worth pointing out that we are discussing the Western mediascape, where there is considerable freedom of expression. For example in China, all newspapers are subject to government censorship and consequently the possibilities for journalistic decision-making are very restricted (e.g. Huan 2018).

journalists' role as gatekeepers who decide what we read, hear and see, which forms the basis on which we build our worldviews and everyday decisions.

Such a discussion is highly topical right now. Traditionally, mass media have had a powerful position in supporting public negotiation on socially relevant topics. However, along with the crumbling of the audience's illusions about the news media's objectivity and impartiality, so too trust in news media has declined. I argue that the restoration of a trusting relationship between the journalistic media and their audience depends to a great extent on transparency about the principles of journalistic work practices (e.g. Carlsson and Nilsson 2016; McBride and Rosenstiel 2014; Van der Wurff and Schönbach 2013), an aim that is also supported by innovative web-based and citizen-driven "participatory media accountability instruments" (Eberwein and Porlezza 2016, 337).

Revers (2014, 808) sees the promotion of transparency as a long-running countercurrent in the professionalisation of journalism; for example, he considers the introduction of the newspaper byline around the 1930s to be pushing back against professional compartmentalisation in journalism.

Professional control entails that processes generating outcomes remain opaque to the outside. A news account, according to this conception, draws its authority exactly from its opaqueness and dissociation from its constructedness.

Transparency demands the exact opposite: Journalism following this principle draws power from revealing how it materializes, who produces it, and under what circumstances. (– –) By being honest and open about their methods, journalists are made reliable, trustworthy, and respectful to audiences. (Revers 2014, 808.)

In practice, transparency might also cause some headaches for journalists if it turns out, as Heikki Kuutti has scathingly remarked (2017, 77), that "journalistic processes actually do not have particularly strict procedural demands for the truthfulness of published information".

To conclude, restoring trust in the mass media requires better understanding of how the media work, and more concretely, who gets their voice heard there, and why. I hope that the model presented in this paper and then operationalised into a method for data collection will pave the way for future research on newswriting, especially on relatively long journalistic items.

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